Let's Fall in Love in a Place You Want to Stay

by embro

Summary

A George of the Jungle / Tarzan AU where Louis is a model who meets Wild Man Harry in the Congo. He was raised by apes and barely speaks a word of English and turns Louis' life upside down.

Notes

I remade on Tumblr
Harry of the Jungle

It was after the fifth time Louis tripped on a tree root that he realised he was well and truly done with the jungle. There was no amount of money in the world that was worth this kind of pain. He was covered in bruises and scratches and a million and one bug bites. And the thing was that he’d spent two hours in hair and makeup before they started the trek to make him look like a wild jungle boy, which was now proving to be totally useless. The branches he’d run into had messed up his hair, and the humid air was making him flushed and sweaty, and all the tripping he’d done had cut up his knees and made him dirty all over. And he was meant to be a model. He’d never felt less attractive.

“Wait up!” he screeched, but no one stopped. He liked to think they just didn’t hear him, but more likely they were all just sick of his whining and wanted to get as far from him as possible. It wasn’t his fucking fault the jungle hated him.

Louis sat on the offending root and pulled out a water bottle from his rucksack, taking a long drink before putting the lid back on. He could still hear the voices of the rest of the crew, so he figured he had a bit of time to fix up his hair and check out his scraped knees.

They were really fucking bloody, and dirty, so he poured out some of his water and rubbed it over, hissing at the slight sting. Maybe if he was allowed to wear his jeans or even trackies, they wouldn’t be hurt so bad. Instead, he was dressed in a fucking fur skirt. They called it a loin cloth, but Louis knew a skirt when he saw one and this was most definitely a skirt. They’d at least given him a loose collared button-up shirt and let him wear his baseball cap for a bit of sun protection, but why they couldn’t have covered his legs too was beyond him. His calves were one of his best features and now they were covered in red welts from fuck-knows what insect.

It was while he was tucking his fringe under his cap to keep his forehead from getting oily that he spotted something in the tree above him.

Something that looked very human.

It was no wonder then that he screamed.

And pushed himself up from the root and started running as fast as he could.

He’d only gone a few steps though before he tripped and everything went black.

---

Louis woke with a start, sitting up so quick he saw stars behind his eye lids. He lay down when he felt a hand on his chest gently push him back, and sighed when he felt another hand on his forehead.

“You got water?” he croaked.

He felt something hard prod at his lips, so he opened them up. Only instead of the rim of his water bottle being placed between them like he expected, a finger was pushed inside.

“What the fuck?” he spat out, grabbing the rude hand by the wrist to push it away because the digit tasted rank. He heard a grunt, and figured that now would be a really good time to open his eyes.

So he forced them open, blinking slowly so the stars would fade away, and really wished he’d kept
them closed and hence blissfully unaware of the predicament he’d found himself in.

There was an unfamiliar guy hovering over him; long brown hair a tangled mess, green eyes wide and blinking slowly, mouth huge and hanging open. Louis just stared, trying to figure out where he may have seen the guy before because this was obviously some kind of fever dream. One of those insects that had bit him must have been poisonous and was currently fucking with his head. Louis’ eyes drifted further down, taking in the man’s tanned dirty skin and hard arms and defined stomach and huge cock.

“Oh shit.” Louis gasped, trying to look back up to the guy’s eyes but failing miserably. He’d never had a dirty dream quite this vivid before. “I better not be sporting a boner when they find me in the jungle.” He muttered, then let out a laugh at his hilarious joke because someone had to. His brain had seemingly been able to conjure up this beautiful guy but didn’t give him any kind of voice or sense of humour; his imagination obviously thought appearance was enough.

Instead of attacking him with kisses like Louis was hoping for, the jungle man fell back on his arse and bent his legs up, resting his chin on his knees. He was just staring, and it was making Louis a little antsy.

“Are we like, gonna do something?” he asked. For a sex dream, this wasn’t very hot. Usually in his fantasies, he didn’t have to woo the guy first. He wasn’t exactly good at seduction. Or speaking to pretty guys, really.

The man tilted his head, then quick as a snake stuck his finger back in Louis’ mouth.

“Stop that!” Louis screeched, swatting the hand away. “At least wash your hands first. Fuck.”

“Fuck.” The man grunted back, and that had Louis rolling his eyes.

“You just gonna mimic me then?”

The guy tilted his head again, only this time to the right rather than the left, and Louis groaned.

“If we’re gonna fuck then can we get to it already? I don’t know if I want to, if your mouth tastes anything like your finger.”

“Yes, exactly.” Louis sighed, then lent in to press his lips to the jungle man’s. Who wasn’t exactly responsive. His lips just sought of clenched together tighter rather than opened up, and when Louis prodded at them with his tongue the man pulled back with an animalistic growl.

Which sounded terrifyingly real.

And when Louis opened his eyes again, the man’s teeth were bared and his eyebrows were furrowed and his whole demeanour became that much more menacing.

“This isn’t a dream is it?” Louis squeaked, and the man pushed himself up on his knuckles and toes, teeth still bared. Louis scuttled backwards, eyes never leaving the strange gorilla man before him. So he didn’t see that he was getting closer and closer to the edge of a branch of a 40 foot tree.

Louis did notice, though, that the man’s face changed from angry to anxious; how his eyes widened and his mouth turned down. The gorilla man began jumping up and down on the spot, making small whimper-type noises and banging his fists on the bark floor.
Louis hadn’t noticed they were on bark before. Sure, he’d seen the green leaves hanging around them and the branch above him but he hadn’t put two and two together to realise that, fuck, he was in a tree. He looked to the left, saw the huge drop, and screamed.

Then he felt the body of the jungle man crushing him to the floor, his arms and legs wrapping around tight and his face nuzzling into Louis’ neck. He was making little noises again, soft ooos like the baby chimp Louis saw at London Zoo once.

“Holy fuck, you are a monkey man!” Louis shrieked, and the guy looked up from beneath his wild mane and smiled.

“Fuck.” He sighed, then carried on with his nuzzling and purring.

And Louis didn’t really know what to do. He’d been at the brink of death so at that moment a hug felt quite nice, but the fact that the man doing the hugging was a wild jungle creature who reeked of sweat and mud made the whole thing a little unsettling.

The guy seemed harmless enough though. Like, he’d saved Louis from falling out of a tall fucking tree; that was cause enough for a little trust.

“All right jungle man, I’m safe.”

Jungle Man made a few more ooos sounds but wouldn’t get up.

“Sorry I don’t speak ape.” Louis grunted, and wiggled his arms out from beneath Jungle Man so he could push at his chest. He still wouldn’t budge, so Louis put his hands on the guy’s head and lifted it up and away from his neck.

Jungle Man blinked some more, and when Louis gave a small hesitant smile the guy grinned wide and fell back onto his arse. Which meant Louis now had a bit more space to breathe.

“What’s your name, then? I can’t keep calling you Jungle Man.”

Obviously, the guy just blinked back.

“I’m Louis.”

More blinking answered him.

Louis put his hand to his own chest and said again “Louis.”

“Fuck.” Jungle Man said with a grin, and a laugh came bubbling from Louis’ throat.


“Lou.”

“Close enough. What will I call you then?”

“Lou.”

“No, that’s me.”

“Fuck.”

“Fuck’s about right.” Louis groaned.
Jungle Man groaned back, only it came out more like a hum because he was still smiling. He began scratching at himself then, at his chest and throat and chin.

“For a jungle man, you’re not very hairy.” Louis observed. He figured that a man who lived in the wild would have a beard down to the ground, but Jungle Man didn’t seem to have a single hair on his chin or his chest.

“Hairy.” Jungle Man said, but his slow way of speaking and odd accent made it sound like a very familiar name.

“All right, I’m gonna call you Harry. I’m Lou.” Louis put a hand to his chest again, and then touched Jungle Man’s. “Harry.”

“Harry.” Jungle Man said, putting his hand on top of Louis’ to keep it pressed against his skin. “Lou.” He added with a sharp shake of his head. Louis decided to take that as a nod. “Fuck.”

Louis blushed. “Maybe later. I think we need to get clean first. And I’m hungry.”

“Lou. Harry. Fuck.” Harry repeated with some more blinking and smiling. He did look good doing it, but some other kind of response would be nice.

Words obviously weren’t of much use, so Louis slowly stood and watched as Harry followed him up. Then he slowly wobbled his way over to the trunk, gripped on tight, and looked down to his side. His stomach rolled as he said “Fucking hell.”

“Fuck.”

“How the fuck did you get us up here? Can you carry me back down?”

“Fuck.”

“It’s not cute anymore!” Louis panicked.

“Lou.” Harry said slowly, and fitted his hands on Louis’ waist.

Louis spun around and wrapped his arms around Harry’s neck and hoisted himself up to wrap his legs around his hips. “Go down.” He demanded, and Harry just stared. Louis shimmed his way around Harry’s body until he was clinging on to his back. Then he began pointing down and pressing his heels into Harry’s stomach. “Climb down. I need to find my rucksack. I’ve got snacks in there, and water.”

“Lou.”

“Yes, Harry, I’m Louis. Now go down, go on! Climb!”

Miraculously, Harry got the hint. He clung on to the tree trunk and started hoisting them down at such a fast pace that Louis thought he was most definitely going to be sick. This guy had to have sticky hands or some shit because it was unnatural the way he was climbing. Inhuman, really.

Louis didn’t open his eyes until they were safely on the ground, and when he felt hard earth beneath his feet he could have cried.

“Oh thank fuck.” Louis groaned, and Harry smiled wide. “Yes, Harry, you did good. Congratulations.” He added with a roll of his eyes, and Harry just smiled wider.

“Fuck Harry.”
“Just stop already, and help me find my bag, yeah?”

---

Harry really wasn’t any help, which Louis should have expected. The jungle man just followed the city boy around, copying the way he walked and occasionally his facial expressions. Sometimes Louis even heard the other man mimic his words, too, but mainly he’d just make monkey-like noises.

So Louis walked through the jungle, hoping that something would look familiar and help him find his way back to the group. Surely he hadn’t been gone for more than an hour. The sun didn’t seem much higher in the sky then he’d noticed before the blackout, and the crew should have stopped when they noticed their male model was missing and began to search.

But Louis’ stomach was grumbling like he hadn’t eaten in days, and his mouth felt powdery with how thirsty he was.

It was why he screamed out in relief and began jumping up and down on the spot when they stumbled upon a lake.

“Fuck yes.” He dropped to his knees and scooped up some water in his hands, lifting them up to his lips but was stopped by a sudden shriek. His hands were slapped so the water spilt everywhere, as if the noise hadn’t been enough of a warning. “I get it. What can I drink then?” Louis grumbled, and Harry picked Louis up and threw him over his shoulder.

And began to run.

The ground was flying by in a blur beneath Louis, who was clinging on to Harry’s waist, nails digging in to the skin as if it would strengthen his grip. He’d had enough near death encounters today, and Louis didn’t want this to be the way he’d go; dropped on his head by a fast jungle man as they raced to find water.

It would probably be better than dying of thirst, Louis reasoned. Quicker, anyway.

Harry didn’t even stop when he got to drinkable water. He just ran right through a waterfall, then turned around and ran through it again.

After about the fourth time, he finally put Louis down into the stream and turned back to lap at the water as it fell.

“Christ Harry!” Louis grunted, pushing himself up with one hand and wiping water out of his eyes with the other. “You couldn’t have set me down on the bank?”

Harry ooed in reply, and Louis looked at him to tell him off some more. Only the words were caught in his throat because water was running down Harry’s tanned muscular back and perky arse and hard thighs.

“Oh fucking hell!”

“Fuck!” Harry cheerily cried, and just had to turn around to grin at Louis, showing off more skin that was wet and slippery and beautiful. Then he jumped out from the waterfall and dragged Louis underneath it, looking up and opening his mouth and poking out his tongue to catch water drops. He looked at Louis, then grabbed his jaw and pulled it down so Louis’ mouth was open. Harry stuck out his tongue, caught some water, then looked back at Louis with a grin.
“I know how to drink.” Louis grunted, and stuck out his hands to catch water in his palms so he could do something other than ogle the jungle man’s tongue and wonder how good it was at lapping other things. Like arseholes.

When they had drunk enough water and were sufficiently clean, Harry made to pick Louis up but the city boy stepped back.

“I want to walk, yeah?”

Harry tried again, and Louis pushed his hands away.

“Walk, see?” He said, and took a few steps.

Harry oooed in a panicky voice and wrapped his arms around Louis’ chest so he’d stop moving.

“I’m not going away from you, calm down, Harry.”

“Lou Harry.” Harry groaned into his neck, and Louis shivered at the feel of breath on his wet skin. Because yeah, it was pretty hot what with Harry being naked and dripping, but the jungle was getting pretty damn cold.

“It’s fine bud, I’m not gonna leave you. We need to keep searching for my group though.” Louis tried to reassure him. But words were clearly no use because Harry wouldn’t let go. “Its getting late, right? And I’m hungry. I need food. You know, food?”

Louis acted out eating, and Harry just smiled. Then he copied Louis’ movements and let out a squawky laugh. Louis dropped his hands and sighed, and Harry did the same. Then laughed, and Louis couldn’t help but smile. As annoying as it was not to be understood, Harry was being impossibly cute. Plus, he was clean now. Maybe they could try kissing again, now that Harry kind of knew him and all.

Before Louis could make any moves, Harry pushed him.

“What the fuck was that for?”

“Ooo.” Harry replied, and pushed him again so hard he stumbled back.

“Oi!” Louis grunted, which earned him another push. “Just lay off, all right?”

This time, instead of shoving, Harry put his hands on Louis’ shoulders to turn him around, then gently nudged him forward.

“You want me to go this way?” Louis asked, following up the question with a few steps in the direction he was facing.

Harry squawked happily and joined Louis at his side, walking along with a huge grin on his face.

“You didn’t have to shove me though.” Louis grunted, and Harry just carried on smiling.

They walked for ages, through more and more shrubs and streams and overhanging branches. Harry protested with little jibbers every time Louis tripped, and would always reach out to pick Louis up, but he’d never get far. Louis would always pick himself up and slap Harry’s hands away. He didn’t want to be carried like some fucking princess. He wanted to show that he could survive the jungle just fine without needing any of Harry’s pampering.

But when he heard a loud inhuman shriek, Louis jumped up into Harry’s arms with absolutely no
shame whatsoever.

“What the fuck was that?”

“Fuck.” Harry said, and Louis nodded like what Harry said was answer enough.

Surely Harry dealt with wild animals all the time. He survived alone in a jungle for fuck’s sake, he would be used to this shit.

“Are you gonna go kill it or something? Maybe we should run away.” Louis muttered, and then cringed back when he heard another cry.

Harry started walking, and Louis thrashed in his arms.

“You aren’t fucking serious. You can’t bring me closer to that thing! It sounds carnivorous!” Then some more shrieking and howling started, and Louis wiggled with a new fervour. “There’s loads of them! What the fuck Harry, turn around!”

Harry let out soft *ooos* that were probably meant to be reassuring as he walked closer and closer to the noise.


“Lou.” Harry purred over the screeching of whatever wild animals they were. The animals he was still fucking approaching.

Just as Louis’ heart made it all the way up to his throat, Harry let out a huge gorilla-like screech and the animals went silent.

Then a monkey popped out from behind a tree and jumped up onto Harry’s shoulder.

Then another one onto his head, and another in Louis’ lap.

“Gross!” Louis shrieked, and pushed it away from him.

Harry dropped Louis with a growl, and turned his attention back to the monkeys that were gathering around them. He was hugging them and cooing at them and Louis wondered if he understood them. Louis was grinning by the time another monkey tried to climb into his lap, so this time he let it. It stunk a bit, but it was sort of cute. Really cute, actually. He gave it a little scratch behind the ear like he would a cat, and the little monkey jumped up and onto his shoulders, tail curling around to tickle at his neck.

“Look, Harry! A monkey likes me, see?” Louis said, and made sure to wear his prettiest grin when Harry turned back to him. The jungle man was still frowning, but his eyes had softened a bit. Louis smiled wider, and kept on smiling until Harry did the same.

It was easy enough getting back on Harry’s good side, but he definitely wanted to stay there so when the jungle man started walking, Louis followed close behind without hesitation. Even though they were going in the direction of the wild animals.

Louis wasn’t stupid. He knew that the noises he’d heard had been from something much louder than tiny monkeys and he was going to find out exactly what had been screeching and howling.

It had been a big group of gorillas. Giant ones, with sharp teeth and cold hard beady eyes that were all fixed on Louis as he followed Harry into the clearing.
Harry started walking forwards then, and Louis whisper-shouted “Stop!”

But it was no use. He kept on going, making the gap between he and Louis larger and larger. The city boy didn’t know what to do. He didn’t like being totally alone, but he didn’t exactly want to get any closer to those things.

“Lou!” Harry shouted with a grin, and one of the gorillas screeched, making Louis jump about a foot.

Louis was shaking all over when the gorilla started clambering closer to him. He opened his mouth to say something, or scream maybe, but the words were caught in his throat.

Harry was ooooing at the other gorillas, and either he didn’t notice that one was a few feet away from Louis or he didn’t really care.

When the gorilla lifted up an arm and started reaching out for Louis with its paw, Louis got a burst of adrenaline and ran for Harry and leaped on to his back, clinging for dear life.

The sudden movement set all the gorillas off; they jumped up and down and screeched into the air, and the one that had been reaching for Louis seemed the maddest. It wasn’t making noise though. It was flaring its nostrils and banging its paws on the ground, and it must have been about to charge or something because Harry was turning to face it so that Louis was no longer in its line of sight.

Harry growled then, and the angry gorilla snorted back. “Lou” Harry said amongst his reassuring ooos, which had Louis’ ears pricking. Was Harry honestly speaking to that thing? Was that even possible, for a human to speak gorilla?

Harry banged his fists on the ground a few times, and when he leant down Louis almost tumbled over his head. With a final oo, the other gorillas went back to whatever it was they were doing before Louis had shown up, while the big angry one snorted and sat back on his arse, still staring at the humans.

Harry approached it, and Louis dug his nails in to the other boy’s skin, trying to make him stop.

“Harry?” Louis muttered into his ear, not knowing how else to stop him. “Fuck?”

“Lou fuck.” Harry replied. At least he was listening, Louis supposed, even if he wasn’t quite understanding.

He stopped before the big gorilla and began ooooing to it, jabbering away in his monkey language.

The gorilla grunted back, and reached out to pull Harry closer. Louis sucked in a breath when the gorilla began sniffing him, and restrained himself from crying out when the animal prodded him in the back.

“Lou.” Harry said, and the gorilla began to pull at Louis’ shirt. Louis clung onto Harry’s shoulders, tightening the grip Louis’ legs had on Harry’s waist. The gorilla was trying to pull Louis off him, and the city boy wasn’t having any of it.

“Harry?” Louis stuttered, and the jungle man tittered reassuringly and pushed Louis off his back and into the gorilla’s lap.

Louis felt three seconds away from shitting his pants.
He was sitting on a gorilla, who’d been ready to kill him only a few minutes ago, and the creature was searching through his hair.

Later, he’d feel a little offended at the insinuation that he could have nits, but right then he was trying his hardest not to breathe or speak or puke all over his own legs.

“Lou.” He heard, and he looked up from his knees to find Harry staring at him with a grin. “Fuck.”

Louis nodded shortly, and immediately stilled again when he felt the gorilla’s breath on his neck.

With another snort, the gorilla was pushing Louis out of its lap and walking back to the rest of the gorillas. Louis rushed to Harry, clinging on to his waist tightly, grateful when the jungle man wrapped his own arms around Louis’ back to pull him into a tight hug. Louis wondered for a moment if gorillas hugged too, or if Harry knew more about being human than he was letting on. Maybe hugging was just natural human instinct? He wasn’t able to ponder it much longer because Harry was picking him up and throwing him over his shoulder and jumping up on to the nearest tree.

“Oh for fuck’s sake.” Louis groaned, because Harry was climbing again. “I want to be on ground, Harry, not up in fucking trees.”

Harry grunted a reply, and just kept on pulling them up. Louis could only watch as the ground grew further and further away the higher Harry climbed, and it was making him queasy. The only thing keeping him up there was Harry’s hand holding on to his thighs, so he shut his eyes and hoped they’d reach their destination soon.

Even when he felt Harry drop him onto a hard, completely flat surface he couldn’t open his eyes.

“Lou Lou.” Harry said as he poked him, and Louis shook his head. The movement made him feel dizzy, and he scrunched his eyes tighter. “Looooou.” Harry cooed, nudging him again. Then he grew impatient, and started trying to force his eyes open.

So Louis pushed Harry’s big hand away and blinked a few times. He looked up so that he wouldn’t look down, and saw to his surprise a roof. He turned around, and realised that he was in a house.

“What the fuck?” Louis grunted, jumping up and running to a window. He looked down to see that, yep, they were in a tree-house. “Harry, what the fuck?”

“Fuck!” Harry giggled, and jumped on top of an old dirty sofa. There was a wooden table and a desk and a few cupboards and sets of draws. There was a double bed and a crib in one corner, with dusty faded sheets and torn-apart feather pillows. Beside that was a dresser and cracked mirror, and when Harry noticed that Louis was looking in that direction he climbed off the sofa and grabbed Louis’ hand and dragged him over to the open wardrobe.

He picked out a button shirt that had been hanging inside it, and held it against his own chest.

“Harry Lou.” He murmured, and Louis nodded.

“That’s right. We’re the same. Human.” He said, putting a hand to Harry’s chest. “Human.” He repeated, and Harry mimicked his nodding. “I’ve got to find my people, Harry. Other humans like us. Can you remember them?”

But it was no use. Harry just kept looking from Louis’ shirt to the one in his own hands. He dropped it suddenly, and walked over to the crib. “Harry.”
“This was yours?” Louis asked, touching the wood lightly. “Harry’s?”

“Harry’s.” He repeated, and then sat on the bed beside it.

Louis just looked around him for a moment, trying to put together a picture of what could possibly have happened. What happened to his parents? And how did Harry survive the jungle when they left? What were they doing living in a fucking treehouse in the first place?

He rifled through the draws and cupboards, putting all the pictures and notebooks and journals he came across in a pile. He found a satchel in the wardrobe and stuffed them all inside, slinging it over his shoulder and walking back to Harry.

“I need to find my friends. We need to find them so we can go home. Like, to civilisation, yeah?” Louis said, and Harry stood up. For a second, Louis thought Harry understood. Disappointed wouldn’t really be the right word to describe what Louis felt when the jungle man hugged him instead of answering him. Maybe because it was answer enough.

---

Louis thought the dizziness would go away when they got back onto solid ground, but his head was still spinning and his vision was blurring. His stomach rumbled loudly, and Louis put a hand to his tummy as if it would stop it.

“Don’t you ever eat?” Louis grunted, and Harry just blinked at him. Then he had another go at miming eating, but Harry just blinked some more. “Am I going to have to almost poison myself again for you to understand?” he snapped, and realised that wasn’t such a bad idea.

There was a bush with bright red berries a few feet away, so Louis picked a few of the most-likely-poisonous fruits and slowly brought them up to his lips. As expected, Harry’s hand swung out to swipe them away.

Harry oooed with a frown on his face, looking somewhat disappointed in him.

“I’m hungry!” Louis snapped, and because Harry wasn’t running off to grab him something to eat he grabbed a few more berries off the bush.

Harry’s jabbers were definitely angry as he gripped Louis’ wrist and shook it until his hand was emptied. He kept hold of it and dragged Louis over to the band of gorillas who were lounging about in shrubbery. A few of them were eating bananas, and when Harry oooed at them one passed a small bunch of the fruit over.

Louis began peeling his straight away, then took a bite before Harry had even started on his.

Harry was just watching Louis with a little frown, lips tight and eyes creased. Then his hand grabbed Louis’ banana and spun it so it was upside down.

“Ooo.” Harry said, then began to peel his own banana from the bottom.

“No, Harry, wrong way!”

“Ooo.” Harry said again, and put the banana in his mouth, smiling around it. He was just staring at Louis, right in his eyes, sucking on a banana.

Louis coughed, and had to remind himself that Harry wasn’t meaning to be incredibly suggestive. He didn’t even know what blow jobs were.
“You don’t look people in the eyes when you eat bananas.” Louis said, because if Harry was going back to London with him then he better start learning life’s lessons. “It’s rude.”

Harry smiled and pushed another banana into Louis’ hands.

He ate four of them before he felt a bit sick. He needed something substantial, and while the fruit was filling his belly a little it wasn’t quite enough.

“I’ve got to find my friends, Harry. Humans, remember?” Louis asked, pointing between the two of them. “You have to take me back to them.” He pointed out to the forest around them, somewhere off in the distance, hoping Harry could somehow make sense of it.

He oooed at Louis, then went back to his gorilla pals and oooed at them. One by one, they all got up and began ambling in the direction Harry and Louis had come from, the biggest one in the lead. Harry beckoned Louis to him, and they began to follow the gorillas through the jungle.

Louis couldn’t fully comprehend what was going on. A part of him still thought this was a dream. He was following giant gorillas through a jungle with a wild man by his side, in search of his photographer and co-models.

At least he hoped that’s what they were all doing, looking for his friends, because otherwise he was most definitely fucked.

When Harry hoisted Louis up onto his back, the city boy didn’t even put up a fuss. He was actually beginning to like being carried around, especially since his legs were killing him and his trainers were getting torn up and dirty. Plus, Harry’s arms were wrapped around Louis’ thighs and his hands were gripping his calves so it was all quite nice, really.

They walked on and on, and the jungle was getting colder and darker.

Just as Louis was about to panic, he heard some voices.

“Do you hear that?” someone said, and Louis recognised the gruff voice as the photographer’s. “That rustling coming from over there. See the bushes moving?” Then he screamed, obviously not expecting a giant gorilla and its friends to come storming out from behind the trees.

“It’s me!” Louis shouted, climbing off Harry and rushing towards the group of people. They were all there; the photographer, the two other female models, the guide and two stylists. None of them looked particularly happy to see him. “Did you even look for me?”

That had the photographer looking guilty. He was still more scared than anything else, though. “Louis, what the fuck is going on?”

“Incredible.” said the guide, staring at the gorillas, and Louis turned to him.

“How you hear that?” someone said, and Louis recognised the gruff voice as the photographer’s.

“That rustling coming from over there. See the bushes moving?” Then he screamed, obviously not expecting a giant gorilla and its friends to come storming out from behind the trees.

“It’s me!” Louis shouted, climbing off Harry and rushing towards the group of people. They were all there; the photographer, the two other female models, the guide and two stylists. None of them looked particularly happy to see him. “Did you even look for me?”

That had the photographer looking guilty. He was still more scared than anything else, though. “Louis, what the fuck is going on?”

“Incredible.” said the guide, staring at the gorillas, and Louis turned to him.

“Isn’t it your job to look out for us out here? You just left me in the jungle?”

“We were looking for you! We couldn’t find you and there was no trace of how you disappeared. It was like you flew away. There were no prints apart from another human’s!”

“That would be Harry. He must have carried me in the trees the whole time.” Louis muttered the second bit mostly to himself. He heard gasps, and realised that Harry had finally come out from behind his ape family. “This is Harry, he’s been – taking care of me, I guess.”

“He’s gorgeous!” the photographer shrieked, and began to snap pictures.
“No, fuck off. This photoshoot is off. I need to get out of this jungle right the fuck now.” Louis snarled at the photographer, and Harry began snarling too. He pulled Louis behind him and growled as if the man was a threat to them, obviously bothered that Louis was bothered.

“Who is he?” one of the models asked a little wistfully, and Louis decided he didn’t like her either.

“He’s Harry, my jungle man. Now someone show us back to camp right the fuck now. I need to eat and sleep and then I am flying right back to London.”

“And Harry?” the guide asked.

“He’s coming with us.”

“Just hold on one second Louis Tomlinson!” the photographer snapped, just as Louis was about to make a dramatic exit from the clearing. It might have been a blessing in disguise, though, because more than likely he would have been heading in the wrong direction and that would have just been awkward. “We’ve flown to the Congo for this shoot, so already everyone in fashion is talking about it, and we are surrounded by wild gorillas. When the story breaks that you got lost in a jungle and found a hot wild man who was raised by apes do you really want to have nothing to show for it? No photos? Because let me tell you, once this story breaks, and it will, people will be willing to pay top dollar to have these photos in their magazine. You’ll be the most talked about model in the entire world. You’re big now, sure, but you haven’t broken the US or Japan. You aren’t global. You want to be global, right?”

And that had Louis momentarily silent. He hadn’t exactly thought about that, about the after of all this. He had been incredibly lucky to score this gig, and if he was willing to fly eight and a half hours to the Democratic Republic of Congo for it then it wouldn’t exactly be career-smart of him to throw the opportunity away.

So he sighed and stepped out from behind Harry. “Where do you want me then?”

Which is when a stylist stepped forward and ushered him to her. “With us, love. You’re a mess.”

Louis sighed again, a little more dramatically this time, and made his way over to the man and lady who most surely didn’t have enough makeup and hair spray to fix him up. His hair had gone fuzzy from when he got it wet, and the bruises and bites and welts had multiplied tenfold. He had cuts and scratches on his face, he was covered in grime and sweat, and all he wanted to do was take a shower and eat a sandwich and sleep for at least ten days. He wasn’t exactly going to be at his best, but that was what Photoshop was for, right?

Harry began whimpering as soon as Louis left his side, jabbering in his apish way. It set the other gorillas off; they all began screeching and jumping up and down the more stressed Harry got.

“Calm them down, will you? We need them settled for the shoot.”

The guide looked to the photographer and said “You’re not seriously considering doing a fashion shoot with wild animals, are you? That is incredibly dangerous!”

The photographer snorted and said “As far as I see it, Louis’ jungle man has them tamed. If Louis can control his jungle man, then the monkeys will be on our side.”

Before Louis could rush over to comfort Harry, the hair stylist pulled him down onto a tree stump and began combing out his hair. Louis plastered on a smile and waved Harry over, and amazingly enough the man got the hint and approached him. He did so hesitantly, eyeing the humans with trepidation and confusion, then settled on the stump at his side.
“Harry’s Lou.” Harry grunted, putting a hand on his thigh and looking up to watch what the hair stylist was doing.

“Yeah, and Lou’s Harry. We’re fine. Good, even.” Louis reassured him, patting the hand that was on his leg and trying terribly hard to hide the excitement he was feeling at how territorial Harry was over him. He’d never found control hot. It had always pissed him off when guys got all demanding, wanting to know where he was and who he was with all the time. But this felt different. Maybe because Harry was being protective and concerned for him rather than jealous and possessive. Or maybe it was because Louis felt the exact same way back; worried for Harry and his safety and his feelings. He had to be shit-scared right now, meeting so many people like him in one day. What was going on inside his head?

Nothing too existential, Louis realised when Harry stood up to watch the stylist’s hands closely. The man had combed out all of Louis’ knots and was putting a mousse through to de-frizz it a bit when Harry pushed the guy’s hands away to pick at Louis’ hair himself. It felt like he was looking through it, probably searching out nits like the big gorilla had done, when the stylist nudged him out of the way.

“I’m trying to do my job!” the guy snapped, and Harry bared his teeth and growled.

“Harry? It’s fine, yeah? Good.” Louis said, and patted the spot next to him.

“Good.” Harry repeated, but didn’t sit down. He continued to watch the stylist, every now and then touching Louis’ hair and hissing when his hands were shoved aside. It meant his hair was taking a lot longer than it should have, so the makeup woman began to work at the same time. Which gave Harry something new to look at.

The woman first wiped Louis’ face over with a wet wipe, then put on some moisturiser and primer, and Harry was mesmerised. She pulled out some foundation and concealer and her brushes and set to work.

If the hair stylist had found Harry annoying, the makeup stylist was finding him positively insufferable.

He would snatch the brushes from her hands to touch them to his own face, he’d wipe his grubby fingers over Louis’ skin and squeal with delight when the foundation stained his skin, and he’d occasionally push her hands away when he thought she was being too rough.

“I thought you could control him.” She muttered to herself, and that made Louis frown.

“He’s never seen this stuff before. He’s probably never even seen humans. Think about that for a second, will you, and get off your fucking pedestal.”

She just tightened her lips and carried on with her work, dabbing on some bronzer and blusher then colouring in his eyebrows.

Harry ooooed in fascination, taking the eyebrow pencil from her hands and sticking it in his mouth. He spat it out and threw it into a bush, and the lady just blinked at him but didn’t say anything. Well she muttered “That was Chanel” but only Louis heard it.

“You’re done.” Said the hair guy, and the make-up woman nodded her agreement.

“You’ve got to get out of that shirt though. And that skirt is looking a little grubby.” The photographer said.
“I fucking knew it was a skirt.” Louis grunted to himself as he unbuttoned the shirt while simultaneously trying not to blush at how Harry was watching him.

“Harry Lou.” Harry said with a grin, and grabbed one of Louis’ nipples.

“Owe! Fuck! Yes, Harry, I’ve got them too. Shit.”

“Fuck!” Harry chirped, and made to grab the other one but Louis stopped him.

Then he looked to the photographer and asked “What do I do about the skirt?”

“Take it off. Jungle men clearly don’t wear clothes.” He said with a wave to Harry. “We’ll cover you up with something else. Leaves, maybe.”

Louis nodded, playing with the waistband of his skirt as he tried to summon up the courage to pull it off. He wasn’t exactly shy, but he wasn’t exactly comfortable being naked in the presence of strangers either.

“For art.” The photographer said.

“Must be your lucky day, seeing two cocks for free.” Louis grunted, and stepped out of his skirt. Before he could cover himself up with his hands, Harry ooooed excitedly and made a grab for him. Louis stepped back just in time. “Harry! You can’t do that! Even in the monkey world I’m sure that’s inappropriate!” he near-shouted, more flustered than angry.

“It most definitely is my lucky day!” the photographer laughed, and Louis had never wanted to stab someone’s neck as badly as he did just then.

“Let’s get to it then.” Louis grunted, making his way over to the models who didn’t seem at all phased. They were professionals, after all. Still, would have been nice if they checked him out like they were Harry.

“We’re gonna need you all over there with the gorillas.” The photographer said, waving his hands about in the general vicinity of the apes. Who were all lazing about on the grass or hiding in bushes, or hanging off branches or climbing over logs. “Do you think you could climb on top of one?”

“What?” Louis snapped, stopping mid-walk to the gorillas. “No fucking way! These things tried to kill me before!” It wasn’t exactly an overstatement. The big one came pretty close to taking his head off.

“They kill?” one of the girl models asked, and began hyperventilating. “I’m not going near those things if they kill!”

“It might be best not to touch them.” The guide added, and everyone took a step back.

Everyone except the photographer, who was quite obviously blinded by the perfect picture he had in his mind. “You can still get in front of them, so that they’re in the shot, right?”

The girls shook their heads, and Louis looked to Harry. Who was just staring at him with tight lips, fists clenched by his sides. “You good Harry?”

“Lou.” Was all he said, and held out his arms for Louis to walk into.

So he did, trying his hardest to keep a bit of space between their hips because fuck they were both
naked while simultaneously shuffling them closer to one of the apes.

The gorilla didn’t seem at all bothered by how close Louis was getting to it. He just continued chewing whatever it was that was in his mouth as he followed them with his eyes. Then Louis began reaching out to it with his hand, right to its nose so that it could sniff him. He’d learnt from his auntie that you should do that to dogs when you meet them so they could take in your scent, fist closed so they couldn’t get at your fingers if they desired, but clearly that wasn’t what you were meant to do for gorillas.

It took hold of his wrist and before Louis even had time to panic it wrenched him into its lap.

“Get Harry out of the shot.” The photographer hissed, so Louis waved Harry away while the gorilla began searching through his hair.

Harry wasn’t moving though, he was just watching Louis with his head tilted.

“Harry!” the makeup stylist cooed, holding out her makeup brushes, and Harry rushed over to her with a squeak of delight.

“Get in there!” the photographer snapped at the models.

“No. This wasn’t in the contract. I don’t do shoots with animals.” one of them said, and the other nodded. It was fair enough, really, Louis decided while the gorilla snorted into the back of his head.

“You can’t take a photograph for Hugo Boss cologne without there being women in it! That’s the whole reason you two are even here! You don’t have to touch the monkeys, just get in the shot!” The photographer was red with how livid he was, and the models inched forward.

“We don’t have to touch them?” the first asked.

“No! Just get in there before the big monkey gets bored of Louis’ hair!”

The models finally got in the shot, one sitting on a log to the side of Louis and the other spreading herself out on the ground.

“Beautiful!” the photographer shouted, and began snapping pictures.

Louis set himself to work, smouldering into the lens. He couldn’t exactly do much with his body, what with the way he was sitting cross legged in the lap of a giant potentially-murderous gorilla getting his hair thoroughly searched for the third time that day, so he tried to put everything into his expression.

He heard some of the gorillas begin to shuffle around them, and as tempted as he was to have a look at what they were doing, he didn’t. He stayed professional.

He did zone out for a moment when the gorilla’s hands that had been in his hair stopped moving though. It pushed him out of its lap and stood up on his back legs, and Louis had to be told to look to the camera. So Louis did, and smouldered a bit more, and tried to position his body so his biceps and chest and abs looked the best they possibly could. All the while, the ape just hovered over him, looking around itself and the humans that were all holding in a collective breath.

Louis could tell by the look on the photographer’s face when he got the perfect shot. He looked absolutely delighted, and close to actual tears of happiness.
“That’s it. We’re done.” He announced, and all three models couldn’t have got away from the gorillas quick enough.

“I want to see it.” Louis said, and the women nodded their assent.

So the photographer wistfully held out the camera to them, hands still gripping it tight as he turned it around so they could see the little screen.

It was stunning. There was no other word for it.

Louis’ stomach grumbled then, and everyone looked to him. “I haven’t eaten anything but bananas all day.”

“We really should head back. It’s going to get dark soon.” The guide offered up, and everyone was quick to pack up their things. No one wanted to find out how the jungle was at night.

Louis finally got to look at Harry, who was watching the commotion with his little confused head tilt.

“We’re going now, Harry. You’re coming, right?” Louis asked, and Harry snapped his head to look at him.

He grinned and walked over to Louis, arms outstretched again.

“You’re a cuddly fucker.” Louis snorted into Harry’s shoulder. Not that he was complaining, even if Harry was already beginning to smell a bit musky. If anything, the scent was hot. Which reminded him. “I’m going to need some clothes!”

The hair stylist ran to him with the button up he’d been wearing before, and Louis really didn’t want to put it back on. It was so dirty and wet and smelly that he was tempted just to forgo clothes all together, but there were a lot more people at the camp and Louis didn’t exactly want everyone to see him naked.

“What about Harry?”

The guide eyed them slowly, and asked “Do you really think it would be a good idea to bring him to the camp with us? We have no idea about his temperament.”

“If he kills anyone I’ll eat my hat.” Louis snorted. “Speaking of which, did I lose that to?”

“It was with your pack. Must have fell off when Wild Boy got you.” The makeup stylist said, pulling his Louisville cap out of his rucksack.

He snatched it out of her hands as he muttered “His name is Harry” and put it back on his head.

“Lou.” Harry said with a giggle, and poked him in the chest.

“So we’re going now, yeah? We’re going to spend the night at camp and fly out tomorrow. You’re going to come, right? Stay with Lou?”

“Harry Lou.” Harry said. “Good.” He added, and Louis grinned. Until Harry threw him over his shoulder and walked back to the gorillas.

“No! No, Harry! We’re going with the humans, okay? Louis’ people?”

“Harry’s Lou.”
Louis hit at Harry’s back until he got the message and put him down. Then Louis hurried over to where his group was gathered, and told them to go. As they began to follow the guide from the clearing, Louis waved Harry over. “I’m going with them! See?”

Louis went after them, and Harry started **oo ooo**ing. He looked terrified, and confused, and it took Louis all his strength to stop himself from running back to Harry and calming him down.

“Come on! Lou’s Harry, yeah?” he asked hopefully.

Harry looked to him, then back to his gorilla family who were going the opposite way. Fuck, but his expression was heartbreaking. Like he wanted to tear himself in two so he could go both ways.

Louis almost felt guilty for forcing Harry to make that choice, but he knew it was best. Harry was human. His place was amongst the rest of them. And he said it himself, he was Louis’ Harry. He belonged with Louis now.

---

The plane ride had been hell. Pure and utter hell.

Louis should have predicted that to someone who hadn’t seen an airport before, or buildings or cars or shops or fucking everything Louis had grown up with, the place would be fascinating.

First, they had the taxi ride to Kinshasa Airport, which Harry couldn’t quite sit still in. He hung out the window and flailed his arms around, and the driver wasn’t having it. He’d pulled over a few times to tell him off, and had come incredibly close to kicking them all out, but they offered him a lot of money to carry on driving so he did. He wasn’t happy about it though.

Then when they got to the airport, Harry leapt out of the car as soon as the doors were opened, and Louis had to run after him. He wasn’t exactly the fittest man in the world, and Harry was all muscle, so it was lucky that Harry passed something he found intriguing and had to stop to look at it. It was a mirror, and Louis had learnt quickly that Harry had loved those. He’d found out as soon as they got to the camp the evening before, when Louis was putting a face mask on and Harry stole the mirror from him. He wouldn’t give it back, and when Louis tried to take it from him, the jungle man climbed a high tree and just stayed there with it for a good hour at least.

And it’s not like he hadn’t seen his reflection before. He would surely have looked into a lake and seen himself, so what had him so enraptured?

Louis stood with Harry at the mirror in the airport, hoping the rest of the crew would hurry up because this place was known to be pretty dangerous and it’s not like he had anything to protect himself with. Well, he had Harry, but he didn’t exactly know what every day threats were. He would probably be able to take down a tiger, but could he stop a pickpocket after their wallets? They’d be fucked without their passports.

“Oh fuck!” Louis shouted, and Harry stopped looking at himself for a moment to give Louis a little confused frown. “You don’t have a fucking passport!”

That was when the rest of the crew showed up with all of their bags strapped into trolleys, safe and secure.

“What’s wrong?” his manager asked him, her face tight with concern.

“How the fuck are we going to get him out of the country! He doesn’t have any kind of ID!”
And she grinned. “You only just considered that?” His eyes narrowed; she was looking awfully smug. It turned out, though, that she had the right to be. “I’ve already called ahead and sorted something out. I’ve got a letter from the Consulate to let him through.

“How did you manage that?”

Her smile faltered a little but didn’t drop. “I had to promise some people a few things. We’ll worry about that when we come to it, okay? For now let’s just get him on the plane.”

Louis opened his mouth, about to ask what the exact deal was that she made, but the cameraman pushed between them, rattling off about the time and how little of it they had.

“We still have to get through customs!” he reminded them, and that sobered Louis up a bit.

He took Harry’s hand in his and pulled him along after the rest of the crew.

They made it through relatively easy, only needing to wait a bit for border security to make a few calls about Harry’s letter, and stopping again when Harry spotted a vending machine and became hypnotised by the little shiny cans of cola and bright packets of crisps. Louis couldn’t even imagine what was going through his head.

He wouldn’t sit still in the waiting area, constantly standing up to follow whoever walked past them, trying to make conversation with fuck and Harry and ooos, so Louis decided to take him for a bit of a walk. There wasn’t much to look at in the airport, only a few coffee carts and a bare souvenir shop, so Louis found another mirror and let Harry entertain himself with it. He watched to see what it was exactly that had Harry so enthralled, and he got a bit of an idea. Harry paid special attention to his face and his neck and his collarbones that were peeking out from the gap in his plaid shirt, one that existed because he refused to wear his shirt buttoned up all the way.

Harry would touch them, then the reflection of them, then jabber to himself with his little monkey noises.

“What is it Harry?” Louis asked, and Harry looked to him and jabbered some more. “I don’t speak monkey, you know that.”

Harry frowned, then twisted his mouth up to the side, then poked Louis’ collarbones. He touched his own, and said “Human.”

It was the only word he’d picked up, apart from good and fuck and their names. Louis had tried practising some with him the night before, like yes and no, but the man hadn’t really caught on. He could say them, sure, but he didn’t know how to use them. “We’re human, yeah.” Louis nodded, and Harry frowned harder before looking back to his reflection.

“Human.” He said, pointing to his nose. “Human.” He repeated, and touched a finger to his lips. Then he wrapped his hand lightly around his neck and murmured “Human.”

And it was Louis’ turn to frown. Then it clicked. “Gorillas don’t have them like you, huh? Like us?”

“Like us.” He mimicked, though Louis couldn’t really be sure if he understood.

“Is that what you’re looking at all the time? The ways you’re different to them and the same as me?” Louis asked, but Harry just continued to stare at himself, fingers tracing his collarbones. “Must be so fucking weird.” He muttered to himself, and looked around them. “Everything’s so new to you, even yourself.”
They stayed there until their flight was called, and Louis didn’t have to try all that hard to pull Harry away from his own reflection.

Luckily, there weren’t many people flying from the Congo to France, so they were able to book seats away from the majority of the other passengers. The closest were a few rows in front of them, a mother and her three small children, and Louis just hoped Harry wouldn’t set them off because there was no sound worse to him then kids’ crying.

Harry sat still in his seat, happily watching the air hosts and hostesses rushing through the aisles to get everything sorted. Every time the intercom would come to life with a ping, Harry would squeal with delight and jabber over whatever the pilot was saying. It meant Louis didn’t hear a single thing, but he didn’t mind; Harry was making him laugh.

The seatbelt lights flashed on, and Louis did up his own and Harry’s, and then the air hostesses got into position to begin the safety spiel.

As they did it, the plane began backing up, and Harry watched with amazement as they moved along the runway. He tapped at the window, getting frustrated that he couldn’t open it, earning him funny looks from the host that was closest to them.

Finally they were done, and the flight attendants took to their seats, and the plane started to increase in speed. It began to shake, and Harry’s jabbers became more frantic until he was muttering “Lou. Fuck, Lou, fuck” and Louis would have laughed if Harry didn’t look so petrified.

When the plane left the ground, and the rumbling sounded, things took a turn for the worst.

First, Harry grabbed Louis’ wrist so tight it felt like his circulation was being cut off. It probably was; his hand reddened quick.

“Owe, fuck! Harry, its fine. You’re safe, okay? Just sit still.”

“Lou Lou Lou.” Harry repeated like it was a mantra, eyes wide and borderline manic. Then he let Louis go and tried to stand up, but his seatbelt didn’t let him get far. He began tugging at it, clawing at the metal clasp, trying to set himself free. “Lou Lou?” he questioned, looking so frightened that Louis felt guilty.


Harry’s eyes began to well up, and was eyeing Louis with so much betrayal that the city boy wanted to cry a little bit too. More in frustration, though, because why couldn’t Harry just see that they were safe? How could he tell Harry that all of this was supposed to happen?

Harry began to screech then, which made the children behind them cry.

“What is wrong with him?” someone shouted.

“Fuck off.” Louis yelled back, then grabbed Harry’s hands in his. “We’re okay. Just… look.” He tapped at the window, and Harry’s head snapped towards it.

He pressed his face to the glass, and immediately relaxed. “Ooo.” He said, peering out at the land that was growing smaller and smaller beneath them.

Louis felt the grip on his hand loosen as Harry calmed, and watched the wild man’s fascination grow. He had this peaceful look in his face, a tiny smile curving the edges of his lips, so it was no surprise that Louis’ heart jumped out of his chest when Harry suddenly screeched like an eagle.
“Caw!” he’d said, and everyone in the plane ducked as if there was a bird flying over their heads. It was that realistic. Then Harry laughed and looked to Louis, eyes bright with wonder.

Louis smiled unsurely back, a little frightened that Harry was mid-mental-breakdown until the jungle man began tapping at the glass with his finger.

“Lou.” He said excitedly, even though all that was out there was clouds. “Lou!”

“Yeah?”

And he cawed again, causing more shouts from the other passengers.

“Control him Louis! He’s going to get us kicked off the plane!” the cameraman shouted from behind, and there were a few mumbled agreements from the rest of the crew.

“Caw! Caw!” Harry said, this time flapping his arms about.

“Oh!” Louis said, eyebrows shooting up because of course. “We’re flying!” There was a giggle from behind them, a child’s giggle, and Louis couldn’t help but grin too. “We’re flying like birds! Right!”

That seemed to change Harry’s feelings towards plane flights because from then on he was completely relaxed. Instead of screeching and jumping about and yelling, he was laughing and grinning with the occasional loud caw.

It meant Louis could relax, and finally move back from the edge of his seat. The children behind them had stopped screaming, and would laugh with Harry or at him when he made his bird noises, and everything went back to being calm.

Except it wasn’t ideal, because the flight attendants avoided them like the plague. The passengers that were over 10 still complained about Harry’s noises, and shushed him every so often, and when the seatbelt light went out a few people actually got up out of their seats to come get a look at the strange man who made animal noises.

It was the longest seven hour flight of Louis’ life.

But funnily enough, Louis found the one hour one from Paris to Heathrow a lot more difficult.

Harry had calmed down for that one, and didn’t flip out during take-off. If anything, he was excited about it. He was bopping in his seat while the flight attendants went through their safety spiel, and when the plane started reversing out onto the runway he pressed his face right against the window.

Unlike the flight from Africa to Paris, this one was completely booked out. It meant that Louis was seated next to both Harry and a stranger, and he wasn’t looking forward to what the woman would surely say when Harry started his bird calls.

But Harry didn’t really make them this time. He just stared out the window with a grin on his face, grabbing at Louis’ hand every now and then when he got overly excited. Louis figured it would be fine, then, to use the bathroom. He’d been busting to go for the last few hours but there was never a time he felt right leaving the wild man. Now that Harry seemed content, Louis saw no problem in leaving him for just a few minutes to use the loo.

When he came back though, and saw the woman sitting in his seat giggling as Harry looked through her hair, Louis snapped.
“That’s my seat.” Louis growled, and the lady just looked at him and smiled.

“Lou!” Harry called, grinning wide. “Harry’s Lou.”

“I’m sorry.” The lady said, voice sweet and accent French. “He was saying something to me and I couldn’t understand.”

“He doesn’t speak English. Can I have my seat back please?” he asked, a little kinder because the way Harry was looking at him, like he was so happy to have him back, was drastically improving his mood.

The woman got up and moved back to her seat, but she wouldn’t stop sending Harry little longing glances. When Harry saw her looking, he smiled and said “Fuck Harry Lou.”

The woman widened her eyes and turned bright pink. “Pardon?”

And Louis grinned. “He asked you to fuck him. And me too. It’s kind of a thing we do.”

“I – I don’t –“ she stuttered, going so red Louis almost felt sorry for her. Almost.

“So how about it?” Louis asked, wiggling his eyebrows.

“No. Thank you.” She muttered, then pulled a book out from the pouch in front of her and read that instead.

Louis was still grinning when an air host popped his head past the woman. “Can I get you anything?” he asked with a big cheesy smile.

“Two waters please.”

The man’s smile dropped a bit as he turned to his trolley and grabbed two bottles out from a draw. He passed one to Louis, and one to Harry, and when Harry reached out to take his the man didn’t let it go. “About that… proposition. I’m up for it.” Then he winked, and grinned at Louis.

Who didn’t really know what to say. If people were just going to crack on to Harry left right and centre then maybe Louis should have just stayed in the jungle with him. He wasn’t very good at sharing.

Harry responded though. He growled and pulled harder at the bottle until it came out of the man’s hand. Then he pressed the bottle to his chin and went back to looking out the window.

The air host just stared back in shock, going red in mortification.

Louis couldn’t help but grin smugly. What a way to reject someone.

“I’m – uh, sorry? I’ll be – going.” He stuttered, and tripped his way down the aisle.

Louis laughed then, throwing his head back and cackling, and Harry watched him with his own little smile. Then he wrapped his lips around the cap of the water bottle and Louis’ laugh got caught in his throat.

He awkwardly coughed it out, all the while staring at Harry’s lips and how plump they still looked despite how wide they were stretched.

“Oh fuck.” It was the creepy air host again, standing by their seats just staring. “How about just me and you then?” he asked Harry, voice coming out in a squeak. “Please?”
Harry pulled his lips off the bottle cap with a pop and grinned. “Fuck Harry!” he shouted, and a big wad of saliva dropped from his mouth.

Which was fucking disgusting, but also incredibly dirty. It seemed to turn the air host on, anyway. “Okay!” he breathed out.

“No! No no no!” Louis growled, before the man got any more ideas. “He’s a bottom.”

The man frowned. “Oh.”

“Yeah. I do the fucking, and I’m not fucking you, so run along.”

“Oh my god.” The lady groaned from beside them. “Please just be quiet.”

“Sorry.” Louis grumbled, and the air host wasn’t going anywhere so he whispered “Fuck off or this lady will complain!”

“Oh. Right. I’ll – go.” He mumbled, and with a final longing look to Harry he hurried off with his trolley to probably go accost someone else.

“Perve.” Louis muttered, and the lady beside him snorted. It was fair enough, really. He had come off as a bit creepy, but at least he didn’t mean it.

When he looked to Harry, the man was sucking on his water bottle again and Louis groaned.

“Ooo.” He grunted, and Louis pulled it from his lips to open it.

Harry sucked some water down and went back to staring out the window. Only now it wasn’t clouds they could see, it was buildings. Louis had never been so happy to see London before in his life.
They stumbled through the door of Louis’ flat, Louis with his three bags and Harry with only the clothes on his back and a bunch of bananas they’d grabbed from the fruit market just outside.

Louis watched Harry carefully, for any reaction the man might have, but if his thoughts were written on his face they weren’t exactly legible.

He was just chewing on his third banana, eyes roaming over Louis’ busy lounge room so fast he surely mustn’t actually be seeing anything.

“Ooo.” He said, then strode over to the sofa and plopped himself down onto it. “Lou’s?”

“Yeah, this is all mine. Do you want to see your room? Harry’s?”

“Harry’s?” he repeated, eyes widening. He patted the sofa and looked back up. “Harry Lou’s?”

“Umm, I guess it’s yours too, yeah. Until you find your own place, yeah. Not that I don’t want you to stay here, I’d love you to. You don’t have to though. Like if –“

“Harry Lou’s!” Harry interrupted with a grin, and Louis relaxed.

“Yeah, okay. Uh - follow me and I’ll give you the tour. Like, show you around the rest of our home.” Louis blabbered, because now that he’d started he couldn’t quite stop. “To your room, and my room. And the bathroom. You probably want a shower, yeah? I’m dying for one.”

Harry smiled and stood up from the sofa, giving Louis the distraction he needed to stop talking, then said “Harry Lou’s room. Yeah.”

“No we have different rooms! Come on, I’ll show you yours.”

“Come on.” Harry repeated with a nod.

“That means follow. Like-“ Then Louis started walking backwards, waving his hand. “Come on. Come with me. Yeah?”

Harry nodded again, and actually began to follow.

“You’re getting better at speaking already. Wonder why.” He muttered to himself, but didn’t have very long to think about it because they were already at the guest bedroom where Harry was going to sleep. They walked into it, and Louis put a hand to Harry’s lower back to lead him further inside. “Harry’s room. Harry’s.” he said slowly, and Harry nodded.

“Harry’s room.”

“Yeah!”

“Harry Lou’s room.”

“No! Lou’s room – my room – is this way.”

“Come on.” Harry said when Louis waved, and followed close behind.

Louis opened the door to his bedroom, and Harry walked inside. When it looked as if he’d seen
everything, Louis said “Mine’s obviously got more in it because it’s lived in. I’ll have to get you a few things, like clothes and stuff, but for now you can just use mine.”

“Harry Lou’s room?”

Louis sighed. “No, Lou’s room.” Then he walked back down the hall, Harry hot on his heels, to the other bedroom. “Harry’s room. Harry’s bed, where Harry sleeps.” Louis went back into his own bedroom. “Louis’ bedroom, and Louis’ bed where Louis sleeps. Louis’ bathroom is just through that door.” He walked out and went into the guest room, opening up one of the doors to show Harry the small en suite. “Harry’s bathroom. Speaking of which.” He opened the shower door and turned the water on. Harry squealed in delight, and stuck his hand underneath the spray. “This is a shower. It’s like that waterfall, yeah? Where we had a drink? Only you use it to get clean. Using these.” Louis picked up a bottle of shower gel and waved it around, then with his other hand grabbed the small bottles of shampoo and conditioner he’d stolen from a hotel room once. “With these you wash your hair.”

Harry didn’t even look. He couldn’t take his eyes off the shower, and kept jabbing his hand in and out of the warm water with little ooos.

“I’m going to have to show you, aren’t I?” Louis sighed to himself. “Harry?”


“You want to get in the water? Get in?” he mimed stepping into the shower, and Harry got the hint. He nodded, and was about to climb in when Louis held him back by his arm. “You’ve got to take your clothes off.”

That Harry understood. It had been hard getting Harry dressed, and even harder getting him to stay that way, so Louis would have said the words clothes and off and on about a million times.

Now that Louis was giving Harry permission to get undressed, he couldn’t have taken his clothes off quicker. He had his trackies around his ankles and his shirt on the floor before Louis could say another word.

It wasn’t anything Louis hadn’t already seen, but Harry’s nakedness still had him blushing. He cleared his throat and said “Umm, Harry? Get under the water, yeah?”

Harry blinked at Louis a few times, and when the city boy stuck his hand under the water and tried to look reassuring, Harry nodded and stepped under the spray.

The water dripping from Harry’s skin was disgustingly brown, and Louis couldn’t help but cringe at that. He was probably just as bad. He hadn’t had a shower for a few days, unless that duck under the waterfall in the jungle counted. In his opinion, it really didn’t.

Harry hummed happily beneath the warm water, and would giggle every now and then, pushing out his dimple. Louis tried to distract himself by grabbing Harry’s hand, then pouring some shower wash into his palm.

“You rub it on. Like this.” Louis mimed washing himself, and Harry copied him. Louis tried not to look at the way Harry’s hands lathered soap into his wet tanned skin, but it was incredibly difficult. His skin looked so soft but his stomach and arms looked so hard, and he knew they were because of how they’d felt in the jungle, when personal space didn’t really exist. When Harry would throw Louis over his shoulder or Louis would jump onto his back.

Louis audibly swallowed, and dragged his eyes away from Harry’s hands long enough to spot the
shampoo again. It was on the tiled floor with the conditioner, and Louis wondered when exactly he’d dropped them. They’d probably slipped out of his fingers when he was ogling. He cleared his throat. “Harry?”

Said man stuck his head out of the water long enough to blink at Louis a few times, drops dripping from his lashes.

“This one goes in your hair.”

This time, after Louis mimed it and poured some shampoo in Harry’s palm, the man just frowned.

“Your hair.” Louis repeated, and mimed it again.

Harry slapped his shampoo-y hand on top of his head and blinked some more.

“Fuck.” Louis groaned, because he knew what this meant. He put some shampoo in his own palm and lathered it between his hands, then slowly reached up to Harry’s head. “Like this.” He croaked, and began to push the soap through his hair. It felt like a rough tangled mess beneath his fingers, but that didn’t turn him on any less. Louis wanted to cry. This was torture for him. Tugging on hair was just one of those things that got him hard in less than a second, so it was incredibly difficult not to pull at Harry’s strands when he so easily could. “You see?” Louis asked, and Harry oooed long and loud and low. It sounded dangerously like a purr.

Louis almost jumped out of his skin when he heard his doorbell ring. Especially because the noise also made Harry shriek.

“It’s just – oh fuck it. Stay here, I’ll be back.” Louis grunted, because he didn’t even know how to explain what that was and what it meant.

He trudged to the intercom, and pressed a button. “Yeah?” he said into it.

“It’s us! Open up!” Zayn’s voice crackled through the speaker.

“Fine.” Louis grunted, and buzzed them through. It was only a few moments before they were knocking on the door.

Zayn walked in first, straight into Louis’ arms for a hug, and then in came Niall and Liam. They’d only been over a few times, but Zayn practically lived there.

“So how was the jungle? Catch any diseases? Meet a snake?” Zayn laughed, but the sound was immediately caught in his throat.

Louis didn’t even need to turn around to know what it was that had his three friends’ attention.

“Lou come on Harry.” The jungle man said, and Louis could have died.

“Holy shit.” Niall breathed out. “We’ll – leave you to it?”

Which was when Louis laughed. It was the borderline-manic one he used for situations like this; ones that were so surreal and ridiculous and embarrassing that surely didn’t have an appropriate response.

“What the fuck Louis?” Zayn asked, grin splitting his face in two. “Who is this? And what is that in his hair?”

“It’s shampoo. We were washing it.” Louis grumbled, then said “One second. Just – wait here.”
He pushed Harry back to the shower, ignoring Harry’s little Inquisitive ooos because he wanted to get this done before his friends came snooping. He shoved Harry’s head under the water to rinse out the shampoo, then quickly put some conditioner in, then tugged him right back out of the shower.

He grabbed the guest bathrobe from where it was hanging behind the door and tied it around Harry. Now that he was more appropriately dressed, Louis figured it was now or never that his jungle man meet his friends.

Louis felt a bit weak for it, but he hid behind Harry as they made their way back into the lounge room where his friends were waiting. He just didn’t want to see their faces because he knew already what expressions they would be wearing. Zayn would be smirking, Niall would be red from embarrassed laughter and Liam would be just plain concerned.

“Harry come on Lou.” Was the first thing Harry said after exiting the hallway, and Louis groaned from behind him.

“I thought it was the other way around.” Zayn laughed.

“He doesn’t speak English okay? That’s not what he’s saying!”

“You gonna quit hiding behind him or what?” Niall asked, and Louis knew him well enough to pick up the smile in his voice. Niall was never going to let him forget this.

So he begrudgingly pushed Harry over to the sofa so that he could talk to his mates. Zayn only had to raise an eyebrow before he was spilling out everything. “I found him in the jungle.”

“What do you mean? Was he your tour guide or something?” Liam asked.

Niall grinned. “He followed you back from Africa? You got a magic dick or something?”

“Niall, just don’t. And, uh – I literally found him in the jungle. Like, he lived there. With gorillas.”

They all just blinked back at him, until Niall burst into laughter. “Come on, what really happened?”

“That’s what happened.” Louis shrugged.

“Seriously? You’re not having us on?” Zayn asked. “Because I know what you look like when you’re lying and you don’t look like that but this is fucking ridiculous.”

“I know. I lived it and I can hardly believe it myself, but there’s a jungle man sitting on my sofa who can’t speak English except for the few words I taught him, isn’t there?”

“Lou fuck Harry.” Harry said from the sofa.

Niall grinned. “And you taught him those words, did you?”

“You haven’t slept with him, right? He should be checked for parasites or something first.” Liam asked, and Louis wanted to slap him.

“Of course I fucking haven’t! We haven’t done anything! He thought he was a gorilla until two days ago!”

“All right, calm down.” Zayn said, still wearing his stupid smirk. “You can’t blame us for assuming things. He’s hot as fuck, and hung like a horse. Just your type.”
“He’s probably straight, all right! Plus I’m pretty sure he thinks of me as his new Dad or something.”

“He been calling you Daddy?” Niall laughed, and Louis was getting pretty tired of his jokes.

“Oh for fuck’s sake! Think about it! He’s never seen another human as far as I know of, so sex is probably the last thing on his mind! Just because you lot are obsessed with fucking doesn’t mean he is!”

“You totally came onto him when you first saw him, right?” Niall asked, as if Louis hadn’t just screamed at him.

He was about to scream some more, but instead he turned red because Niall knew him too well.

“You did?” Zayn asked, smirk growing wider. “Oh fuck, Louis, that is too good. What did he do?”

Louis rubbed the back of his neck, peeking over at Harry. Who was watching them all carefully, sitting at the edge of the sofa like he was ready to leap up if Louis got any more distressed. So Louis smiled at him and then whispered “I tried to kiss him and he flipped.”

“What?” Liam asked, and Louis looked back to him.

“I kissed him and he freaked out. See? Sex is the last thing on his mind. He’s more interested in why we’re wearing clothes and what all this furniture is.”

“Well shit.” Liam said, with just the right amount of amazement. At least he got it. “Do you know how he got there?”

“He can’t exactly tell me, can he? He showed me his treehouse though, where he grew up. There was a crib which he said was his, anyway. And there were some books and shit that I grabbed, but I haven’t really looked through them yet. I was going to on the plane but I was a bit distracted.”

“So this is like a proper mystery, isn’t it? This’ll be the craic.”

“It’s not going to be the craic Niall, it’s going to be incredibly difficult! A baby human got left in the jungle to fend for himself and we’ve got said human on Louis’ sofa!” Liam growled, which took everyone by surprise. “Where do we even start?”

Suddenly music began blasting from somewhere, and there was a shriek, and then a smash.

All eyes fell to Harry, who was standing over the TV which was lying in bits on the ground, remote control in his hands.

“You didn’t turn your electrical appliances off by the wall before you left?” Liam asked, voice exasperated, and Louis wanted to strangle him. Right then, he was a lot more concerned for his TV. And the rest of his stuff, which he’d just realised was at an incredibly high risk of being destroyed. Maybe bringing a wild man into his house hadn’t been the best idea.

“Fucking –“ Louis covered his eyes with a hand and tried to control his breathing. He could feel one of his infamous temper tantrums coming on and it was something he definitely didn’t want Harry seeing.

“Lou?” he heard Harry say, and took three more deep breaths before answering.

“Yes Haz?”
“Haz?”

“Harry. Sorry.”

“Haz like Haz.” Harry said, and Louis grinned. Another word added to Harry’s vocabulary list; he’d never said like before.

“Okay, Haz it is. Now what were you going to say?”

“Haz like Lou.”

“Lou likes Haz too. Is that it?”

Harry oooed, then pointed to the mess on the ground. “Lou?”

“That was my telly.”

“Fuck, Zayn, you said we could watch the game here!” Niall groaned, and Louis looked to his best mate with a raised eyebrow.

“Come on Louis, we always watch games here. You’re the only one with a HD TV.” Zayn whined, and even pulled out his puppy face; where he stuck out his bottom lip and blinked his eyes slow so his eyelashes fluttered against his cheeks. Louis may not want to fuck his mate, but he still couldn’t resist him when he made himself look all pretty.

Louis sighed, and looked at the smashed TV on the ground, and threw his hands up into the air. “Doesn’t matter now does it? It’s all over the place!”

“We can go out and buy a new one! You had that one for what, three months? There’s got to be an even better one out by now!”

“Niall.” Zayn groaned, because he knew how funny Louis was about his money even though he had a lot of it and Louis loved him for it. He hadn’t exactly grown up being able to throw money around the place, so he still held it all quite close to his chest. It wasn’t like he could model forever. “He’s not just gonna go out and buy a TV so we can watch a footy game you tit!”

“Why not? You’re going to have to buy one eventually, yeah? May as well be right now.”

“I haven’t slept for three days Niall! I haven’t showered, I feel like shit, and I’ve got a jungle man sitting on my sofa! The last thing I’m thinking about is getting a new TV!”

“I was just suggesting it.” Niall grumbled. “You’ve got to get Jungle Boy clothes and shit right?”

That had Louis stumped, because Harry was a good few inches taller and his legs were incredibly long and his shoulders were far too broad for any of Louis’ shirts. “Shit.”

“So let’s go do some shopping! But real quick because the game’s on in a few hours.”

“Will Harry handle it?” Liam asked, eyeing the boy speculatively. Harry was sitting on his hunches, inspecting the remnants of the TV, bare toes inches away from a big chunk of glass. “He’s kind of like a big baby, isn’t he? Discovering the world? Might not be safe.”

Louis nodded his agreement, just as Harry reached out with his foot to press it into the cracked flat screen. “Fuck! Harry!”

Harry’s eyes snapped up fast, and he bit his lip sheepishly. “Lou? Fuck.”
“I reckon Liam’s right. Maybe I should just stay with him.” Louis stuck his hand in his back pocket and pulled out his wallet. “You take my credit card –“ Niall’s face lit up and Louis glared at him. “Zayn, you’re in charge. Don’t go crazy with the telly, or Harry’s clothes. Get him the basics, like some trackies and hoodies or something. Nothing weird.”

Zayn took the card with a nod, then eyed Harry up. “You’ve got a measuring tape somewhere, yeah? From when you were obsessed with getting bigger arms?”

Niall snorted, and Louis glared because that was meant to be a secret. He grunted out a yes and rushed to his bathroom to search through his draws. He found it at the very back of the second one.

Zayn had Harry standing up in front of him when Louis re-entered the living room, arms outstretched. Then he was pulling the robe off, and Louis cleared his throat.

Zayn looked back to where he was standing at the doorway, eyebrow raised, and he turned red. “I need to measure his hips. And his chest and stuff, to get his size?”

Louis shook his head, and Niall laughed, and Harry just grinned because something funny was obviously going on and he wanted to be a part of it.

“You’re going to need this.” Louis said, holding out the tape.

Zayn took it, then turned back to Harry. Who was just blinking, smile still small on his face. Zayn cleared his throat, then wrapped the tape around his hips and called out a number.

Liam typed it out on his phone, as well as all the other numbers Zayn shouted at him. Like his chest measurement and his waist measurement and foot length.

“You realise you’re only getting him some shirts and trousers, yeah?” Louis snorted, when Zayn was kneeling on the ground in front of Harry, face inches away from his cock, as he measured the length of his legs.

“I don’t want to muck it up.” Zayn mumbled, face an incredibly bright red. “I’m not even gay, stop stressing.”

“But you’re –“ and then something incredibly awkward happened. Harry started getting hard.

Zayn fell back onto his arse when it happened, and Niall laughed so hard he bent himself in half, hands on his knees.

“I didn’t do anything!” Zayn swore, and even Liam was laughing now.

Harry was just blinking down at his hard-on, eyebrows furrowed.

Everyone sobered up pretty quickly when Harry went to touch it.

“Haz! No! Don’t, that’s - rude!” Louis screeched, rushing over to Harry and gripping his wrist before he could get a hand around himself.

“Guess you can be sure he likes guys now.” Niall laughed. “And that he’s an exhibitionist.”

“Do you reckon he’s ever got himself off though?” Liam wondered out loud, and Zayn turned to him with a raised brow. “Not, like – I’m not saying we should think about that! Just that, you know, he probably doesn’t know what that’s for!”

“Monkeys have sex too Liam.” Louis said, eyebrow raised as if he hadn’t wondered the very same
thing at some point.

“Yeah, for mating! I’m sure Harry hasn’t felt like getting it off with some apes!”

“I guess.” Louis muttered, then felt Harry’s wrists twitch in his hands. He’d forgotten he was holding them.

He looked down to see that Harry’s problem had gone away, and released his grip on his arms.

“So we’ve got everything, yeah? We can go?” Niall asked, obviously busting to get back in time for the game. Louis didn’t even know who was playing.

“Yeah, we’ll go now.” Zayn grunted, avoiding Harry’s eyes.

Harry smiled though, and when Zayn stood up Harry pulled him into a tight hug. “Harry’s Zen.” He grunted, and Louis frowned. He didn’t like it, Harry claiming ownership of someone that wasn’t himself.

“Off you go. I need to shower.” Louis grunted, and Zayn sent him a knowing glance. He’d experienced Louis’ possessiveness first hand when Liam and Niall joined their little double act. Louis had been cold to them for weeks before Zayn set him straight.

“All right. See you in a bit.” Liam said with an awkward grin, always eager to break the tension.

When all his mates were finally out of his flat, Louis collapsed onto the sofa with a sigh. Harry copied him, and then snuggled in to Louis’ side.

“Harry’s Lou.” He muttered happily.

“You say that to all the boys.” Louis grunted back, and Harry frowned.

“Lou?” he asked, and prodded Louis’ lips.

Louis pushed his finger away and stood up. “Come on.”

“Harry come on Lou!” Harry chirped, and Louis summoned up a small smile.

“I’m going to have a shower. You’re going to wait in here, yeah? Your bedroom?”

“Yeah.” Harry repeated, then sat on his bed when Louis told him to. “Lou come on Harry?”

“No, I’m not coming on – fuck, I meant following – I’m not following you. You stay. Got it?”

“Yeah.” Harry said again.

When Louis thought that Harry definitely got the message, he rushed into his bedroom and closed the door. It didn’t lock, and neither did his bathroom, but he didn’t really need it to. If Harry came in, he could just send him away.

Louis stripped himself, happy to get out of the clothes he’d been wearing on his long flight. They felt tacky and smelly and disgusting, and his skin felt better just for being rid of them.

He turned on the shower and the jets, and waited until the whole bathroom was hot and steamy before stepping in.

The thing Louis loved most about his flat was his shower. It was the perfect amount of pressure,
and the little jets that blasted water out from the tiled walls beside and in front of him meant he hardly even had to do anything. He just had to stand there and enjoy the warm water as it cascaded down his body.

Louis had his eyes closed, forehead against the wall so the water ran down his neck and back, when he heard the bathroom door bang open.

Harry squawked and pulled the shower open and stepped inside it with a happy grin and his happiest monkey noises.

“No! Harry! I need a shower alone, okay?” Louis groaned, and tried to focus on something that wasn’t Harry’s wet chest or face or hair. He settled on his hands. His incredibly big hands.

Harry just jabbered at him and said “Harry’s Lou” before grabbing the conditioner.

“No! That goes last.” Louis said as he snatched the bottle from his hands. “Just, get out!”

Harry carried on smiling, and took the next bottle off the shelf. “Lou?”

“Yes, that’s the shampoo. Please just get out. I want my own shower.”

Harry frowned, then mumbled “Harry’s Lou?”

“Yes, I’m your Lou.” He sighed, and felt his self-restraint crumbling bit by bit. Harry just looked so good, with his wet skin and pouty lips and bulging arms and big hands that could easily hold Louis up against the tiled wall. “You can – you can wash me if you want.” He croaked, and Harry just tilted his head. So Louis grabbed the shower gel bottle and poured some onto his own palm and then Harry’s palm. “Remember?”

And Louis began to rub the wash into his own skin in circles, foaming it up nicely. This stuff was quite a lot more expensive than the rubbish in Harry’s shower, and smelt like wild berries instead of dodgy coconut.

Harry copied his movements, hands roaming over his own skin and lathering up the gel before reaching out to touch Louis’ arm. “Lou.” He grinned, and started roughly rubbing it into his skin. Louis had to hold himself up against the shower wall, Harry was washing him so roughly, and annoyingly enough it was turning him on. Louis kind of had a thing for being manhandled.

“Fuck. Slow down, Harry, stop!” Louis groaned, and Harry did. Which wasn’t what Louis really wanted to happen, but it had to because Louis didn’t want to get a boner and have Harry grabbing at it before he even knew what to do with one. That could end tragically. Before Harry could get to the shampoo, Louis had it in his hands and rubbed it into his hair. Harry watched with a pout, but didn’t make any more moves to help. Then he conditioned, and rinsed, and turned off the water.

Harry grinned cheekily, as if he knew he’d just done something naughty, and stepped out of the shower before Louis could. It meant Louis got a perfect view of his perfect arse as it waddled out of the bathroom.

Louis sighed and followed after him, not before grabbing two towels though. He wrapped one around himself, and sucked in a breath, and left the bathroom to deal with the naked jungle man that was probably rubbing himself all over Louis’ pillows.

He wasn’t. He wasn’t even in Louis’ bedroom at all, actually.

“Harry?” Louis called, then popped his head into Harry’s bedroom only to see it was empty too.
“Lou!” Harry yelled back, and it sounded like he was in the lounge room so Louis went in there.

Only to see Harry pressed against the giant window, waving his hand at something.

“Oh for fuck’s sake, Harry!” Louis cried out, and wrapped Harry in the spare towel.

Harry pouted but held the towel in place around his hips with one hand while waving again with the other.

“What are you looking at, anyway?” Louis grumbled, and followed Harry’s line of sight to the street. Where a big group of girls in school uniforms were in hysterics, waving and pointing and laughing into their palms. “Oh fucking-“

Louis pulled Harry back from the window, thanking every kind of deity that none of the girls looked particularly young. He sat Harry down on the sofa, and tried to return the wild man’s grin. “Harry.” He said, kind but stern.

“Lou.”

“This.” He waved at Harry’s body. “is called naked. No clothes means naked. You can’t be naked around here. You always have to wear clothes. Got it?”

“No naked.” He nodded. “Clothes.”

“Right!”

“Harry’s clothes?”

“Uh, Zayn’s buying you some. For now I’ve got something you can wear.”

Harry followed Louis into his bedroom, and watched him rifle through the draws in his walk-in wardrobe. He was certain he had a few pairs of trackies that were too long on him, and some shirts that were a size or two bigger than he was.

It took a lot of digging, but eventually he found just the ones he’d been looking for. He grinned and turned around, only to see that Harry wasn’t standing by the wardrobe door anymore.

Louis groaned, but only had to walk a few steps before he found the jungle man.

Harry was curled up on the bed, knees bent to his chest and arms wrapped around them, head beneath a pillow.

“Harry?” Louis asked gently, tapping the man’s shoulder. “You want to sleep in your own new bed?”

Harry grunted and grabbed Louis’ wrist and pulled him down onto the bed with him. He wrapped his arms and legs around Louis, who squirmed out of his tight grip. He was still naked and a little bit wet, and the towel that was wrapped around his waist was beginning to slip.

“Harry, I’m gonna go sleep in the guest room, okay?”

“Lou?” Harry squeaked when the city boy climbed out of bed. “Lou come on Harry!”

“No, Harry, I can’t get in there with you. We need good sleeps and we won’t get them together.”

“Lou!” Harry cried out, and then began to whimper. “Lou come on Harry!” he begged, and Louis
didn’t think he could say no to that. Harry was probably used to cuddling up with his ape friends at night to keep warm; maybe he’d never slept alone before.

“All right, fine. I’ve just got to put some clothes on.”

“Harry clothes?”

“Yeah, you put these on.” Louis proceeded to throw the trackies and shirt to Harry, and went into his wardrobe to find something for himself to wear to bed. It wasn’t even 2pm yet, but Louis was beginning to feel a bit dizzy with how tired he was. So he pulled on some cotton pyjama bottoms and an old grey shirt, then went back in to his room to see Harry.

Who was still naked, just lying on top of the duvet with his bottoms in one hand and the top in the other.

“Fuck, I forgot, sorry.” Louis groaned, then hurried over to help Harry get into the clothes.

When they were both fully dressed, Louis pulled back the duvet and crawled beneath it, and Harry did the same. As soon as Louis was settled, Harry wrapped his limbs around Louis and put his head on his chest and closed his eyes. It couldn’t have taken more than a minute for him to fall asleep.

Louis envied him for a second, because he’d never in his life gone to sleep that quickly. He did most of his thinking before bed, not by choice but because his brain just didn’t like to stop, and he had so much to ponder. Like what to do with Harry, and how the man was going to change his life. It was like owning a pet, but instead of only feeding it and bathing it and putting it to bed, Louis had to socialise it. Teach him how to behave in front of others, what was simply manners and what was illegal or life threatening. He’d just taken on a massive responsibility and he was only just beginning to realise it.

Because Harry was cute in the jungle, and Louis didn’t want to miss the cheeky grins and charming oooos so he thought it would be okay just to bring the man back with him. He hadn’t even considered the sacrifices he’d have to make, like time to teach him and a room and money to clothe him. Hell, Harry hadn’t been there for more than 5 minutes before he broke an expensive TV and flashed a bunch of school girls.

Harry snorted then, right into Louis’ chest, and when Louis looked down the sleeping boy was smiling. He looked so vulnerable, and Louis had a sudden urge to cry because for a moment he’d forgotten that Harry was just that; he was innocent and childlike and had been left to fend for himself in a place ruled by nature.

When Harry’s grin suddenly dropped and his hands clenched Louis’ shirt tight, the city boy snuggled further down in the bed and pressed his lips to Harry’s forehead. He wrapped his own arms around Harry’s middle and watched the boy’s smile spread over his face again.

“Harry’s Lou.” The jungle man muttered into his chest, and Louis closed his eyes and fell asleep wearing his own little smile.

---

Louis woke to the sound of his doorbell, and he groaned because he hadn’t been asleep for more than two hours. He knew it was Zayn though, and that if he didn’t let them in with his new TV then they’d just take it to theirs and set it up and Louis would probably never get it back.

So he let his mates in, leaving Harry still curled up under the duvet, and watched as the three of them tried to sort out how to get Louis’ brand new TV working.
“Here.” Zayn grunted as he shoved a few bags into Louis’ hands. “Your card should be in the Burton one.” Then he turned his attention to Niall and Liam, who were pulling the flatscreen gingerly out of the box.

“I’m going back to sleep. You’ve got this, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Niall called back, face red with exertion. “Where’s Harry?”

“He’s sleeping too. It’s been a big few days.”

“All right.” Niall nodded, and Liam said “There’s milk in that Sainsbury’s bag, might want to put it away first.”

“Oh.” Louis looked down at the bags in his hands and noticed the bright orange one. He hadn’t even thought about groceries. “Okay, yeah, thanks.”

Liam smiled back. “Get some sleep, we’ll lock up when we go.”

“Yeah, all right, thanks.”

Louis left his mates to it, and fell asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow.

---

The second time he woke up, it was to shouting. When Louis realised that Harry wasn’t beside him, he jumped straight out of bed and ran to where the voices were coming from.

“Get it in!” yelled Niall, pumping his fist.

Harry did the same with his own fist, then Niall held his hand up and Harry slapped it. He was grinning so wide, like he was absolutely delighted.

“Oh, hey Louis! Harry’s just joined us to watch.” Liam threw over his shoulder.

“Yeah, he’s great craic! Loves those monkey sounds, doesn’t he?” Niall added, and Louis nodded slowly.

It was like he’d just stepped in to a carnival.

There were crisp packets everywhere, and empty beer bottles beside half-full ones. Niall had taken his shirt off at some point, and Harry had stripped down to just his pants.

“He wanted to take those off, too, but we stopped him.” Zayn said, and Louis snapped his eyes away from Harry’s barely covered arse to look at his mate. “Did we wake you?”

“Yeah, someone was screaming.” Louis grunted, then took a seat on the sofa between Liam and Harry, squishing Zayn into the very corner.

“That was Harry.” Liam supplied helpfully. “Niall got him a little overexcited about the game. He was banging his chest with his fists and everything, it was pretty funny.”

“You want us to keep it down?” Niall asked.

Louis looked to Harry, who was grinning wide, hair strewn about his face, and he didn’t really want to deny the boy that. Harry looked like he was having the time of his life.
“Nah, I should probably eat something anyway. Should we order in?”

“Yeah, is there an Indian place nearby?” Niall asked, just as Liam muttered “Pizza” and Zayn said something about Thai food.

“I agree with Zayn. There’s a really nice Thai place around the corner, and they do free delivery.”

“Thai it is!” Niall chirped, and Harry pumped his fist. Which made Niall laugh, and Harry join in.

Louis couldn’t help but smile as he walked into the kitchen. He searched through his drawers until he found the one with the menus in it, and then rifled through them until he got what he was looking for.

He didn’t go into the lounge room again until he’d already placed his order, saying he’ll pay card when the food arrived, which reminded him that the bit of plastic was still amongst the shopping.

He pulled the bags of clothes up onto the counter and took each item out one by one.

Zayn did well.

He’d bought a few pairs of dark jeans, some tees, and a couple of trackies, as well as the basics like pants and socks, and it looked like he hadn’t spent too much either. The only things he’d lashed out on were a pair of black leather boots, but all of the clothing was from department stores like Burton or TopMan or Urban Outfitters instead of anything designer labelled.

“Everything all right?” Zayn called from the sofa, and Louis looked up with a grin.

“Yeah, you did good.”

“You’ve forgotten something.” Niall said, grinning wide and nodding to a bag that had been dropped by the front door.

Louis narrowed his eyes at his suspiciously smiling friends, then turned his heated glare to the plain white plastic bag lying open on the floor.

A very large part of him wanted to throw the bag away without looking inside, because knowing his mates there would be a novelty dildo and banana flavoured lube inside, but curiosity got the better of him.

It wasn’t nearly as bad as he’d expected, but as he emptied the bag he still let out a groan.

“A monkey costume? Really?”

Liam laughed and shook his head. “It’s a onesie! We thought it would help Harry feel more at home.”

“Liam thought that. I thought that it would be fucking hilarious. Go on, put it on!” Niall begged, and Louis wanted to kill him. “Might help you get fucked by your gorilla m–“

“Niall!” Zayn barked, but he was grinning too.

Louis’ blood was boiling, and he could feel his face going red, which meant only one thing: a tantrum was coming on.

Zayn could obviously see it coming too, because he jumped up and shouted “The receipt’s in there! It was just a joke!”
“Ooo!” Harry called, then jumped out of his seat to grab at the costume in Louis’ hands.

“He likes it, see!” Niall cackled, which was the final straw.

Louis leapt at him, only to be wrenched back by Zayn’s hand on his shirt.

“You fucking cunt shower.” Louis growled.

Which just set Niall off all over again. “It’s shower of cunts! Oh fuck Louis you’re so red!”

“Ooo!” Harry happily cried. “Lou! Lou!”

It made Louis turn to see Harry hugging the onesie tight. He was grinning so beautifully, and Louis felt himself drop from boiling to a simmer. Then Harry shoved the onesie into him, and said “Come on!”

That had Louis going from an angry red to an embarrassed pink.

“Maybe later.” He muttered under his breath, and before Niall could say anything annoying the intercom rang.

“Saved by the bell.” Liam sighed, and Louis grabbed his card out of the shopping bag and went to answer the door.

Luckily the second half of the game began then, pulling everyone’s attention so Louis could serve the dinner in peace.

He put a little bit of everything on each plate, then called Zayn over to help give them out.

“Harry, follow me.”

He nodded and said “Come on Lou.”

Louis lead him to the dining table behind the sofa, placing their dinners at chairs side by side because he figured he would more than likely have to feed the jungle man who probably had never used a fork in his life.

But Harry was eager to learn. He watched Louis pick up his cutlery, then did the same.

“Move your hands down a bit.” Louis instructed, and when Harry just tilted his head he pushed Harry’s fingers further down himself. “Now, watch.”

Louis felt a bit weird having someone watch him eat so intently. Harry’s eyes followed the fork as it poked at a bit of chicken and stuck it in Louis’ mouth, then scoop up some pad thai and shove it in there too.

Harry copied him, and it looked adorable. He’d wrapped his whole hand around the handle so it was clenched in his fist and tried to shovel the food in. Noodles were hanging out of his mouth yet he’d still be trying to fit chicken in there with it. He hummed as he chewed, obviously enjoying the taste, and Louis laughed.

It went a bit pear shaped when Harry tried to laugh with him. The contents of his mouth all fell out when he threw his head back, chewed up chicken and noodles dropping back on to his plate.

It wasn’t so cute when Harry picked them up with his fingers and put them back in his mouth.
“I guess I’ll have to teach you table manners.” Louis muttered to himself before taking a forkful of food.

Not that his mates were much better; Niall was shouting at the TV with noodles hanging off his chin, and Zayn was using his fingers to eat the meat.

As long as nothing landed on his sofa, Louis wasn’t too bothered by it.

“How’s he liking it?” Liam called over his shoulder.

“He’s eating it all, so I’d say he likes it a lot.” Louis said back.

“Nothing too spicy?”

“Don’t think so.”

“He’s probably been eating fruit and vegetables all his life, his taste buds must be going into overdrive.” Liam pondered out loud.

Which made Louis feel a bit bad. He hadn’t really thought about that. Harry probably needed something plainer, or at least natural.

“Could he get sick from eating this, do you think?” Louis asked.

“Maybe. His immune system might be stronger than ours, though. He’s probably eaten bugs and stuff before.”

“I guess.” Louis muttered, and went back to watching Harry.

Who’d stopped eating, and looked a little pale.

“Oh fuck.”

“Fuck.” Harry agreed, and Louis grabbed his forearm and tugged him to the kitchen sink.

Harry retched into it, and Louis held his hair away from his face and rubbed calming circles into his back until he stopped. “Guess we’ll be eating organic from now on.”

---

Louis got the rest of the week off from work, and spent it entirely with Harry.

He taught him words, and how to dress himself; how to use cutlery properly and brush his teeth and make the bed.

Louis stocked up on fresh fruits and vegetables, and cooked healthier meals every night instead of ordering in.

Harry still refused to shower himself or sleep alone though, no matter how many times Louis begged him to.

And he begged and begged because he hadn’t had a wank in at least a week, not before the trip to the jungle, and he needed one.

It was getting to the point where all he could think about was sex; everything was turning him on.
Harry would smile, and Louis would whine. Harry would walk, and Louis would moan. Harry would wrap his lips around four bananas a day and every time Louis would have to adjust himself in his trousers.

So having Harry naked in his shower, water cascading down his neck and back and thighs, was hard. Being wet and naked beside Harry was tough. Having Harry shamelessly staring as Louis washed himself was difficult, and when Louis would get hard and Harry would ooo excitedly and reach for his cock it was impossible.

Then there were nights, when Louis would tuck Harry in to his bed and tell him to stay before going to his own room.

He’d settle down under the covers, turn off his lights by the bedside switch, and not a minute later Harry would push open the bedroom door and crawl into the bed, cutely tittering as he curled up against Louis’ side.

Louis always slept so much better with Harry pressed against him, but getting to sleep was the hard bit.

On the fourth night after the jungle trip, Louis climbed into bed with Harry instead of going back to his own.

Harry loved that, grinning wide and wrapping his big arms around Louis until the man could hardly breathe, which made it harder to sneak out once Harry was fast asleep. He felt guilty for it, lifting Harry’s arms from his waist and cautiously climbing out from the covers, but if he didn’t get to wank soon he was going to explode.

As soon as his head hit his own pillow he was pulling out his cock from his boxers and stroking it quick, twisting on the upstroke and pumping down hard.

That was the only kind of real technique he could manage, that occasional twist of his wrist, because he was too worked up and desperate to be able to make it last. He wanted to come fast and hard, so he pumped his cock like his life depended on it.

He heard the creaking of floorboards and sped up his hand.

He clenched his teeth together when he heard Harry’s tittering, willing himself to come already because he wasn’t going to be able to stop until he had.

And he did, just as Harry poked his head through the door.

Louis came with a growl, teeth clenched and head thrown back so his jaw was exposed, and all he could think about was Harry sucking on the skin when he reached the peak of his high.

But then he came down, and realised that Harry was climbing into the bed with a concerned look on his face.

“I’m fine!” Louis squeaked, and tucked himself back in before Harry could take notice.

“Lou gone.” He said with a pout, then snuggled down beside Louis properly. “Harry sad.”

“I’m sorry, Harry, I just needed to be alone for a bit.”

“Alone?”
“Like, by myself. Just Louis, no Harry.”

Harry’s frown deepened, then he flicked Louis on the nose and cuddled into his side. “Bad.” He grunted, and closed his eyes.

Louis tried to steady his breathing and tamp down the adrenaline that was coursing through him at nearly getting caught, but Harry wriggled and tightened his grip on Louis’ waist further.

“Lou?” he said sleepily.

“Yeah Haz?”

“Harry’s Lou?”

“Yeah.”

“Lou’s Harry?”

“Yeah.”

Harry hummed at that, and began moving his hand up and down Louis’ torso, as if he was trying to calm him. Only it was the opposite of calming because Harry’s fingers were mere inches from the come on his belly.

Just before Louis could swipe it away, Harry’s fingers found it.

Harry’s nose wrinkled up and his eyelashes fluttered, but he didn’t say anything. He just continued to pat at his stomach, rubbing the come all over it.

And it was making Louis hard again.

He was definitely going to hell.

---

The day after the wanking incident, Louis realised he needed a break. He needed some space from Harry, because his life had been nothing but Harry for almost a week.

Harry wasn’t happy when Louis said he was going out.

He clung on to Louis’ waist and kept telling him to stay and it was painful to say no to him when his lip was quivering and his eyes were widening impossibly.

“Just for twenty minutes, okay? For a walk. I’ve put the telly on, yeah? You can watch the game.”

“Harry come on Lou.” he begged.

“Its follow, Harry, not come on. Follow!”

“Harry come on Lou!” Harry growled it this time, and Louis pushed his hands away and rushed out of the flat, slamming it closed and locking it. Harry banged his fists on the door, and Louis ran.

He made the mistake of looking back when he was in the street, up to his lounge room window, where Harry was standing and watching him with teary eyes, hands pressed against the glass.

And Louis cracked.
He rushed back upstairs and went back into his flat and Harry leapt at him, knocking him down onto the carpeted floor and pressing their chests together hard.

“Bad Louis!” Harry scolded, and nuzzled his face into Louis’ neck.

“Sorry.” He whimpered, because Harry was actually quite heavy.

Then Harry began licking him.

“Harry!” he shrieked, and pushed his head away. But Harry just began licking his throat instead, tongue quick and light like a kitten’s. “Stop! Bad Harry!”

That made Harry stop. He pouted, and pushed himself off Louis, and sat back on his arse, arms crossed. Just glaring.

“You can’t lick people! It’s one of those things humans don’t do, okay?”

Harry sniffled, but didn’t say anything.

And Louis started thinking that maybe it was best he took Harry out of the flat. It couldn’t be good for him, to only be spending time with Louis and no one else. A part from the occasional visit from Louis’ mates, Harry didn’t get to see anything else except how Louis acted. Plus, being cooped up in a London flat after a lifetime of expansive forest must be making him a bit stir-crazy. That was the only way Louis could explain the licking.

“You want to come out with me? Follow Louis out there?” he asked gently, and Harry just sniffled again. “Are you mad at me?”

Harry growled, and stomped his foot.

“You can-“ tell me, he was going to say, but he realised Harry really couldn’t. He didn’t know how to explain how he felt in a way Louis would understand. No wonder Harry’s sadness was turning into anger; he was frustrated. If it was frustrating for Louis not to get an answer out of the jungle man, it must be a hundred times worse if Harry wanted to explain himself but literally couldn’t. The only way they could really communicate was body language, so Louis held out his arms for a hug.

And Harry rushed at him again, collapsing into Louis and jabbering into his chest. Then Harry kissed him.

He pressed his lips against Louis’ neck, then his chin, and all over his cheeks before getting the corner of his mouth.

“Harry? Do you know what that is?”

“Harry’s Lou.” Harry said instead, and kissed him on the lips.

It was just a short peck, and Harry went back to kissing all over his face straight after, but it still felt as if Louis’ world had just been rocked. He breathed out in an audible huff, all the air in his lungs whooshing out like some kind of overly-dramatic sigh of relief. Or maybe a finally.

Louis couldn’t exactly get his thoughts straight when there was a heavy jungle man pinning him to the ground, kissing all over his neck and face, tongue occasionally peeking out in kitten-licks as if he’d forgotten himself for a moment.
“Harry? Will we go outside?” Louis asked when his breathing settled.

He nodded, and stood up, and pulled Louis with him.

Louis went through the routine of putting Harry’s shoes and socks on, then popped a hat on top of his head, and grabbed the flat keys.

Harry ran out the door before Louis could, as if he was scared of being locked inside again, but stayed to watch Louis lock up.

“You can’t go away from me, okay? You have to follow me. Stay with Lou.”

Harry nodded, and gripped on to Louis’ wrist.

“Like this.” Louis said, then pulled his arm up so Harry was holding his hand instead. “That’s what people do, hand holding, not wrist holding.”

Harry tilted his head, but stayed gripping Louis’ hand. He didn’t let it go, even when they stepped out of the building and onto the pavement. His eyes were flicking about, trying to take everything in. The people walking by them, the cars driving past, the shops lining the street; everything.

They passed a fruit market and Harry grabbed a bunch of bananas, and Louis tried to pry them from his hands but he couldn’t. So he ran inside to pay the man instead.

They walked and walked, Harry munching on his bananas as he took in his surroundings. He was fascinated by the dogs on leashes and children the most, letting out little excited squeals and pointing whenever he saw one.

Which earned them funny looks, but Louis didn’t mind.

“Excuse me.” Louis heard, and turned around to meet the eyes of a teenage girl. “Could I get a picture with you?”

Louis plastered on his fake grin and posed for the photo, hand still in Harry’s because the jungle man refused to let go.

“Is he your boyfriend?” the girl asked, and Louis opened his mouth to deny it but then realised that might be bad for his image. He hadn’t discussed it with his manager yet, and that was something he really had to do.

“We have a special relationship.” Louis said instead, and felt like a tit for it, but it wasn’t a yes or a no so whatever was said in the press could be denied.

“Oh.” The girl nodded. “Umm, could I get a hug? I’ve got some of your ads on my school books and some posters and like, I’m just a big fan.” She gushed, and Louis couldn’t really say no to that. So he nodded, and the girl turned to Harry. “Can you take the picture?”

He blinked at her, then looked back to Louis with a frown.

“He doesn’t – umm, he’s against technology.” Louis said, and cringed at himself because what the fuck. “I mean, like, Samsungs. He hates them, so he doesn’t touch them. He’s strictly Apple. Uh – I’ll just take it.”

Louis pulled his hand out of Harry’s to take the phone, then put his other hand around her waist.

Harry’s hands immediately found his hips, wrapping around him and pulling him back.
“Sorry.” Louis yelped as the girl gasped. “He’s – foreign. This is just how they do things in – umm, his country.”

“I can go if you want?” she muttered, and Louis shook his head.

“No, it’s fine. I’ll just try not to get him in the picture.”

“Okay.” She nodded, giving Harry confused little glances until Louis told her to smile for the photo.

Harry growled when the phone flashed, and Louis could feel the girl jump from where she was pressed into him.

“Sorry! He’s territorial!” Louis tried to explain, but by that point the girl clearly just wanted to get away from them. He passed the phone back to her and she gave him a small *thankyou* before scampering away.

Louis groaned, because what the hell was she going to say to people? He sounded insane, so he wouldn’t be surprised if the press made out that he’d come back from the jungle a deranged madman.

Not that Louis was the most famous model in the world. It was only the London papers that were really interested in him, and online gossip sites.

It was because he’d dated a famous footballer when he was 19 and just starting out, and the papers went nuts with wild speculations when they split up.

It was only a bit of fun for the both of them, and when the footballer wanted something serious they split. That was it.

But the papers wouldn’t accept the “we’re good friends” public announcement, and instead started saying that Louis cheated on the guy with his best mate. They’d pulled that completely out of their arses, but it stuck and Louis had to deal with the heartbreaker rep.

It also meant that he got thrust into the limelight, and he wasn’t just another model anymore but a personality as well. People cared about what he was up to, and he wasn’t so famous that paps followed him from his house but he still managed to show up in magazines after big nights out looking a little worse for wear, or linking him to young actors or pop stars or other models.

They’d probably go crazy with the news that Louis could be dating a strange growling Apple enthusiast. And when the news broke that they’d found Harry in the jungle; he could only shudder. That story would probably go global.

Harry grabbed at Louis’ hand when they started to walk again, jabbering grumpily in his monkey language so he couldn’t understand.

“What is it?” Louis asked, and Harry frowned.

“Harry’s Lou!” he humphed, and Louis sighed.

“A big part of being human is sharing, okay? I’m going to have to share you, and you’re going to have to share me.” Harry just raised an eyebrow, so Louis continued. “Louis is not just Harry’s. Louis is Zayn’s, and Liam’s and Niall’s. And my manager, remember her? I’m hers too. I’m kind of everyone in England’s, actually.”
“No!” Harry shouted, so loud he made the people passing them stare. He’d stamped his foot and crossed his arms like a toddler throwing a tantrum. “Harry’s Lou!”

“Yeah, but not just Harry’s Lou! See this?” Louis pulled his phone from his pocket and googled himself. He clicked on the images and flicked through them, showing Harry ones from recent jobs where he was posing near naked with women, or ones of him at events with a pretty boy hanging off his arm.

Harry growled and grabbed the phone and threw it on the concrete, and Louis could only blink at the mess on the ground.

Then a low growl ripped itself from his own throat, and Louis tugged his hand away from Harry’s and turned around and stormed away because he didn’t want to deal with it anymore.

He didn’t want to teach someone how to be human.

He didn’t want to put up with temper tantrums from grown men.

He didn’t want to be someone’s possession and he didn’t want to be responsible for someone else either.

“Lou!” he heard being yelled from behind him, but he just kept on walking.

“Lou!” the voice was louder this time, and so probably closer.

He heard footsteps and knew Harry was hurrying after him. It made him feel a little better because as mad as he was, he didn’t want Harry out here alone. He wanted Harry following him, but he just didn’t want the boy grabbing onto his hand or his wrist as if he owned him.

“Lou.” Harry begged, voice breaking, as he reached out to grab at Louis’ shirt.

He didn’t tug it, just held it in his hand as he followed Louis back to their flat.

And Louis felt incredibly guilty, because Harry had just been holding on to him so tight because he didn’t want to get lost. He was somewhere new and loud and busy, and Louis was the only familiar thing about the place. He just didn’t want to lose that.

But Louis was still mad about the phone, so he grabbed Harry’s hand and tugged him along, never meeting his eyes or speaking a word because he’d probably say something he’d regret later. Even if Harry didn’t understand him, Louis didn’t want it on his conscience.

“Sorry.” Harry muttered, and that made Louis look. Harry hadn’t said that before, and Louis hadn’t taught it to him. He must have just picked it up, and what was more incredible was that he knew its meaning. “Sorry Lou. Not Harry’s Lou. Everyone’s Louis.” Harry nodded to himself, and Louis couldn’t help but smile.

“I am your Lou. Just not only your Lou, okay?”

Harry nodded, and cracked his own grin.

It was too easy to forgive him, frustratingly so, because he was still learning. He didn’t know how to behave, and he didn’t understand, and he couldn’t explain himself because his first language wasn’t even a human one. All he had to go off was body language and what Louis told him.

And it was scary having that kind of control over someone; that responsibility. It was like Louis
had become a parent overnight, only his child was six foot tall and had already lived a life Louis didn’t know. Harry could probably teach Louis just as much, but it wasn’t his world they were in.

Survival in Louis’ world wasn’t just about staying alive.

Survival was forming relationships and having aspirations and finding success, about making a life you actually wanted to live, and in so many ways that was harder.

Hunting and finding shelter and water were skills that could be taught, but how could Louis teach Harry how to live in this world when he himself had been socialised since birth. There were so many rules that were both conscious and unconscious and Harry had to learn them all.

Louis just needed patience, because Harry was surely going to keep fucking up.

They walked up to their flat, silent but still hand in hand, and Louis almost shat himself when he opened his door to find his manager sitting on the sofa.

She raised her eyebrows at their joined hands, and simply said “Hello Louis.”

“Uh, hi. I was told I had until Monday off.”

“You do, but that was before you got spotted with this one.” She nodded her head to Harry. “People want to know who he is, and our people want to tell them.”

“Can’t it wait until next week? It was literally just a few minutes ago that we were seen together!”

“It’s already got out about him. Not to the general public, but to researchers all over the country. They’re all fighting to study him, and we’re going to have to let them or he’ll be deported.”

Louis’ stomach rolled. “What do you mean we have to let them? Let who? What kind of studies?”

“I don’t know yet.”

“They can’t just – he’s a human! He’s got rights!” Louis screeched, and Harry jumped.

His manager though stayed very calm. “He does, he’s got a choice. He can cooperate with the government and go where they want him to go, or he can be sent back to Africa. They aren’t going to be poking and prodding at him, Louis, it’s not the fifties. It will just be observational. A few intelligence tests, some exercises. They won’t be shocking him like he’s a mouse in a maze.”

“How is – who’s in charge of him, then? How can he make that decision? How can we even ask him? He won’t understand!”

“I’ll get him a lawyer. A good one. They’re psychologists, Louis.” She assured him. “Only good can come of it. Do you really think you’re the right person to deal with him? You couldn’t even keep a fish alive.”

Louis choked out a sob at that, because ten minutes ago he wanted to be rid of that responsibility but now that it was being forced out of his hands he couldn’t imagine letting it go. “But – he’s mine. I found him!”

“We’ll work something out, okay? He’ll go somewhere in London, and maybe he’ll even be able to stay with you. You’ll get to keep your jungle man.”

Louis knew that, he did, but it didn’t make him feel any better because now Harry wasn’t going to be just his. Harry was going to be London’s property too, just like he himself was.
Louis was going to have to share him, and as much as Louis had told Harry that that was a part of life, he really didn't like to share.
Harry of the City Part 1

It didn’t feel right at all, walking through the halls of the psychology building in Westminster University. They were all blatantly staring; professors, researchers and students all watching Harry like hawks. It was putting Louis on edge, but the jungle man didn’t notice.

There was too much else catching his attention.

Despite the fact that Louis had taken him on a few more outings since the first one, everything still seemed to amaze Harry. Even silly things that Louis had never looked at twice, like flickering street lamps and children on scooters and men selling flowers on the side of the street, got Harry excited.

“Do you think we should have cut his hair?” Louis’ manager muttered to him under her breath, and the city boy frowned at her.

“Why?”

“It would make him look a bit more presentable, don’t you think? And clean. Not so wild.”

“They want him wild, don’t they?” Louis grunted back, still quite bitter about the whole thing.

He’d had the weekend to come to terms with it, sure, but he still didn’t like it.

After that conversation with his manager in his apartment those few days ago, Louis asked Harry “Do you want to go home to the jungle?”

And Harry grinned and nodded his head. “Home.”

Which made Louis feel a bit sick. “Do you want to leave me?”

Harry frowned and squawked “Harry’s Lou!”

“If you go back to the jungle, you have to leave Louis. No more Harry and Lou.”

That had Harry hugging him tight, jabbering into Louis’ hair.

“So do you want to stay with Lou or go back to the jungle?”

“Lou come on home.”

“I can’t, Harry. I don’t belong in the jungle. So, me or the jungle?”

Harry paused for a moment, and Louis held his breath. It hadn’t even been a week, but Louis couldn’t imagine much of a life without Harry. The man was too exciting, and different, and everything he’d been looking for in a person. He was sweet and gorgeous and didn’t know anything about Louis’ past. The model couldn’t remember the last time he’d met someone he could automatically trust not to be using him for their own motives.

“Lou.” Harry said, breaking Louis’ fearful train of thought.

And Louis grinned for a moment, before saying “If you want to stay, you have to do something first.” Harry tilted his head, and Louis continued. “You have to talk to some people. Can you do that?”
Harry blinked, then said “I don’t know” like Louis had told him to whenever he felt confused or wasn’t sure how to answer.

“You have to do something to stay here, or you have to go home. People will make you. It’s the rules.” He tried to explain, as simply as he could, but it was hard. How could he explain the concepts of law and politics to someone who’d never had to experience them? The truth of the matter was that if Harry didn’t do what England said they’d kick him out, that he was being blackmailed, but the jungle man wouldn’t understand that. All he’d ever known was complete freedom.

“Maybe you should show him.” The manager suggested, and Louis rolled his eyes.

“How?”

“Take him to a few places tomorrow, see which he likes best. He might enjoy the tests.”

“Tomorrow? Can’t we have a bit more time?”

“The advert is being released next Thursday, Louis, and we want this sorted by then. We want to know where Harry is and what he’s doing before we release that information to the public. They’re going to find out about Harry whether we tell them or not, I’m sure, so we just want to have a solid story sorted for when it happens. We need to be sure Harry isn’t dangerous before we start representing him.”

“Representing him? Like, you want him to model?”

“No, but he’s going to be linked to you and you’re our model. You care for him and he only trusts you, so people are going to want to know about the two of you. About a model’s relationship with a wild man from the jungle. It makes an incredible story, you have to admit. People are going to be falling over themselves to find out more.”

Louis looked to Harry, who by that point had become incredibly bored with the conversation and had moved on to staring out the window. He hadn’t even thought about that, about the fame Harry was surely going to get. He’d only really considered how his own would grow because of the advert; how they’d used real wild gorillas and stumbled upon a human who spoke monkey and swung through trees during the shoot. He’d forgotten that Harry would be a celebrity in his own right.

“So you want me to figure out if Harry will cooperate with the researchers, or if he’s going to be kicked out of England, before the advert’s release? So you can know whether or not to mention Harry then or wait for the information to come out by itself, is that right?”

His manager beamed. “Exactly. Can you do that?”

“Not tomorrow. Monday. When I go back to work, because this is work.”

“Of course, yes.” She said excitedly, nodding her head hard and quick. “Just take him to a few different universities, see if there are any that you both like, and find out a bit more of what they want to do with him.”

Which is how they came to be at Westminster, the first university of the day.

The people were all nice, but a little too nice. It all seemed a bit fake, and Louis couldn’t help but wonder whether their overcompensation meant they were incredibly wicked in reality.
“Sit.” A woman said, ushering them to a few chairs in an empty classroom. Then she introduced herself, and shook the hands of Louis, the manager, and made an attempt with Harry. But the man just stared at her hand, then looked to Louis.

“You shake it. See.” He said, demonstrating with his manager, and Harry tried to do the same. Except he squeezed her hand so tight the woman flinched.

“Do you do that often? Translate for him?” she asked, and Louis nodded.

Then asked “So can we get to it? We’ve got a lot of people to see today.”

“Oh. Yes, I suppose.” She replied just as bluntly. “I suppose you’re wondering what we want to do with Harry. Well, we are most interested in his socialisation. How he reacts to different situations in public, and how he reacts to the consequences. We’re also interested in whether he learns how to respond appropriately without needing to be taught. If the basic instinct to fit in and follow the crowd is ingrained or learned.”

“Nature or nurture.” Louis said, and the woman nodded. “What kind of studies are you planning on doing?”

“It’s all observational. We set up situations, and watch how he reacts to them.”

“What kind of situations though?”

The woman shuffled in her seat, and Louis raised an eyebrow. He couldn’t help but wonder if they’d assumed he was stupid because of his occupation; that he was just going to sit and listen and look pretty with nothing to say. She cleared her throat and said “Well, for example, picking up on social cues. If one person in a room was to look up, chances are everyone else would as well in case there was something worth looking at. Animals, on the other hand, don’t. So whether Harry follows the line of sight of his fellow humans or ignores them completely, that may tell us something.”

“Oh.” Louis said simply, because what a boring and unimpressive study. “It would just be simple things like that?”

“Mainly.” She said, nodding her head.

Louis left feeling somewhat underwhelmed, but also incredibly uncomfortable. He didn’t like them.

He felt judged walking through the halls, as if he wasn’t good enough to be in them; like he was a student in Secondary School again with the teachers looking down at him. Plus, no one had said a single thing to Harry.

So Louis did, when they walked out of the psychology building. “Do you like her?”

“No.” he answered simply.

“Why not?”

“I don’t know.” Harry said, and Louis nodded.

“You just feel it? Me too.”

“Harry Lou go home?” he asked hopefully, and Louis sighed.
“Not yet. We’ve still got two more places to go.”

At least they had a driver. Louis’ manager had organised one through the modelling agency so they wouldn’t have to make Harry use public transport, and Louis was grateful for that. He couldn’t imagine what Harry would be like on the tube or on a bus. He’d probably press the stop button continuously like a child would, or jump out the door at every tube stop until they got to their one. Just imagining it had Louis smiling.

The second place was much more interested in Harry’s brain and how it worked. They wanted to put Harry through intelligence and memory tests, and observe his brain while he did them. “Using an MRI scanner, we can watch how active the different lobes of his brain are while he does different tasks.” The man explained excitedly. He was such a cliché, with big glasses and wispy hair and pale skin. There was something about him that just made Louis feel sick.

“What would that achieve?” Louis asked, and the man’s smile dropped momentarily.

“We would like to see if his brain works in a way that is all human, or a little closer to primate. We’re interested in seeing if his upbringing has caused any regression in how his brain functions.”

“So you want to see if he thinks like apes because he was raised by them?” Louis grunted.

And the man swallowed audibly. “I suppose we do, yes.”

“What do you think? What’s your hypothesis?” Louis asked, and he could see his manager looking somewhat impressed with him out of the corner of his eye.

“We – well, we believe he may be quite similar to the ape. They aren’t much different to humans to begin with, so Harry may likely be somewhere in the middle.”

“All right. We’ll be in touch.” Louis replied as he stood, and the man was quick to stand and shake their hands goodbye.

Louis wiped his hand on his jeans as soon as they were out of the weird man’s sight.

“What did you think about him?” the manager asked.

“I don’t get what they want to do, and I don’t like that they want to use fancy equipment to study his brain. And that they want to put him through intelligence tests and shit like that, there’s something weird about that to me.”

“Intelligence tests aren’t odd. People do them all the time.” His manager assured him, and Louis groaned.

“Let’s just do the last one.”

It was LSE, and they were definitely Louis’ favourite, by far.

At first they were quite boring, bragging about how their University was the best for Psychology and Sociology in all of the UK, but they seemed genuinely friendly, and weren’t in clothes that looked suffocating like the others’ had been in. They were relaxed and comfortable, and Louis liked that. He didn’t feel all that different to these researchers, and he didn’t feel like they were looking down on him.

Still, he’d learnt better than simply going off first impressions, so he asked “What are your plans with Harry?”
The woman with a high slick bun said “We’re interested in his socialisation.”

“We’re interested in the same thing.”

“Really? I suppose they just wanted to know about his social interactions? How he reacts in public situations?”

Louis frowned. “Yeah actually, that was it.”

“And they just wanted to observe him?”

“Yeah.”

“See, we’re interested in far more than that, and we want to do more than that as well. We’re willing to teach him as we study.”

“Teach him what?”

She shrugged. “Everything. How to communicate, how to behave in a socially acceptable way, how to do things for himself. We want to offer him a grant too, just a bit of money each week for being part of our project.”

Louis’ eyes narrowed, because no one else offered them money and it was making him suspicious. “And what is your project?”

“Like we said, we want to observe him. But not just his social interactions. We’re interested in absolutely everything about him. His mood, emotions, how he relates, how he expresses himself, how he reacts, and the list goes on.”

Louis nodded, and looked to Harry. Who looked bored out of his mind. He was undoing the buttons of his shirt and then redoing them, and Louis wondered if he was just trying to give himself something to do or if he was practicing the task he’d only recently learnt.

“Harry?” Louis said, and Harry’s eyes shot up before he grinned wide. “Are you okay?”

“Good. Harry Lou home?”

“Yeah, soon.” Louis replied with a nod, and Harry nodded back. Then Louis looked to the researcher, who was watching them both intensely. He ignored it though, and asked “Is that all?”

“Just one more thing. You’d be invited to witness our studies any time you like. You could come watch for the whole day, or drop in when you can. We wouldn’t mind that at all.”

“Yeah?”

She smiled. “We’d prefer that, actually. You might be a positive influence on his education, considering he is so fond of you.”

“I suppose.” Louis said slowly, not wanting to commit to anything just yet. He was already quite set on this university, but he didn’t want to promise his presence when he might not be able to deliver it. “We’ll get back to you.”

---

It was the third one they decided on in the end, simply because they were the only ones who mentioned helping Harry out rather than just using him for their own research. And maybe because
they also invited Louis along to watch.

Louis obviously wanted to see what they were up to, so if Harry was uncomfortable he could say something or if he was upset he could stop it. But that wasn’t the only reason.

He didn’t like the idea of these strangers knowing more about Harry than he did.

Louis liked that Harry was so comfortable with only him, and it did something to his stomach when he thought about Harry being like that with others.

But he knew that was possessive, to think like that, so Harry seeing more of the world than just what he himself had to offer was for the best.

Louis and Harry had until that Monday afternoon to make their decision, and to Louis it was obvious who he himself would pick, but ultimately it was Harry’s choice.

As soon as they got back to their flat, Harry was pulling Louis onto the sofa for a cuddle.

“Hang on Haz, I’m dying for a cuppa.” Louis groaned, and Harry just boinked him on the nose with his index finger and climbed into his lap so he couldn’t move. “You’re too big for this!” Louis mock-complained because it was easier than admitting he liked having the solid weight of Harry on his thighs. Plus, Harry was sitting so they were chest-to-chest and his chin was digging itself into Louis’ neck and it was making him warm all over.

“Lou?” Harry grunted, breath tickling Louis’ skin and making the hairs at the back of his neck stand up.

“Yeah?” Louis asked, suppressing a shiver.

Harry groaned and sat back up, looking down at Louis with a little frown, and for a second Louis thought Harry was going to kiss him. Especially when Harry began chewing at his bottom lip and his eyebrows furrowed, clearly contemplating something. “Harry come on Lou. Where?”

It was Louis’ turn to be confused. “Sorry? I don’t understand.”

Harry groaned again, and broke into a fit of titters, slipping in a few *ooo ooo* occasionally.

It wasn’t the first time they’d had problems with miscommunication, but it was the most frustrated by it Harry had ever been.

So Louis cooed and pulled him back into his chest, rubbing Harry’s back with one hand while the other stroked his hair. “Are you asking where we are?” Harry shook his head. “Where we are going?”

Harry pulled back again and nodded, eyes wide.

“Today?” Louis asked.

“No.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t know. Maybe back to one of the universities.”
Harry began to bounce up and down on Louis’ thighs, grinning wide like Louis was finally on to something. “Where?”

So it had something to do with the researchers, and Harry had originally asked where he was following Louis to. “Do you mean which University?” he tried.

“Yes!” Harry squealed, and nuzzled his way back into Louis’ neck.

“Which one did you like: one, two or three?” he asked.

“I don’t know.” Harry grunted.

“Okay. Umm – all right.” Louis thought aloud, trying to think of a way to explain himself. Words obviously weren’t going to work, and he was shit at drawing, so he gently nudged Harry off him until he was sitting back on the sofa and then Louis stood up in front of him. Charades it would have to be. “Okay, so number 1.” Louis held out one finger, then began to mimic the first lady as best he could. He stood up straight, put his chin in the air, and repeated a few of the things she said in a high pitched posh London accent. Harry squawked and clapped his hands, and Louis hoped he understood and wasn’t just laughing at the show. “Number 2.” He said, then stopped for a moment. He couldn’t remember much about the man, other than the fact that he was incredibly boring. “Oh!” Louis exclaimed, then made little circles with his thumbs and pointer fingers and put them around his eyes. “He had glasses, remember? And he – umm.” Louis couldn’t quite remember anything distinctive about his voice, so the glasses would have to be enough. “Number 3.” Louis finally said, and frowned in thought.

“Lou come on Harry!” Harry yelled, then put up three fingers. “Three!”

“You understood that?” Louis asked, game of charades totally forgotten. “When the woman was talking, and said that Louis could come watch, you listened to that?”

Harry nodded, and pulled Louis down on to the sofa again so he could cuddle into his side.

“You’re more observant than I thought.” Louis muttered, and Harry tittered.

“When 3?”

“When are we going?” Louis asked, and Harry nodded. “They want us to decide by this afternoon so we can start tomorrow. I’ve got to go in to do actual modelling work on Wednesday, so we only have tomorrow before I have to see my people. I’ve got to be debriefed before the cologne launch Thursday night, apparently.” Louis rolled his eyes, because it wasn’t like he’d never been to a launch before. He’d been to loads, and they were all the same, but still every time he had to meet with some people to discuss how he would act and what he would say if he was spoken to. It was a pretty big if, because people usually weren’t that interested in the models. Maybe for once they’d leave Louis alone, but it was unlikely; he was sure to get a few questions about his relationship status thrown at him. Plus, there was the fact that he’d travelled to an entire different continent for the photo-shoot; there was sure to be some interest about that.

“Tomorrow.” Harry repeated.

“I’m going to go get a tea.” Louis said, without bothering to offer Harry one. They’d already tried Harry on tea once and the man had spat it all out on the kitchen counter. While Louis was up, he called his manager to tell her their choice, and she promised to find out the time they were expected to be there.
Schools had always put Louis on edge.

He was always getting into trouble in both Primary and Secondary School because he wasn’t book-smart and did terribly on tests. He didn’t pay attention because he didn’t see the point, and his tolerance of boredom was incredibly low, so he was always the one mucking around and disrupting the class. He spent most of his lunch breaks in detention, which were utter hell for him because he didn’t even have to write out lines; his punishment was just to sit still at a desk for half an hour with nothing at all to do except look at his supervisor.

The only class he liked was drama because he could move around the room as much as he liked and talk to people and was applauded for putting on voices and using boisterous gestures. He’d decided that if he was to go to university that’s what he would study, but the thought had always daunted him. He’d been looking forward to the end of school for the previous twelve years, he didn’t want to voluntarily sign himself on for another three.

It was lucky, then, when he got scouted.

He’d been eighteen, drunk and grinding up against a man at a club, when it happened.

He’d laughed and pushed away the woman at first, thinking she was in some serious denial about his sexuality, but she just rolled her eyes and put her card into the front pocket of his chinos.

The next day, after the worst of his hangover had passed, he called her up and organised a meeting.

And that was it. He was signed to a modelling agency.

It felt like he’d come full circle when he walked through the halls of LSE, Harry in tow. The walls felt just as constricting as they had in Secondary School, and the ceiling just as suffocating; the click-clacking of heels on the marbled floor just as daunting and the inquisitive glances of other students just as terrifying. His first instinct was to make a scene, yell out something stupid and embarrassing so he could know and control exactly what they were thinking about him, but he had to remind himself that he was a semi-famous model now, not an out-and-proud teen with something to prove. They were most likely just checking him out or wondering whether they should ask to take a picture with him. Or maybe they were actually looking at Harry, grinning around a banana, tangled hair pulled back from his face by the scarf wrapped around his head, and Louis was just being paranoid.

They were led into a large bare room that was filled with five or so other people, each holding clipboards and wearing lab coats. It was ridiculous, because it wasn’t like they were doing chemistry, but Louis figured they had their reasons. His whole career was based on looking the part, so maybe that’s what they doing.

“We need you to read over this consent form and sign for it.” She said, and Louis was surprised to see the form pushed in his direction.

“Shouldn’t Harry sign it?”

“Can he read?” she asked, and Louis shook his head. “Would he understand if you explained it to him?”

“Probably not.”

“So as his guardian we require you to do it.”

“But I’m not his legal guardian.”
“You are.” His manager suddenly said from the back of the room, and Louis had almost forgotten about her.

“What do you mean, I am?”

“We had to make somebody his guardian, and the most obvious choice was you.”

“Wouldn’t I have to know about that, though? Like, sign for something?”

The manager shook her head but didn’t elaborate, so Louis just sighed. His life hadn’t been his own for a while, it didn’t surprise him that something like that went on without his knowledge.

Then Louis frowned. “Hang on, does that mean I’ve adopted him?”

“No.” the researcher laughed. “It just means you are responsible for him. You aren’t his parent.”

“Oh.” Louis muttered, and took the consent form from her hands. He wished he’d paid more attention in law classes at school, but he supposed they wouldn’t have covered *what to do if you become a guardian of a jungle man*.

He read it thoroughly, noting that Harry could pull out any time if he wanted, that Harry could have a friend or guardian present whenever he liked, that he could stop for the day at any time if he chose to. He couldn’t find anything suspicious, so he passed the form on to his manager to check through it too.

As annoying as she was, they’d always been upfront with each other. She’d never done anything to hurt him, and he’d never suspected that she had anything but his best interests at heart.

“Should our lawyers look over it?” Louis asked, and his manager pushed herself up from her chair.

“I’m just going to make a call and I’ll be back.”

She left the room, phone in one hand and consent form in the other, and it felt like ages before she came back.

“Sign it.” She said as soon as she sat down, so Louis did.

“Now,” the head researcher said, pushing herself back into her seat. “This is just going to be a short session. We just want to introduce ourselves, discuss what we want to know and how Harry can help us get there. Sound good?”

Louis nodded, and that was all the confirmation she needed before she began her thoroughly-planned spiel.

Like Westminster, they were mostly looking for information to support their argument in the nature-nurture debate. They believed that one’s persona wasn’t completely set in their biology since birth, but it was the environment they grew up in that was the most important.

“So you think Harry being brought up by apes will have shaped him more than being born as a human?”

“That is our hypothesis, yes. We could still be wrong, though, so we could in fact find that the total opposite is true.”

“That Harry’s humanity will win out?” Louis asked hopefully, and the woman smiled.
“Yes, exactly. Or we could find that our study is awful and doesn’t prove anything.” She laughed, and Louis relaxed.

He was silent for most of the next few hours, just listening as the researchers asked Harry questions about what he could remember about his life in the jungle. That conversation didn’t last long, what with Harry having a very limited vocabulary. Afterwards, someone appeared with flashcards and sat before Harry.

“Banana.” He demanded, and someone ran off to get him a bunch. He ignored the researcher until he had one in his hand. “Go.” He said, and it made the researchers smile.

The only male researcher held up a flash card, and Harry roared impossibly loud.

“Tiger.” The man said back, and Harry roared again.

“It sounds very realistic, doesn’t it?” the head researcher whispered into Louis’ ear.

Louis nodded proudly, because it was an incredible talent Harry had.

“He’s a very good mimic. It may be why he has picked up English so quickly.” she theorised, and Louis shrugged.

He was distracted from responding by a few cheers from the centre of the room, where Harry was sitting across from the male researcher, smiling from ear to ear.

“He got the word.” The head researcher explained, before Louis even had to ask. “Like I said, he’s a good mimic.

The man went through the cards, and for each one Harry would make the animal’s noise and eventually copy the name for it. After the last one, the man came back to the start and didn’t say anything.

“Tiger.” Harry said, and the researcher grinned.

Harry remembered about 70% of the animal names during the first run through, and all but three in the second one. After the third he got them all right, and was given another banana break.

“Why are you teaching him animal names?” Louis asked, watching as Harry peeled the fruit from the bottom. “And also why does he open them like that?”

“That’s how gorillas peel bananas. And we are trying to teach him jungle related words first with the hope that he will be able to tell us more about his life. He’s doing very well, I didn’t expect this at all.”

“What did you expect?”

“For him to take more than three tries to remember a word and grasp its meaning.”

“Oh. Do you know why he might be able to do that?”

“He’s obviously a good mimic, so that might explain things. Or maybe he learned English before, maybe in his childhood, and has not completely forgotten it.”

Louis wondered then if he should bring up what he’d taken from Harry’s tree house. He hadn’t looked at any of it yet, not even a simple flick-through of one of the journals, so he thought maybe he should hold onto that information in case the information was useless and he just got her hopes
up. Plus, there was the fact that he didn’t entirely trust her; he hadn’t known her long enough to.

So he remained silent, simply watching Harry copy their words and let out squeals of delight when they clapped for him, for another hour at least.

He took the flash cards they offered him, promising to test Harry when they got home so he could practice, and left in a hurry.

Louis was relieved to see that Harry was smiling afterwards, and well into the night. He was grinning when they showered, and tittered happily as they climbed into bed. He listed off the new words he’d learned, making the coinciding noise after each one, and every time Louis would smile and pat him on the head and praise him, which Harry loved.

In the morning, Louis had to explain to Harry that he couldn’t stay with him for the entire research session.

“I have the meeting to go to, remember?” he said, and Harry frowned.

“Lou come on Harry! Lou stay!”

“I can’t, really! I’ll stay for a few hours, and then Zayn will come meet you here and bring you home. There’s a football game on this afternoon you two can watch.”

Harry glared at Louis, and turned away from him without another word.

Louis couldn’t help but feel a little jealous when Harry began hugging each of the researchers, even though it was quickly becoming obvious that was just his way of greeting. Louis sat down in his chair, crossing his arms because he was in a sulking kind of mood, and watched as the session began.

When it was finally time to go, Harry didn’t even give him a second glance.

He just returned Louis’ farewell with a grunted “Bye” and went back to learning the words for plants.

---

He only found out one thing of note during the debriefing, and that was that they were going to keep Harry secret.

“We want you to talk about your jungle experience as much as you like without mentioning the jungle man. That is something we will bring out later.” Louis’ head of PR said. “He has nothing to do with our client, and a lot more to do with your public image, so we have been given full control over that information.”

“But I thought they wanted people to know about Harry so more people would talk about it?”

“They already have been given a lot to talk about. First, there is the fact that you travelled to the Congo for the photo-shoot. Everyone is already talking about how innovative that was, et cetera et cetera. Secondly the print advertisement will be revealed last.

“Even after the television commercial?”

“Even after the television commercial.” The PR man replied, and Louis was nearly jumping out of his seat he was so excited. The television commercial starred LA’s hottest movie star of the
moment, spouting off some stupid line about women following their instincts, so men should become Hugo Boss’ Instinct or something else equally ridiculous. They shot the advert on the location of his latest film, in some random Australian rainforest, and people were excited about that. So excited that the people at Hugo Boss thought it would be a good idea to send Louis off somewhere for the photo-shoot instead of just creating a set.

Louis thought it was ridiculous to be throwing that much money around, but it also meant that more was being thrown his way so he didn’t complain. He just took the extra pay and promised to go wherever they wanted him to. “Why though? That’s just going to create so much hype for my advert.”

“Because of the third reason. The gorillas. People will be beside themselves when they learn those gorillas were wild. That you and the other models all posed with wild dangerous animals for a photo; people will go crazy for it. Not to mention that it is an incredibly beautiful shot. I heard someone say it’s the best print advertisement that has ever been created for cologne.”

“Shit.” Louis huffed out a breath, falling back into his seat. This was all a lot to take in. He’d known it was a good shot, and that the feedback from it would be positive, but a part of him thought that was just himself being cocky. People really were going to love it.

“This is going to do wonders for your career, Louis. You’ve just got to sell yourself as hard as you do the product tomorrow night. When people ask about the jungle, stay quiet about the gorillas until after the reveal. Then say as much as you want. Say that one of them almost killed you, if you like.”

“Well, one did.”

“Excellent! Tell them the story! Tell them how one almost ripped your body to shreds.”

“That wasn’t really what hap-“

“I don’t care, I just want you to sell it. If you become known as the model who will push himself to the limits for his clients, you can get any job you like.”

---

When Louis got home that afternoon, Harry was sitting with Zayn on his sofa, just watching some footy.

“Hey.” He grumbled, and Harry grinned and beckoned him over by patting his lap.

“How was it?” Zayn asked, and Louis smiled as he collapsed onto Harry.

“Really good. Things aren’t going to be the same for me after tomorrow. Well, for my job. Things haven’t really been the same since before the jungle.”

“Yeah, you weren’t living with a giant teddy-bear.” Zayn snorted.

“How was he today, when you picked him up?” Louis asked, and Harry push his nose into the hair at the nape of his neck.

“Good, I guess. They gave me loads of flash cards for you to go through with him, and asked for the ones they gave you the other day back if you’re finished with them.”

“How was it Harry?” Louis asked, turning around as much as Harry’s grip would let him.
“Good.” He said, still smiling wide.

“Did you tell them anything more about yourself? Or are you still just learning words?”

Harry blinked. “I don’t know.”

“All right, sorry.”

“Lou come on Harry tomorrow?”

“Yeah, for a few hours.” He promised, and Harry grinned. It seemed like Louis was already forgiven for leaving him earlier.

“So what did they say about Harry?” Zayn asked. “Are they going to tell the world about him just yet? Might fuck up the research if they do.”

“No, they’re going to sit on it for a while longer. They must have paid off everyone else who was with me in the jungle; they seem confident no one will talk.”

“Maybe I should threaten to release the information. See how much I get for it.” Zayn joked, and Louis just yawned.

“You want to head off now?” Louis asked, and Zayn laughed.

“Really subtle, Tommo. But yeah, I better get going. Got assignments to do and tests to study for.”

As Zayn was pushing himself up, Louis stopped him. “Hey, I forgot to ask. Do you want to be my plus-one to this thing tomorrow?”

“Seriously?” Zayn asked, eyebrows raised, because Louis had never invited him before. He’d always gone with celebrities his PR team set him up with.

“Yeah, they’re letting me choose who I take this time.”

“Why?”

“Not sure. Do you want to come or not? I’m sure Niall will co-“

“Yes! Yes, I’ll go.” Zayn said, nodding quick.

Louis grinned. “Good.”

---

He didn’t know exactly when it happened, but at some point he’d fallen asleep still sitting on Harry’s lap.

He woke up to the sound of a loud moan and something hard jutting up against his arse, and when he finally opened his eyes they were met by giant bobbing boobs on the television screen before him.

“Fuck.” Louis grunted, and rolled off Harry’s lap to find the remote.

He had to laugh when he realised it was just an episode of Game of Thrones, not a porno Harry accidently put on, and he was still laughing when he sat himself back down in Harry’s lap.
Then he shot up again, because Harry was hard as a rock.

“Lou?” Harry groaned, a mix of arousal and fear.

“What?” Louis asked, looking anywhere but Harry because he was beginning to feel a little turned on and controlling himself would be that much harder looking at Harry’s blown out pupils and sweaty forehead and chewed-red lips.

“Ouch.” Harry said simply, then stuck a hand down his pants.

“Shit.” Louis groaned, and unintentionally took a step closer, eyes fixed on the part of Harry’s wrist that was only just peeking out of his trousers.

“Help Lou!” Harry begged, voice low and gruff and shaky.

“I – I can’t!” Louis said back, not sounding at all sure of himself.

“Please!”

“Just – just move your hand, okay? Up and down.”

“Help!” Harry begged again, and Louis could only just make out what his hands were doing underneath his clothing. By the looks of it, Harry was trying to push his cock back down so it was lying flat again.

“No, don’t do that! Ouch!” Louis said, and Harry let go of his cock with a small pained groan. What was Louis to do? He couldn’t touch Harry, because even though the jungle man was asking for help he still didn’t know what he was begging for. The only way this would be right is if Harry got himself off. But how was Louis going to show him without getting his own cock out?

Then he had an idea.

He ran off to the kitchen, ignoring Harry’s whimpers of protest momentarily, and returned with a bunch of bananas.

“Okay. So. This is your cock.” Louis tried to explain, holding one of the bananas in his hand.

“Banana!” Harry begged, so Louis threw him one of the others in the bunch. Harry quickly unpeeled one and shoved it in his mouth, chewing at it desperately as he shoved his hand down his pants again.

“Umm, right. Well, this is your cock.” He said again, and Harry nodded. “Wrap your hand around it like this.”

Harry nodded again, and moved his hand beneath his trousers. Then he sighed and pushed them off, along with his pants, so Louis could see everything.

“Fuck.” Louis groaned, because that looked painful. His tip was red and leaking and the base was almost purple, and it took every last ounce of self-restraint for Louis not to suck Harry into his mouth.

“Lou?” Harry choked out, and Louis centred himself again. Harry’s hand was wrapped around the base of his cock, the other around his banana, and he was just waiting for Louis’ next command.

“O-okay. You’ve got to move your hand up and down.” Louis said, stroking the banana in his hand.
As soon as Harry started moving his hand he was moaning, so loud and unabashed. His eyes were fixed on Louis’ as it ran up and down the banana, his own hand matching the rhythm perfectly, and for a second Louis was a little frustrated that Harry wasn’t totally lost in the sensation. How could he be keeping up with Louis when he was so turned on?

“Then you do this.” Louis croaked out, swiping his thumb over the top of the banana, and Harry did the same along the tip of his cock.

That earned him a loud animalistic grunt.

So Louis continued playing with the top of the banana, watching Harry torture his tip with his fingers, before getting sympathetic and moving his hand back to the banana’s base.

Only Harry didn’t follow that movement.

Louis looked up to Harry’s face, to see his head bent back over the head of the sofa and his eyes shut and the banana firm between his lips.

“Fuck.” Louis groaned. He was never going to see bananas the same again. He wouldn’t be surprised if he came his pants every time Harry stuck one in his mouth.

The noise had Harry cracking open an eyelid, noticing what Louis was doing to the banana and dropping his fingers away from the head of his cock so he could wrap them around his shaft and stroke quick.

It didn’t take more than a few pumps before Harry was coming, and Louis would have laughed at the way the banana fell from between Harry’s lips when he clenched his teeth during orgasm if he wasn’t so desperately hard.

Harry squealed with delight at the pool of come on his belly, and immediately stuck his fingers in it.

“Lou! Look! Harry’s!”

“Fuck.” Louis groaned, because Harry’s excitement shouldn’t be turning him on this much.

Harry looked at him hard, eyes stopping at his groin, and then he smiled.

“Lou come on Harry!” he said, patting the sofa beside him.

Louis warily did, trying to will his hard on away, but then Harry shoved the half-chewed banana in Louis’ mouth and stuck a hand down his pants.

“Hmm-rry.” Louis moaned from around the banana, but Harry just grinned and began stroking him quickly.

Louis threw his head back on the sofa and clenched his fists, because it was unreal.

The banana between his lips was so much hotter than it should have been. Louis wasn’t exactly in the mood for theorising why exactly that was when he had a big callused hand around his cock, but he thought it was something to do with the texture of it against the inside of his lips and how he was instinctively trying not to bite down on it. Mentally, it was like he had a cock in his mouth. One he could just suck on at his own pace that tasted nice and wasn’t shoving its way down his throat; like it was politely asking entrance to his mouth and was happy just to be suckled. His jaw ached in that pleasantly familiar way, and he was forced to pay the slightest amount of attention to
it so it wouldn’t fall further into his mouth and push at the back of his throat, and it was blowing his mind. Even though it was just a piece of fucking fruit.

Then Harry started toying with the head of his cock with wet nimble fingers, teasing at the slit with his fingertips and rubbing hard just beneath with his come-covered thumb.

“Fuck.” Louis groaned loud, making the banana drop out of his mouth, and Harry tittered and shoved it back in. As if the banana was a requirement for hand jobs.

Before Louis could tell him they very much weren’t, Harry’s hand was back around his cock and his head was falling against the sofa.

And Harry’s fingers were playing with his cockhead again, torturingly slow.

Just when Louis was about to beg Harry to stop, that the feeling was getting to be more painful than enjoyable, the jungle man was dropping his hand back down to his shaft and tugging it hard.

His palm was so hot and wet, pumping up and down fast and rough, that Louis came within a matter of minutes.

His jaw fell open when he did, going slack as he silently screamed, so that the banana in his mouth slipped further down and hit the back of his throat.

He gagged and spat it out, and looked to Harry when he heard the jungle man’s snorting laugh.

Harry held out his come-covered hand and waved it back and forth in front of Louis’ face before asking “What’s this?”

“It’s. Fuck – it’s come.” He muttered back, really not in the mood to give a sex-ed lesson. He was much more in the mood to sleep. And maybe shower and eat something.

“Uh uh.” Harry mocked with a grin. “Lou’s come.” Then he licked it. Licked it up with his tongue wide, running from his wrist to the top of his middle finger, leaving traces of it on his chin and the tip of his nose. “Hungry.” Harry said, then got off the sofa and strolled into the kitchen like they’d done all this before.

The sound of Harry rattling through the fridge pulled Louis out of his daze, and he rushed out of the room to join Harry. “How are you?”

Harry grinned. “Good. Hungry.”

“Want me to make you some dinner?”

“Yes. Please.” Harry said, and Louis smiled because that was a new word.

“Do you know what just happened?”

Harry shrugged, and elbowed Louis. “Hungry!”

“Right.” Louis sighed, and grabbed some bread out of the freezer. He wasn’t much of a cook, so Louis was yet to make them anything more adventurous than salads on their organic diet. He didn’t have to cook anything, so the chances of Louis stuffing up were incredibly low. He was too tired, though, to even cut up a few vegetables, so ham and cheese sandwiches it was going to be for dinner.

As Louis buttered the bread, Harry asked “Lou like come?”
Louis paused for a moment, before pulling some ham slices out of the packet. “Do you mean do I like the taste of it?”

Harry shook his head. “Harry like that. When Lou come. Louis like to come?”

“Yeah.” Louis coughed, and willed his blush to go away.

“Harry like to. Good.” Harry said matter-of-factly.

“Good.” Louis repeated, and sprinkled on some grated cheese because they didn’t have any of the sliced stuff. Then he put the sandwiches on some plates and carried them to the table.

Harry followed, hot on his heels, and was stuffing the sandwich into his mouth before he was even seated. He really was starving.

“Did you get food today? Did the researchers feed you?”

Harry nodded. “Bananas.”

“Is that it?”

He nodded again, and picked up some of the fallen cheese from his plate and pushed it between his lips.

“I’m going to have to pack you a lunch then I guess.” He muttered to himself, before finally beginning his own dinner. He wasn’t really hungry, though, so ended up just giving most of it to Harry. He gobbled it down with a muttered thanks.

They skipped the showers and climbed straight into bed, Harry staying completely nude while Louis put on a shirt and pyjama bottoms.

Before his head had even hit the pillow, Harry was nuzzling into Louis’ side.

It had been the first night in a while that Louis hadn’t at least tried to get Harry to sleep in his own bed, and not one bit of him minded. He’d been trying so hard, so he probably should have felt like his work was for nothing, but he didn’t care. He finally just accepted that he liked having Harry in his bed; that it was so much more comfortable with the warm jungle man by his side. So instead of keeping himself up with thoughts of what it could mean and why he shouldn’t be letting it happen, he simply put his arm around Harry’s waist and fell asleep to the sound of his low throaty humming.

---

Louis didn’t get a limo. He wasn’t exactly expecting one, but when the movie star stepped out from his Louis couldn’t help but feel a little jealous.

He rolled his eyes and turned to Zayn, who was openly staring at the man. They were in the function room already, staring out the giant glass window down at the street. Practically everyone was, though, to watch the movie star’s big entrance.

All he was doing was stepping out of a bloody car and walking into the building.

“He’s laying it on a bit thick, isn’t he?” Louis scoffed, and Zayn jumped.

He shrugged, then allowed himself one more look at the man, before turning to Louis completely. “He’s in pretty much every big film that’s being released over the summer. He’s literally the most
famous person in the world right now. And he’s American, you know how the English paps go crazy for American stars when they come over here.”

“I guess.” Louis muttered, and caught the eye of his manager. Who was waving him over, frown set on her little face. “Ugh, I’ve got another interview.”

The reporter was exactly the same as all the others. The first thing she asked was whether Zayn was his boyfriend, and didn’t accept his answer of “He’s just my best mate.”

Then she asked whether he was single, and Louis nodded.

She wanted Louis’ opinion on the movie star, and the cologne, and the jungle photo shoot.

Louis spent the most time talking about that, as his manager had told him.

He complimented the photographer and Hugo Boss for allowing him to be a part of it.

He joked about the bugs, and the amount of times he tripped over and got left behind.

When she asked about why his print advert was being released last, he gave her a sly smile and said “It’s a secret.”

He was told to leave them desperately wanting more, so he did.

The interview was over in a few minutes, and he got another few minutes to talk to Zayn, before he was dragged over to the next reporter.

When he was finally finished with the last one, he was given a glass of wine and was left to relax.

Which didn’t entail any actual relaxing, because he had to mingle with fancy fashion people and try to talk himself up to get more work.

He felt a bit sorry for Zayn, who looked bored out of his mind.

He wasn’t ever left alone for long, at least. There was always someone sidling up to him, and when Louis passed close enough he overheard someone asking him which agency he was signed with.

“None.” Zayn replied monotonously. “I don’t model. I’m a student.”

It was ridiculous that Zayn didn’t want to be a model, because he could make a fortune out of it. Louis had offered him help countless times, but Zayn always insisted he was meant to be behind the camera, not in front of it.

“You can help me once I’ve graduated from my photography degree.” Zayn would always insist, and Louis just had to accept it.

There was a moment when Louis was actually left alone for a few minutes, so he snuck outside onto the balcony for a breath of fresh air.

He hadn’t even been out there for a minute before someone was joining him.

It was the movie star, and Louis’ breath caught in his throat.

The man was gorgeous. He was tall and well built, tanned and dark haired. He looked to be in his thirties, small lines around his eyes and on his forehead.
“Louis Tomlinson.” He said, and Louis would have greeted him in return if he could get words out.

He really wasn’t good at talking to fit guys like this, one-on-one. At least there was no one else around to see him making a fool out of himself.

The movie star pulled a cigarette from the pack that had been in his pocket, holding it out for Louis. Louis shook his head, and the man lit up. Louis watched him inhale, and after he released the smoke from his lungs the man said “You know, I was quite angry when I heard your ad was getting a bigger reveal than mine.”

“Sorry.” Louis muttered, like he was a child being scolded.

“Don’t be sorry. I didn’t care once I saw the picture for myself.”

Louis looked at the man, trying desperately hard to ignore his perfectly stubbled jaw and incredible cheekbones. He’d seen much better countless times, but there was something magnetic about this guy. Louis wondered if the man had that quality before he was famous, or if it was the fame that made him so attractive. “Yeah?”

The man grinned, and Louis felt his knees buckle. “Yeah, it’s an incredible picture. Looks like it belongs in a gallery or something.”

“Thanks.” Louis got out, still surprised that he hadn’t stuttered even once. “Not that I did much. It was all the photographer.”

The movie star looked at Louis, his honey eyes dropping to his feet then slowly making their way up to the very top of his hair. “You make that photo. You were all I could look at when I saw it.”

“Oh. Th-thank you.” Louis said, and wasn’t sure what was more embarrassing; that he stuttered or that he was blushing so red.

He could have died when the man took a step closer, and rested his hand on the small of Louis’ back. When he spoke, Louis felt the movie star’s breath on his collarbones. “Just because you’re beautiful, it doesn’t mean I have completely forgiven you. You still owe me.”

“W-what do I owe you?” Louis asked, voice coming out in a whisper. The man was just so close, and Louis could hardly breathe. This movie star, the biggest in the world, was flirting with him. Little insignificant him.

Louis couldn’t supress his shiver when the man’s lips caressed his ear lobe and whispered “A glance at your dick. I felt personally teased by how your legs were bent to cover yourself up in that picture. Made me even more desperate to see you completely naked and spread out for me.”

And before Louis could respond, the movie star was letting Louis go and stubbing out his cigarette and heading back into the function, without even saying goodbye.

When Louis finally got his breathing under control, he frowned.

What the hell had just happened?

That man was a cocky arsehole, and Louis hated those. He had some serious sex appeal, sure, but now that Louis was broken from his spell he felt slimy just for having been so close to the guy.

Zayn popped his head through the door just as Louis was contemplating giving himself a serious wash in the bathrooms, and said “Your manager’s looking for you. I held her off when you were
talking to that movie guy, but she’s getting kind of mad now.”

“Okay.” Louis nodded, and followed his mate back into the room

When he found the woman, she did indeed look very mad. “Where were you?” she snarled.

“Outside. Why?”

“They’re starting. They want you sitting up front.”

Louis followed her instructions, so had to look like he was actually paying attention when the speeches began. The journalists were littered around the room, and their photographers were snapping photos constantly, so Louis couldn’t for a second look like how he really felt; bored shitless.

He pinched his face up as if he was concentrating, and laughed loud when everyone else did. He refrained from cringing when the movie star’s advert played, and clapped along with the others.

He sat up a little straighter when the host began talking about the print advert, listing off everything everybody already knew, like how far they’d travelled and who was in it, before saying “Something we didn’t plan on happened in the jungle, and I’m sure you will be just as excited about it as we were.”

Then the photo came up on a large screen behind him, larger than life-size, and everybody gasped before applauding loudly.

Blown up that big, the gorilla that had been behind Louis looked terrifying.

It was standing over him, looking down, and Louis was just staring straight into the camera; mouth a hard line, eyes a steely blue, posture straight and unnerved. His hair was a wild mess, and his skin was covered in patches of dirt, and he looked truly like a wild man. He wasn’t one to give himself credit where it wasn’t due, but the movie star had been right. He looked incredible.

The thought had him looking over to said movie star, who was openly staring at Louis with a sly grin on his face. When he licked his lips obscenely, Louis snorted and looked back to the screen.

With this photo in his portfolio, he was definitely going places.

---

All Louis wanted to do when he got home from the stupid function was have a long hot bubble bath and a glass of wine, but that craving slipped entirely from his mind when the first thing he saw after walking through his front door was a come covered Harry splayed across the sofa.

He was stark naked and dead asleep with strings of white across his stomach and chest, and all Louis could do was creep closer to have a better look.

It was borderline painful how beautiful the man was. No one should look like that, it was unfair to the rest of humanity. Or, namely, Louis, who never really stood a chance at not falling for him.

Harry slowly blinked his eyes open, and Louis wondered why because he was sure he’d never made a sound. “Lou.” He breathed, and held his arms up, eyes still closed.

Louis fell into them, and let himself be pulled against the bare chest of the jungle man.

“Where?”
“To the work thing, remember? Were you okay by yourself?” Louis asked with a whisper. For some reason, talking normally felt inappropriate and he couldn’t put a finger on why. Maybe because this situation felt too intimate for loud words.

“Good.” Harry muttered back. “Harry come good.”

“I saw.” Louis chuckled, and Harry grinned.

“Lou come now?”

“No, not now. I want to sleep.”

“Yes, good.” Harry grumbled, and wrapped a leg around Louis’ hip, sliding his calf between Louis’ thighs. “Sleep now. Shhh.”

And despite the fact that Louis’ arse was hanging off the side of the sofa, he didn’t for a second feel like he was going to fall back. Harry just felt that safe, even when he was teetering right on the edge.
The first thing Louis heard as he blinked his eyes open was Harry’s soft laughter. He fluttered his eyes some more, which only made Harry giggle harder, until he lifted his head to look around him. They were still on the sofa, only Louis had at some point shuffled further down so that he was lying over Harry with his face on his chest and his hips between Harry’s spread knees.

His cheek felt sticky from where it had been pressed into Harry’s sleep-sweaty skin. It wasn’t just sweat that had made the skin tacky, he realised with a groan, because the last thing Louis had seen before shutting his eyes the night before was Harry’s come.

Harry scoffed, and Louis looked up at his grinning face.

When the jungle man’s fingers began making their way to his face, Louis couldn’t help but flinch back. Only Harry wasn’t trying to stick them into his mouth like he had when they first met. He, instead, took a finger and softly ran the side of it through Louis’ eyelashes.


“Were they tickling you? Like this?” Louis proceeded to give Harry’s finger a butterfly kiss, and Harry grinned wider and nodded his head.

“On here.” Harry said, stroking between his pecs, so Louis did it again, where he had when he’d first woken up, on Harry’s chest. Harry smiled softly, and pushed his hand through Louis’ hair. Then he stopped, and pulled his hand back. “What’s this?”

Louis lifted his head again, only to see the dried up bits of white in Harry’s palm. “Oh fuck, that’s your come from last night!”

Harry laughed at Louis while the model rushed to the bathroom to look at himself in the mirror. There wasn’t much of it, just a little bit clumping some of his fringe together, but it still made him flush red.

He realised then that he was still wearing his shirt and jeans from the night before, having only shucked off his jacket before collapsing into Harry on the sofa, so he made quick work at undressing.

He turned on the shower, and mere seconds later Harry was popping into the room with a wide grin and some cute jabbers. “Lou come now?” he asked as he climbed in after Louis, and the model swallowed hard.

Before Louis could say anything, Harry had a hand around his cock and began to tug. All Louis could do was fall back against the tiled wall and groan.
When they finally got into Uni, only an hour or so late, Louis was pleased to find out that they didn’t have to come in the following day. He’d hoped that, considering it would be a Saturday, but he wasn’t completely sure until they’d told him.

They also said that it would be the last day they were going to try to find out more about Harry’s past, that the next week they were going to start some behaviour-based research, so once again Louis was just meant to sit back and watch as Harry was taught some words and asked some questions.

He felt a bit sick, though, when they started asking Harry about his parents.

“You know what a mother is, Harry?” It was the head researcher who said it, and Louis had liked her up until then.

He didn’t exactly know why his opinion of her changed so rapidly, or why the question had him shifting in his chair, but he wasn’t going to think much more of it. Not at that moment, anyway.

Harry shrugged his shoulders, and looked over to Louis. He frowned, which had Louis forcing a smile because obviously his own discomfort was showing.

The woman pulled out a fresh pack of flashcards, and Louis’ stomach twisted as she sifted through them.

Was it guilt that churned his stomach? That he was sitting on what could potentially be the answers to her questions, but was allowing her to put Harry through them anyway?

He hadn’t even looked through the books, he reasoned. They probably held nothing.

But still, his insides ached.

She held up a card with a woman holding a baby and said “Mother.”

“That’s a baby.”

“I know. We were all babies once, who came from a female. That female is called a mother. All animals have mothers, and humans do too. You would have seen mothers in the jungle.”

Harry nodded. “Mother gorillas. Mother monkeys.”

“You had a mother too. Maybe you still have a mother.”

Harry smiled. “Mother at home.” That had Louis and the researcher sitting up straighter in their seats. “Not Harry’s mother, mother gorilla. But Harry’s too.”

“What does he mean?” the researcher asked, turning to Louis.

Who looked back at her with bewilderment because he wasn’t completely sure.

So she asked Harry, without waiting for Louis’ reply, “What do you mean?”
“Gorilla mother to gorilla. Not Harry. But gorilla mother still Harry’s.”

“I think he means that back home, where he’s from, there was a gorilla who had children. And Harry felt like he was hers too, even though she wasn’t the – how did you put it? The female who he came from?” Louis tried his best to explain what he’d heard, what he’d taken Harry’s words to mean. Harry nodded, so he must have got something right.

“Not Harry’s mother, gorilla’s mother. But still Harry’s too. Not mother. Something.” He stumbled through his words, and it was Louis’ turn to nod along, because he got it.

The researcher looked rather pleased with herself, smiling wide at the two of them. “So he’s saying he had a connection with a female gorilla. He knows that he didn’t come from her, but what they had was still a kind of mother-child relationship. She must have treated him similarly to how she treated her own babies, or how else would he know the concepts of parenting that we haven’t explained yet? Features to parent-child relationships that aren’t just biological?”

She was rambling now, getting more and more excited. She changed cards, still grinning, and said “How about a father? A male who cared for you?”

That Harry had a lot more trouble understanding. He didn’t seem able to comprehend how the male fit into the relationship between mother and child; what a father figure was.

And the researcher’s excitement was quickly turning into frustration. “A male is needed to make a baby. Or at least, sperm, which is produced from the male. A female needs that to be able to make a baby inside her. And – he’s not getting any of this, is he?” she asked Louis.

“I don’t think so. He hasn’t exactly taken sex-ed before, so it’s not like he knows what fertilisation is.”

She was silent for a moment, seemingly deep in thought, before she turned to one of her colleagues. “Do you think you could rustle up a sex-education movie? He might not understand the words, but the images could be helpful.”

The other researcher said something about going to the library to find one, and Louis tried not to laugh.

He’d remembered having to watch those films in school, and how pointless they were because everyone had already learnt about that stuff years before; when one child would learn a little too much from an older sibling and share their new knowledge with the rest of the kids in their year. So teachers would put the movies in and spend the whole period trying to force the students to pay attention. It never worked. Once, during a particularly boring sex-ed video in Biology, Louis spent the entire lesson wiggling around the classroom pretending to be a sperm. That earned him a week of lunch time detentions.

He wondered what kind of sex ed films they kept at universities. Surely something much more advanced than the ones they showed to teenagers?

The library must have been a long way away, because the researcher didn’t get back for ages. It meant Louis had to awkwardly watch as the head researcher continued her attempts to get Harry to understand.

Surely Harry would know how babies are made? He would had to have seen some kind of gorilla mating action and put two and two together when a baby popped out of the female nine months later.
He’d been too deep inside his own thoughts to notice what the researcher had said, but he heard Harry when he replied with a very human-like “Oh” of realisation.


“How?” Louis let slip the confused sound, and Harry gave him a small smile and wave.

The researcher sighed, and sat back in her seat. “I mean, I’m no expert on gorillas but that makes sense from what little I do know about them. They’re similar to a lion pride, in that each pack has one male and seven or so females, plus the offspring. The male would act as more of a leader than any kind of care giver.”

“So Harry really has forgotten his human parents then?” Louis asked, and the woman shrugged.

“Maybe. He could be hiding something, or have blocked out particularly traumatic memories of them. We won’t know for sure until he can completely understand us and we him. That could take a while.”

Guilt churned Louis’ stomach again, but his need to protect Harry was what kept him silent about the answers he could possibly be sitting on. What if the journals held something horrifying? What would the researcher do with that information? Would she try to force something out of him, turn the research into an interrogation?

Maybe Louis was getting ahead of himself, but he couldn’t take that risk. He didn’t trust anyone else with Harry, and it went beyond his possessive nature. Harry was naïve and this world prayed on that; chewed up the innocent and spat them out bitter. Louis wasn’t about to just let that happen to someone else, especially not Harry.

“Sorry!” someone said as they burst into the room, and Louis turned to see it was the researcher from earlier holding a small pile of DVDs. “They were a lot harder to find, and I got a few more ideas.” The head researcher raised an eyebrow as the younger one approached them, heaving in breaths.

“So what are your ideas?” the woman in charge asked, when the heavy breathing noises were making the atmosphere a little too awkward for comfort.

Louis felt a bit sorry for her, actually, with how red and shiny her face was, and how it sounded like she was actually about to topple over any second. She actually ran to the library and back again. That’s commitment.

“I was thinking we could show Harry some clips from this gorilla documentary first. Perhaps ones of mating habits and child rearing, or something that shows the group dynamics? It might help us out too, and then we could show him the sexual education movie I found.”

She held it up then, and Louis groaned because it was definitely familiar. It was a boring BBC one the school had managed to somehow squeeze into the curriculum every year, and now he was going to have to watch it again.

The gorilla documentary was all right, though. Even pretty interesting.

Harry responded to it well, with small nods and the occasional soft throaty hum.

It was making more sense, too, why it took Harry a little longer to understand what a father was considering the researcher had defined one as another care-giver.
“Father gorilla hate Harry.” The jungle man said, and all eyes were on him. “No like. Fight.”

Louis blinked, and the head researcher shuffled closer to the edge of her seat, leaning forward to rest her elbows on the desk in front of her. “Why?” she asked, though Louis was much more interested in the hows. How did Harry know that? And how did he even know the word *hate*?

Harry shrugged. “Harry didn’t leave. Harry stay with mother gorilla too long.”

“What did he do to you? How did he fight? Did he hurt you?” Louis asked, and he felt it when everyone else in the room turned to look at him but he ignored them. He was staring too intently at Harry.

The boy smiled small, and Louis was just about ready to beg for answers again when he opened his mouth to reply. “No hurt Harry. Just angry. Tried make leave sometimes.”

It was silent for a moment as they waited for Harry to say more, but he didn’t. He just blinked at them, then turned back to watch more of the documentary.

“I mean, it makes sense, doesn’t it?” a researcher said, and Louis looked to her. She was one he’d never really noticed before. She was one he’d never really noticed before. He’d seen her, and knew her as the one who was always doing something on her tablet, but he’d never heard her speak. “When the gorilla offspring mature they go out and form their own groups, but Harry never did that. He stayed with the gorilla he had a connection to.”

Louis sat up straighter. “That’s not a very gorilla thing to do, is it?” His pulse began to race. “Like, he knew he was different, yeah? From the other gorillas? So he didn’t move on to new groups because he knew he wouldn’t have a role in them.” The head researcher raised her eyebrows at him, but Louis ignored her patronising stare because he was on to something. He could feel it. “I mean, it’s not like he could become the leader of a new group. He was an adult male that couldn’t mate, and wouldn’t have exactly wanted to. That would have made him question himself, yeah? Kind of makes you wonder about his – gorilla-ness or whatever you want to call it. The whole nature-nurture thing.”

The room was silent again, now that Louis’ rant was over, and it was becoming more and more obvious as the seconds ticked by that his argument had fallen on deaf ears.

“There could be other explanations.” Was what broke the silence, and Louis snorted.

“Like what? His mummy gorilla wouldn’t let him leave?”

“Let’s just put on the next DVD.” The quiet researcher had said, and Louis rolled his eyes.

“Are you sure you want to be here? We’re going to have to ask you to leave if you become hostile. Your mood could be stressful to the subject.”

Louis’ fists clenched and his nostrils flared, but his expression remained calm. Inside, he was seething. What did she know about what was good for Harry? She saw him as a *subject* for fuck’s sake. The only thing that was good for Harry in this room, this entire fucking *country*, was Louis.

“Just play the next movie.” He said through gritted teeth, and the woman’s patronising smile was back.

“Of course.” She said sweetly, and Louis’ cool was one nudge away from burning up.

Luckily, none of the researchers pushed.
The dedicated one, the researcher who’d run off to the library earlier, stopped the gorilla documentary and swapped it for the sex-ed one.

It gave Louis time to calm himself. Sure, it was to the sound of talk about eggs and sperm and penises entering vaginas but at least he didn’t have to listen to the head researcher any more.

The patronising cow.

The film was projected onto a blank wall, and it was a whole lot more confronting to Louis than when he’d watched it on shitty little TVs at school. The sperm before him was about the size of his head, wriggling its way into an egg, and Harry croaked.

Like, proper croaked. Louis would have thought there was a frog in the room if he hadn’t seen Harry do it.

“Did he just – “ the quiet researcher began, but Harry interrupted her with another one.

“Baby frog.” Harry said.

And Louis couldn’t help it; he threw his head back and laughed. He laughed so hard his stomach ached with it, and his ribs were burning as he heaved in breaths.

“That’s – uh – a baby frog is a tadpole. That is a sperm. That’s inside y- uh, males.” The head researcher said, and Louis felt elated at her discomfort.

Harry shrugged, and carried on watching the film, but Louis couldn’t quite wipe the grin off his face.

This bloody movie watching wasn’t helping anything. There wasn’t even a fucking point to it. Harry didn’t need to know the logistics of how he was born to understand his past, and the expressions on the researchers’ faces was proof of that. They were all side-eyeing each other, quietly muttering as they jotted things down in their notebooks or onto their tablets.

Harry made a small noise after a birth scene, when the umbilical cord of the baby was cut, but apart from that he said nothing. He couldn’t take his eyes off the screen, sure, but he wasn’t saying anything. He wasn’t giving the researchers anything, and Louis couldn’t help but feel happy about that.

“Well that was a waste of time.” Louis pronounced when the end credits started rolling, grin splitting his face. “You could have just told him the basic facts in about ten minutes.”

The researchers ignored him, and the head one began to flick through the DVD menu. There was a title called interactive in the Special Features bit, and as the researcher clicked on it she turned to face Harry with a smug smile. “So, Harry, do you have any questions?”

“Where sperm?” he said immediately, not even a second after the woman had stopped speaking.

And so began a proper sex talk, with diagrams from the DVD on the wall behind her. She explained how sex worked, how erections happened, how to prevent pregnancy, the lot. The film had all been biologically based, but the diagrams and short clips from the Interactive bit explained everything Louis had learned before puberty.

It was so fucking awkward and embarrassing and it shouldn’t have been because Louis was a grown fucking man, but the way Harry was shamelessly asking questions and commenting on the cartoonised sex-scene had Louis blushing red.
He’d even mimed wanking at one point, and asked “Sperms in Harry’s come?”

Louis was half tempted to crawl under his desk when Harry asked “Where banana?”

Luckily the researchers just assumed he was asking for one, but Louis knew.

“So do you understand that now? About sex and how humans are created?”

“What about Harry Lou?”

“Fuck.” Louis exhaled. He hadn’t meant to, it just sort of slipped out, and he regretted it because everyone in the room but Harry was turning to him. They probably would have anyway, considering Harry’s question.

“What about you and Louis?” the researcher asked, smiling small and knowing.

“How Harry Lou have sex for babies?”

“Shit.”

“Two men cannot have babies on their own. They need an egg, and a woman to carry the baby. They can have sex though.”

“How?”

“Don’t tell him!” Louis shrieked, jumping out of his chair. “Please don’t! I’ll explain it to him later, okay?”

“Are you sure? Because I found a DVD at the library that would – “

“No! Fuck, no.”

“Harry, would you like us to tell you?” the head researcher turned to Harry as she said it, and the man was sitting with furrowed brows and pouting lips.

“Harry want to know how sex Lou.”

“Please don’t tell him.” Louis begged, willing to drop to his knees he was so desperate. “I’ll explain it to him, yeah? Harry, I’ll explain it to you.”

Harry pouted some more. “When? Now?”

“Tonight, okay? I promise you.”

“With bananas?”

“Yes, if you want.”

“Harry want.”

“Okay, yes. Tonight. With bananas.” Louis replied, talking mostly to himself by now because fuck that would have been awkward. To have these researchers tell Harry about gay sex knowing full well why he wanted to learn about it. Even picturing the whole thing in his head had him reddening.

“So,” the head researcher said after a moment’s awkward silence, bringing all the attention from
Harry and back to her. “Do you want to know anything else?” Harry shook his head. “Have you any questions about parents?”

“No.”

“Have you remembered anything about your childhood yet?”

Harry tilted his head, and pursed his lips in thought. “Harry rem – rembers only gorilla mother.”

All of the researchers visibly deflated, dropping their shoulders and any semblances of smiles that had been on their faces. One even exaggeratedly sighed.

“Is that it for the day?” Louis asked hopefully.

The head researcher frowned, and looked to her colleagues. Who all shrugged. “I suppose so. There aren’t any other words we were actively going to teach him. Most words he will learn as he hears them used in conversations, so I believe we’ve finished for the day.”

“And for the week, yeah?”

“Yes. Next week the actual research will begin. He will be taking a lot of tests both physical and mental, so we expect to see him well-rested for Monday.”

“Yeah, okay. I can make sure he sleeps.” Louis said as he stood from his chair, motioning with his hand for Harry to do the same. “Harry will see you then. I don’t know if I’m working yet, so I can’t say whether I’ll be in or not.”

The researchers seemed just as eager to have them leave as Louis was, because they were nodding along and practically pushing them out the door with see you next times and have a good weekends.

As soon as the two of them were outside the room with the door shut behind them, Louis let out a long drawn out sigh of relief that had Harry chuckling.

“Harry Lou home now?”

“Yeah, we can go home.” Louis said, matching Harry’s grin.

“Lou teach Harry sex with bananas?”

Louis snorted at that, the whole thing becoming a lot funnier not that they didn’t have an audience. “Yeah, after we eat. We should probably get the driver to stop at the Tesco express round the corner from us, actually. Just get some sandwiches, I can’t be arsed cooking anything.”

Just as Louis was about to babble some more, he was stopped by a passing student.

She just wanted a picture, so he grinned for it and accepted her compliments and well-wishes, and then she was thanking him and hurrying off with a ducked head and pink cheeks.

It was a funny thing, because that was the first time he’d ever been approached at the University. People had always looked at him, but no one had ever tried speaking to him, even just to get a picture.

Louis shrugged and took out his phone, turning it on so he could text their driver, but he was interrupted again before he could even open Messages.

“I hate to be a pain,” she said, but it didn’t sound like she meant it. She sounded quite happy to be a
pain, actually. Excited even. “But could I get a picture please?”

Louis blinked. Two pictures in one minute was a new record, and he began to get a little suspicious. Still, he just nodded and plastered on his fake smile, and the girl gave Harry a quick appraisal before leaving them.

“Why?” Harry asked, and Louis shrugged.

“I don’t know. Well, sometimes I get stopped because they’ve seen my face and want to say hello and get a picture, but I don’t know what’s going on today. I kind of figured the Uni must have told people to leave me alone or something.”

When Louis looked back down to his phone, he saw that he had seven missed calls from his manager, and a few messages demanding Louis to call them. He ignored them for the moment, instead sending the driver a text to come get them, and he received a reply almost instantly with his ETA.

They began the walk to the cab rank where they always met when another person stopped him.

Louis was growing more and more suspicious, and when the girl asked “What is he like?” Louis really started to worry.

“What?” he replied with a tight smile, because the girl was grinning wide at him and he would have felt rude to not at least try to return her eagerness.

She rolled her eyes and said “As if you don’t know who I’m talking about. He’s only the biggest star in the world!”

“Oh, him. Uh, he’s nice.” Louis lied, and the girl laughed and excused herself to go to her class. As if Louis was the one that had stopped her for the conversation.

So that must have been it. The advertisement’s public release must have made some headlines on the breakfast shows around the country, and people were just getting excited about the fact that he was being talking about on the news. It had him relaxing, because he knew their eagerness to talk to him would die off reasonably quickly. Maybe even by tomorrow, if he was lucky.

By the time the driver had arrived and they’d climbed in the car, it felt to Louis as if he’d taken pictures with every student at the bloody place. His wait had consisted of a constant string of ‘fans’ wanting pictures or to talk about the movie star. Louis hadn’t realised the guy was that big in England, to have people so excited to meet an acquaintance of his.

The whole thing was ridiculous, and Louis was getting more and more fed up as the minutes ticked by.

He was also growing increasingly worried about Harry and what he was thinking. The man looked confused more than anything else, but Louis was half expecting him to lash out and break someone’s phone or something; get jealous like he had that first time.

When they were belted into their seats, as the driver pulled out of the curb, Harry asked “Why?”

“Hmm?” Louis tore his eyes away from the group of people that had been waving at him through the car window, as if he was a proper famous person. It was weird, to have them all grinning and staring like that.

“Why they talk Lou and – with -“ Harry pointed to where Louis’ phone was still clasped in his
hand. “Why?”

“They’ve seen my face places, like in the papers, and they just get excited to see me in real life I guess. I don’t think its because they like me, I think its just so they can show other people they’ve seen me. I’m kind of like a gimmick to a lot of them.”

Harry hummed. He didn’t look any less confused, but he wasn’t exactly asking for anything more so Louis didn’t bother trying to explain himself further. Fame was such an odd concept for even Louis to wrap his head around, so how could Harry possibly be expected to understand it?

When they pulled up at their apartment, Louis was shocked to see a hoard of paparazzi waiting for them.

They were snapping pictures before Louis had even stepped out of the car, and one even tried to open the door.

It had been locked, luckily, but that didn’t stop the pap from trying again.

“Lou?” Harry asked, gripping his hand.

“What the fuck is going on?” he asked.

It was to himself, really, but the driver answered with “I don’t know, but is there anywhere else you’d like me to take you?”

“Zayn’s!” Louis replied automatically, and when the driver raised an eyebrow Louis told him the address.

He turned back to Harry, who was chewing his bottom lip, pulling back from the window as the paps got closer, cupping their hands against the glass to get a better look inside.

Harry slapped the window with his hand, and the person startled back. Then Harry giggled, and did it again.

The driver didn’t need to be told. He pulled away from the curb as soon as he had Zayn’s address in the Sat Nav, slowly so as not to hit any of the people pressing themselves against the car.

“That happen a lot?” the man asked, and Louis huffed out a laugh.

“Never. I honestly have never seen that, let alone been at the centre of it.”

“Have the team told you anything?”

“I – fuck.” He groaned, picking up his phone to sift through the messages they’d sent him. None of them gave anything away, a part from the fact that they were desperate to speak to him. “They’ve been trying to, I guess. I’ve got to call them.”

Instead of calling them, though, he sent Zayn a message asking if he was home.

Yeah mate, you comin round? He texted back.

Louis sent back the thumbs up emoji, and pulled up his manager’s number. He took a deep breath before pressing the little green phone.

It didn’t even ring once before she answered. “Louis? Have you seen?”
“Seen what? The paps outside my flat? I kind of just stumbled into them now.”

“What did you say to them?” she snapped.

“Nothing, I was in the car!”

“Where are you now?”

“Heading to Zayn’s. Are you going to tell me what’s happening or not?”

“You’ve got to come in. Is Harry with you?”

“Yeah, we just came from Uni.”

“He needs to stay in the car, he can’t be seen with you.”

“It’s a bit late for that, they saw us in the car together.”

It was silent for a moment, except for the sound of her ragged breathing through the phone.

“Hello? I can take him to Zayn’s if you want? I was heading there anyway to –“

“Yeah, okay. Do that, then come straight in to the agency.”

“Can’t you just tell me now on the phone?”

“No, because there’s people here to see you. We need to talk.”

“Fuck. Did something come out? Am I ruined?”

“No, Louis, nothing like that. It’s actually the complete opposite.”

“The opposite of something coming out or of me being ruined?”

“Louis, that makes no sense. Just come in and we’ll talk. Try not to get seen when you drop Harry off.” She hung up after that, and Louis was left to blink at his phone in silence.

“Lou?” Harry said gently.

Louis looked up at him, and tried to smile reassuringly. He obviously hadn’t faked it well enough because Harry was still frowning. “I can’t come to Zayn’s with you, I’ve got to go to work.”

“Oh.” He said sadly, and Louis had the strongest urge to hold him tight.

“I shouldn’t be long, and I’ll pick you up afterwards.”

“Harry come on Lou?”

“No, love, you can’t.”

Harry nodded slowly. “But Lou be fast?”

“Yeah, as quick as I can be. I’ve just got to find out what’s going on, yeah? Things will go back to normal soon enough.”

He was mostly telling himself, and he didn’t quite believe it, but Harry seemed appeased.
He lessened his grip on Louis’ hand, anyway, and went back to stroking the back of his hand idly with his index finger. “Hungry.” He muttered, and it made Louis smile.

Something about the normality of the statement at such an odd time had Louis relaxing; had him telling himself that whatever was happening wouldn’t be so bad. It was the day the advertisement went public, he was expecting some talk about it. Maybe not this much, but still. That could only be a good thing, right? All this attention?

The driver let Harry and Louis out when they got to Zayn’s, saying he was going to drive around the block until Louis was ready to leave again because of the lack of parking spaces.

He only had to drive around once, in the end, because Zayn was ready for them.

He must have been standing right at the intercom because he was buzzing them in mere seconds after Louis had pressed the button.

Harry was eager to see Zayn’s flat, so he was taking the stairs two at a time until Louis told him to stop; that he’d gone too far.

He barrelled into Zayn as soon as the man opened his front door, hugging him tight and tittering a bit out of habit.

“So what do you guys want to eat?” Zayn asked, and Louis shook his head.

“I’ve got to head into the agency, so it’s just Harry you’re gonna have to feed.”

Zayn frowned and asked “What’s going on?”

“Still don’t know, but I’ll tell you when I come back for Harry.”

“Have you googled yourself?”

“No. Fuck, should I?”

“Would you rather hear the news from gossip articles, or straight from the horse’s mouth?”

“The horse, I s’pose.” He grunted, and Zayn gave him a tight smile.

“Good luck, mate. Niall and Liam are coming round when they can so Harry will be fine. We’ll make a party out of it. Hey, maybe we can go to a pub?”

“Save that for when I get back, yeah? I’d kind of like to be there to witness Harry at his first bar.”

Zayn rolled his eyes and muttered “Of course you would.” under his breath.

“Fuck off.” Louis retorted with a grin. “Just to make sure he doesn’t get into trouble. Imagine what Niall would do with him unsupervised.”

“I s’pose.”

“All right, I better go.”

“Text me when you’re on your way. Good luck, mate.”

“Cheers. Hey Harry!” Louis called over Zayn’s shoulder, to where Harry was already shuffling through the lounge room and examining all of the trinkets that lined Zayn’s shelves. When he
heard his name, though, he stopped to look at Louis, Eiffel Tower keyring hanging from his finger. Zayn’s Mum was the type to buy cheap souvenir gifts from every place she travelled to, and her son was too kind to ever throw them away. His entire family were like that, though, so Zayn’s flat was filled to the brim with bits and bobs from his aunts and uncles and grandparents. Somehow, his flat still looked pretty amazing. Zayn made it work. Harry was going to have to fun there.

“Lou?”

“I’m leaving for work now. I’ll see you soon.”

Harry nodded silently, chewing at his lip.

“Can I’ve a hug before I go?”

That made Harry’s whole face light up. He was pulling Louis close within seconds, nuzzling his face into Louis’ neck. “Hurry fast.” He whispered, and Louis chuckled.

“I’ll be two hours tops. Make sure Zayn cooks something nice for when I get back.”

Zayn grinned and grunted “Fuck off” but Louis knew he would.

He pulled back from Harry, but left an arm over his shoulder. “Maybe you can show Harry a few things? Might be good to have someone who’s not totally useless in our kitchen.”

“I’ll see. Just leave already, will you?”

“Yeah, yeah.” Louis said, patting Harry’s back for the final time and letting him go. “I’ll see you when I know what’s going on.”

---

Louis had been reasonably calm when he got to his building. He had the whole drive to think things over, and tell himself that the mob of paps hadn’t actually been as bad as he remembered. He’d just exaggerated it, like he did a lot of things, and what was going on would be explained with something completely reasonable.

Only those positive thoughts flew right out the window when he walked into his manager’s office to find it occupied by none other than the movie star and some random man.

The movie star stood up from his seat, and held out a hand for Louis to shake. “We meet again.” He said dramatically, cocky grin plastered on his face, but Louis wasn’t one to leave someone hanging so he shook the offered hand.

“Yeah. So is someone going to tell me what’s going on?”

Louis’ manager pointed to the free chair, and waited until Louis was sitting in it before she said “Some pictures came out today.”

“Of what?”

“Us.” The movie star said, still grinning like the arsehole he was.

“Doing what?” Louis frowned, because the two of them hadn’t exactly been together at all the night before. Except when they went out onto the balcony, but – “Oh.” Louis said, because of course. Someone would have snapped a picture of the two of them when they were close, when the
movie star had whispered into his ear, hand on his hip.


“Little? That was the only adjective they could come up with to describe me?” he spat. It was a bit of a joke in the fashion world, his height, and for the first few years of his career people always asked him what it was like being a ‘short’ model. They got over it soon enough, but occasionally people would bring it up. Mainly when they wanted to piss him off.

“That’s what you’re noticing?” his manager scoffed.

Louis looked back down to the pages before him, eyes drawn to the title again, but he made sure to look elsewhere this time. He scanned through the article, trying not to blush when he read how he and the star had been ‘making eyes at each other all night’ and ‘got cosy when they thought nobody was watching’.

He knew what he was meant to be looking at, the photos running down the side of the page, but he really didn’t want to see them.

He had to though, to see how bad it looked, so he sucked in a breath and flicked his eyes to the incriminating snaps.

It did look pretty bad.

The first was of the two standing close on the balcony. They weren’t quite touching, but they were staring at each other, the movie star smiling down while Louis was looking up. Fuck, but he did look small.

The one below it was awful.

Just as Louis had predicted, someone had caught the star’s hand on Louis’ hip, but it was so much worse than that because it looked as if they’d been kissing. The photographer had obviously taken the picture just as the movie star had been bending down to whisper in Louis’ ear so it appeared like their lips were about to connect.

Then the picture below that was a lot less incriminating, but suggestive nonetheless.

It had been taken during the advertisement’s reveal, from somewhere to the side of the room. It showed the back of Louis’ head, from an angle that made it look as if Louis was looking at the star, who was grinning slyly in Louis’ direction. Obviously it had been snapped at the end, when the star was being gross after the print advertisement’s big reveal, and anyone looking at the picture would think they were checking each other out or something.

“So,” Louis sighed, and settled back in his seat because he just knew he wasn’t going to like the answer to his question. “What’s the plan?”

“The three of us have spoken, and we agree that it would be good for all of us if you were to go out with –”

“With him?” Louis growled, pointing his thumb in the direction of the star. “You expect me to date that arsehole?”

The movie star just smirked; was probably getting off on Louis’ outrage.
“Louis!” his manager chastised. “It will just be during the time of his UK visit.”

“How long will that be?” Louis demanded to know, and the stranger put up his finger, silently asking to interject.

“My client is staying for two weeks to promote his upcoming films. We would like you to be publically seen with him four times, half of which should be instances with just the two of you, such as dinner at a restaurant. The others may be party appearances.”

“Is this guy fucking serious?” Louis asked, blinking in shock. He wasn’t even angry anymore. He was amazed, more than anything else, and a little bewildered. He’d done PR stunts before, but nothing came close to sounding as much like a business arrangement as this did.

“Yeah, he is.” The star said, then reached out to give Louis’ knee a squeeze. “You make it sound as if dating me is disgusting. I’m a little offended.”

The man’s grin had softened, so that he looked more charming than cocky. His pink lips still looked full despite being pulled back to reveal his ridiculously perfect teeth, and Louis was mesmerised for a moment.

“Come on, Louis, it’ll be incredible for your image. You’ll become so much more desirable. Irresistible, even.” His manager said, and Louis found himself nodding slowly.

But then the star took his hand away, and settled back into his chair with that smarmy grin, and the spell was broken. “Hang on, what would these dates entail exactly? And what does he get out of it? Dating an English model? Are you even gay?”

The other celebrity shrugged. “Not to the public.”

“So that’s what this is about? I’m meant to be the guy you’re coming out for or something? And then what, I break your heart? To make you look good while once again I look like the arsehole?”

The room was silent, and Louis was angry to learn he’d hit the nail right on the head.

It was the stranger that spoke, the star’s manager, Louis supposed. “You’ll be getting something out of this too. This story will break the US, your name will make headlines worldwide.”

“My picture is going to do that anyway.” Louis retorted, and his manager made a small noise in her throat. One of disagreement. It made Louis stop for a moment; calm down. “It will, right? I was told the picture would help me break the international market. You told me that.”

“Things aren’t that simple, Louis. You know that.”

“Nothing about that was fucking simple! Nothing I had done has been simple!” Louis was standing now, face red and fists clenched, yelling at the top of his lungs. “How was me going to the fucking jungle, putting my life at risk with those fucking gorillas, and adopting a bloody jungle man, simple? That was all meant to help my career, and now you’re turning around and saying that’s not enough? That I’ve got to whore myself out, too?”

“Harry was your choice, Louis, don’t put that on me!” the manager yelled back, getting out of her chair as well.

“But you –“ Louis started, but someone’s loud voice clearing interrupted them.

It was the movie star. “Can we get back to the point? Are you in or not? You’ll be paid – “ Louis
scoffed, and the movie star waited until he was finished before continuing. “You’ll be paid for your time, and all expenses of our public outings will be covered by us.”

“When have I got to tell you by?”

“Sometime in the next few minutes, preferably.” The movie star smiled, and Louis was back to being charmed. This guy was like a fucking swinging pendulum, having Louis hypnotised one moment and frustrated the next. “I urge you to take the offer, for both our sake’s. I’ve been told you once had acting aspirations, yes? Just think of all the doors I can open for you.”

Well, that was unexpected.

“You can make me an actor?”

“I can try.”

“Oh.” Louis muttered, because that was a new card being played. They were pulling out all of the stops; had to be desperate. “And how much would you pay me?”

“One grand every hour.”

Louis’ eyebrows sky rocketed. “Is that American dollars or pounds?”

The star grinned. “Clever. In pounds. One thousand pounds for every hour you’re with me. That’s an easy 15 grand right in your pocket, just to go out to dinner and attend a couple of parties. Maybe even a movie premiere.”

“So we’re agreeing on 15 hours, are we?”

“Give or take, depending on how long our dates go for.”

“I suppose you have some kind of contract written up?” Louis asked, directing his question to the star’s manager, who had a briefcase resting on his thighs.

“I do, yes. Your manager has it.”

She didn’t have to be told; she was pushing it across the desk to Louis before he even glanced her way.

Louis read it carefully, occasionally stopping to ask what certain parts mean.

“I can’t be seen looking romantic with anyone else? What does looking romantic mean, exactly?”

“Kissing, cuddling, that sort of thing.” The star shrugged.

“What about hand holding?” Louis asked, mind having jumped to Harry and his need for affection.

The star smirked. “That is allowed. Why, have you got someone at home waiting for you? This Harry character?”

“I – I guess?” Louis said hesitantly, looking to his manager for some kind of guidance because he didn’t know what he was allowed to say yet. If Harry was still to be kept in hiding.

“That’s fine, as long as he doesn’t make a scene. We can’t have a jealous boyfriend ruining things between us, can we?” the star winked, and Louis swallowed down the bile that threatened to creep up his throat. What a fucking line.
Louis rolled his eyes instead, and turned back to the contract resting on his lap.

There was nothing else that really stood out to him to question. There wasn’t anything about having to touch the star and kiss him, or admit they were in a relationship. It was all just to create talk, and Louis could deal with talk.

He wasn’t completely sure he could cope with the press though. They’d just caught a sniff of a potential story and were hounding him at his own house; he’d never seen that before.

“I’ll probably need to stay somewhere else, until everything calms down. Are you willing to pay for a hotel room?”

“It depends. Will I be staying there with you?” the movie star winked, and Louis was just about ready to call the whole thing off simply because of that. He was such a fucking tosser; Louis didn’t know if it was even possible to put up with him for an hour let alone 15 of them.

“Yes, that can be arranged.” The manager said quickly, as if he knew Louis was teetering on the edge of breaking point.

“Somewhere five stars.” Louis’ manager jumped in. “Four at the least.”

The star’s manager clenched his jaw, and grunted “Of course.”

“And room service has to be included.” Louis added with a grin.

The guy reddened, but still nodded. “So is that a deal?”

“Four dates with your client, one thousand quid an hour. I don’t have to touch him or say that we’re an item – “

“You also can’t deny it.”

Louis carried on as if the star’s manager hadn’t just interrupted him. “I can be seen in public with Harry as long as it’s not ‘romantic’. And all this will just be for two weeks, then I can carry on like normal. That’s what I’m agreeing to.”

“And that’s all we’re asking for.” The star said.

“Right. Well pass me a pen.”

Louis didn’t relax again until the star and his manager had left.

They’d taken the signed contract from Louis’ hands, put it in the briefcase, and walked out with a simple “Thankyou.”

“You realise people are going to want to know who Harry is if you get seen with him, right? We might finally have to tell the world about him, and that’s just going to make it even harder for the both of you wherever you go.”

Louis looked down from the ceiling, something he hadn’t even realised he’d been staring at until she spoke, and said “I know. Fuck, should I have done that?”

“For your career, yes.”

“Yeah, but for me? And Harry?”
When his manager didn’t reply, Louis dropped his head into his hands and groaned.

“What the fuck did I just do?”

---

When Louis got back to Zayn’s, the whole gang was sitting on the sofa with beers in their hands, watching a football game.

Niall whistled when Louis walked in, and was grinning as he said “So you and a big movie star, huh?”

Louis looked to Zayn with a raised eyebrow, and his mate put up his free hand and said “He told me. Saw it on the cover of a magazine on his way over.”

Harry growled then, and tightened his fist around the paper he was holding. Louis didn’t have to ask what it was, because Harry threw it at his head and stormed out of the room.

Louis was hot on his heels, following him inside Zayn’s office until he was pushed back against a wall.

“Harry’s Lou.” He growled, hands on Louis’ chest, gripping Louis’ shirt.

“Harry.” Louis said low, as if a warning, because this felt like a repeat of the last incident. When Harry had got possessive over a random fan meeting and broken his phone.

Harry frowned, and his head dropped at the same time as his hands did. “What?” he whimpered.

“Who?”

“I have to be seen with him in public a few times over the next two weeks. He’s no one, but I have to pretend he is.”

“Harry don’t know.”

“He’s famous. Like, in movies. Uh, like on the TV, I guess.” Louis added, because Harry had never seen a movie and probably hadn’t learnt what one was yet. “And he’ll help make Louis famous.”

“Harry make Louis famous.” He pouted, and Louis got a sudden overwhelming urge to kiss him.

“You – I’m just using him, Harry. I’d never use you like that. It’s so I can go places, Harry. There’s always younger and better models coming along and I’ve got to keep going forward because otherwise I’ll just fall right down. I’ve always got to be doing more or I’m just going to fizzle out. I can’t be another has-been at 23.”

“Why? Come home with Harry.”

“We can’t, the paps will still be there. We’ll have to stay here tonight.”

Harry shook his head, hair flying wildly. “To jungle. Louis and Harry happy there. No one else. Just Harry and Lou.”

Louis paused, because at that very moment nothing sounded better than that. The two of them alone, with nobody else. No one to tell Louis what to do, no career for Louis to worry about. It was just a dream, though.

“I wouldn’t be able to survive out there, Harry.”
“Harry care for Lou. Teach Lou to survive.”

“It’s impossible.”

“Lou teaching Harry to survive here. Doing it for Lou. Lou do that for Harry.”

“I – I can’t, Harry. I could barely stand a day there. I’m not strong enough.”

“Lou strong. Stronger than Harry. It’s harder here than home. Dangerous.”

Louis didn’t know what to say to that, so he stayed silent. He just watched Harry, the way his eyes were boring into Louis’ and how his fists were clenching and unclenching. He looked so uncomfortable, so scared and out of his depth, that Louis pulled him in for a hug.

“I’m looking out for you, okay? I’ve got you.” He muttered into Harry’s neck, and watched the boy nod.

He felt Harry’s lips at his neck, then up to his jawline. There was another kiss on his cheek, and another on the corner of his mouth, before finally their lips met.

Harry began to pull back, and Louis chased him, lips still connected. It seemed to give Harry the courage to push back, because he did. And hard.

His fingers dug into Louis’ back, Louis could feel his nails through his shirt, and Louis moved one of his own hands to the back of Harry’s head to pull him in closer.

Their lips were moulding together, and each time they opened slightly Louis would dart his tongue forward, tasting the inside of Harry’s top lip.

Harry whimpered when he felt Louis’ teeth, and opened his mouth wider to let Louis in further.

Louis felt Harry’s tongue with his own, sliding against it and beside it as Harry tilted his head this way and that, trying to get them closer. Trying to find the exact angle for them to fit together perfectly, no space between. Trying to make them as close to being one as possible.

“Lou.” Harry moaned into his mouth, and Louis slipped a hand down from Harry’s waist to the small of his back, fingers dipping into his jeans. “Sex now.”

Louis chuckled at that, pulling back to see Harry’s red puffy lips and glazed-over eyes. To see what he did to Harry. To picture how much more he could do, because if Harry looked this wrecked just from kissing than Louis couldn’t wait to see how he’d look being blown.

It would have to wait, though, because Zayn, Liam and Niall were probably somewhere close, listening through the door to make sure Louis was okay.

“We have to wait until we get home.” Louis muttered, and kissed Harry again. “We’ll go back later tonight to pack up a few things.” It was Harry who lent in for a kiss this time, pressing hard, forcing Louis’ lips open so he could slide his tongue inside.

Louis was back to tugging Harry impossibly close, pushing at the small of Harry’s back so their hips were pressed tight.

Harry groaned, and Louis could feel why.

His cock was hard, restrained by his jeans, and he was desperately rolling his hips against Louis’ to get friction.
Louis chuckled, and said “It doesn’t take much to get you going.”

But Louis was hardening pretty quick himself, he was embarrassed to realise, because Harry’s whimpering noises were getting louder and his hip thrusts more erratic.

“Are you gonna come in your pants, Haz?”

“Can’t. Hurts.” Harry groaned. Which made sense, because his jeans were so tight his cock could only push at its seam. Louis pressed against it with his palm, and Harry whimpered in pain though put his own hand against Louis’, holding it there tight.

“Fuck it.” Louis grunted, and dropped to his knees. Harry made to crouch too, but Louis grunted out a “Stay.”

Then he unzipped Harry’s jeans, pulled out his cock, and Harry moaned throatily.

“You want to try something new?” Louis breathed into Harry’s cock head, wrapping his fingers around the base.

“Yes.” He sighed in return, and reflexively pushed his hips forward so his cock head nudged into Louis’ lips.

Louis parted them slightly, allowing Harry to slip inside on his next thrust forward, and Harry let out a shaky groan as his hands raced to fit themselves against the back of Louis’ head.

Louis licked at his cock head, swiping over the slit with the back of his tongue before using the tip to trace the underside.

“Lou?” Harry begged, fingers clenching and unclenching Louis’ hair.

Louis knew he wasn’t going to last much longer, so he pushed his head further down until he could feel Harry at the back of his throat. He pressed his lips tight around Harry, put his hands on Harry’s arse cheeks for leverage, and slid back and forth as fast as he possibly could.

“Lou.” Harry groaned, but Louis just kept on going; kept fucking Harry with his mouth, despite how hard Harry’s thighs were shaking and the way his arse was clenching beneath his palms.

Louis knew Harry was going to come from the noise Harry let out; it was something inhuman, a wild and guttural hum from low down in his throat. A rumble from his chest that had Louis letting out his own moan while Harry came down his throat.

Louis palmed Harry’s arse cheeks as Harry rode his orgasm out with little desperate thrusts, tight and controlled even if the groans he’d made were everything but.

When Louis dropped his hands, Harry pulled out and dropped to the ground and pushed Louis back until he was lying on it. He rubbed his face against Louis’ chest, then nuzzled into his neck, and pressed soft kisses beneath his jaw.

“Lou want? Harry want that to Lou. Yes?” he murmured, and Louis rolled his head back with a groan.

“Yeah, Lou wants. I want.”

So Harry crawled down his body and fumbled with his fly. He pulled his jeans down until they sat just beneath his arse, and pulled Louis’ cock out over his pants.
“Like banana?” Harry asked, eyes wide as he assessed Louis’ size.

Louis groaned, because he’d forgotten about that. How Harry looked sucking a banana into his mouth, how he’d fantasised about this since the jungle. “Yeah.” He moaned. “Just, no teeth, yeah? Don’t like, bite it.”

Harry giggle snorted, and without warning sucked Louis into his mouth.

He didn’t tease at Louis’ head first, didn’t work his way down, just let Louis’ cock slide against his tongue until he was at the back of Harry’s throat. Until Harry’s wet lips were tightening around the base of his shaft.

“Shit.” Louis groaned, transfixed by how good Harry felt and looked. His eyes were wet and glazing over, pupils blowing up with lust all over again. His nostrils were flaring, and his lips were still so plump.

He began moving then, back and forth, until he stopped with just Louis’ cock head between his lips.

Then Louis felt it, his tongue working at his slit, and he couldn’t watch anymore. He was clenching his eyes shut, desperate to stave off his climax for just a little while longer.

Harry moaned at the taste, pulling his lips from Louis’ cock to lap at the pre-come with the flat of his tongue.

Then he began to grind into Louis’ leg, letting out small huffs of breath against Louis’ cock that felt hot and cold all at once.

Louis was about to beg Harry to get his mouth back on him, but the jungle man didn’t need to be told. He gripped Louis’ hips harder, digging his fingers achingly hard into his skin, and wrapped his lips back around Louis’ cock to slide further down his shaft.

The more erratic Harry’s hips got, the sloppier Harry’s mouth became.

His mouth was still so tight, but it was getting wetter and wetter, and faster and harder, and so unpredictable that Louis’ climax just snuck up on him.

His head fell back against the floor, his hands clenched into small fists, and he shouted “Harry” into the air without thought of his mates being in the other room.

When he came too, he noticed the wet seeping into his jean-clad leg where Harry had been rutting against him.

“Oh, Louis said, grinning up at Louis with his wet bruised-red lips.

“Fuck.” Louis smiled, and it became a laugh when Harry tackled him with kisses again.

There was a bang at the door, and Niall’s voice yelling “Does that mean you’re finished?”

“Fuck.” Louis repeated, only more of a groan of embarrassment this time. Fucking Niall. Couldn’t he just pretend like he heard nothing like Zayn and Liam were going to do?

“Yes!” Harry yelled, then jumped off Louis to open the door.

“Fuck, mate, put it away.” Niall laughed, and Harry nodded and tucked himself back in. Louis, on the other hand, scrambled up off the floor to do his jeans up before Niall could notice.
“What do you want?” Louis grunted, trying to wipe off the sweat he could feel on his forehead, hoping the embarrassed red colour his skin had surely turned would disappear with it.

“Nothing really. The game was just getting boring without Harry.” Niall said, throwing his hand over said boy’s shoulders. “You want to borrow some of Zayn’s trousers?” he added, pointing to the come stain on Louis’ leg with his free hand.

Louis blinked down at it for a moment, then muttered “Yeah, I’ll go get some.”

He rushed into Zayn’s room while Niall took Harry back out to the lounge, grabbing a pair of trackies because Zayn’s jeans all had too many holes for his liking. He scrunched up his own trousers and threw them into a plastic bag he’d found on Zayn’s floor.

When he joined his mates on the sofa, they were all quiet and a little red. Zayn and Liam because they were quite obviously awkward, and Niall because there was something riveting happening on the telly and his cheeks were always a light pink anyway.

“So.” Louis broke the silence, and his mates all looked up at him. “Me and Harry are gonna stay at a hotel for a few days, courtesy of the movie star, but I’m going to need a few things. I can’t exactly get to my apartment right now, so could you lads maybe do it?”

Niall grinned. “Yeah, I’m sure I could.”

“You’re not fucking going alone.” Louis snapped, because he knew Niall would only grab condoms and lube and Harry’s headband collection.

“I’ll go.” Liam offered. Him Louis could trust, so he nodded.

“Just get the essentials, but also there’s some papers on the top draw on Harry’s bedside table. Make sure you grab them, yeah?”

“Harry’s parent’s journals?” Zayn asked, and Louis nodded.

“Harry’s secret is going to be coming out soon. I think it’s about time we do some proper digging for answers before anyone else can.”

---

Niall, of course, didn’t stick to the essentials.

"This was my contribution to the packing.” Niall grinned as he pulled out the monkey onesie from the case Liam had packed.

Harry immediately grabbed it, hugging it close to his chest with his little jabbers, before thrusting it to Louis. "On.” he demanded.

"No fucking way.” Louis laughed.

Harry didn't laugh. He frowned, and shook it in front of Louis' face. "On.”

"Yeah Louis, go on!” Niall snorted.

"But I thought we were going to go out.”

"Yeah, but we'll be here a little longer to look through the journals. And drink, obviously.”
Louis took it from Harry's hands. It would be a laugh, he supposed. Plus, the way Harry’s face lit up when he held it against his body meant he kind of had to.

So he took Zayn’s trackies off and stepped into the onesie, then slid his arms through, and zipped it up.

Harry squawked out a laugh, which made Louis grin and flip the hood bit with the monkey ears up over his head.

“Ooo.” Louis said, and Harry leapt at him, throwing his arms over his shoulders to pull him in for a cuddle.

“Fuck, that’s amazing.” Niall laughed.

“You do look pretty good.” Zayn said with his own little lopsided smile. “You got to wear that when we go to the pub.”

“Fuck off.” Louis grunted, pushing Zayn with the hand he managed to squeeze out from where it had been stuck between he and Harry’s chests. “You got beers or what?”

“I’ll get them!” Niall cheered, just as Liam said “I thought we were going to look through the journals.”

“We’ll do both at the same time. You did get them, right?”

“Yeah, it took some searching though. You didn’t tell me they were in a bag already.” Liam said as he shuffled through Louis’ open case and pulled out the brown satchel that Louis had grabbed from the tree house.

“I forgot about that.” Louis replied honestly, because he hadn’t even looked at the books and papers since he’d shoved them in a draw the first day they got back from the jungle.

He took the satchel from Liam’s outstretched hands, and carried it over to Zayn’s table. The others joined him, Niall only after he got a six pack from the fridge, and watched as Louis reached inside to pull out the contents.

They all just stared at the pile for a moment, Louis glancing up to look at his mates’ reactions.

Liam’s fingers were tapping the tabletop, eyes fixed on the journal sitting closest to him. Zayn’s head was tilting, trying to get a better look at the sketches that were peeking out from beneath the journal without actually reaching out to move them closer. Niall looked about as uncomfortable as Louis, mouth turning down at the corners, looking at everything but the items on the table before him.

“Well pass me a beer, then.” Louis said, giving the blonde something to do while simultaneously easing the tension that was thick between them all.

Niall grinned, and broke open the plastic holding the bottles together. As he passed them around, he said “So where do we start?”

“Zayn should take the drawings for obvious reasons, and me and Liam will take a journal each. Do you want to entertain Harry or something? Watch some telly for a bit?”

“Yeah, all right.” Niall said, and couldn’t have got away from the table quicker.
When Louis looked back at his mates, they already had the papers in their hands, skimming through. Like they’d been desperate to look before but were waiting for Louis’ permission.

Louis took a long chug of his beer with one hand while grabbing the second journal with the other.

He tried to ignore the swooping of his stomach as he flipped open the first page and began to read.

The first page was dated 7th of January, 1996.

It spoke of home in the city, how they missed it and wanted to go home but couldn’t because they were so close. But it didn’t say what they were doing, and why, so Louis skimmed the rest of the page before turning the next and doing the same.

Nothing was jumping out at him. There was no mention of Harry, no talk of why they were there, just what they were seeing and what they missed.

From what Louis had read so far, it was becoming obvious that the journals were Harry’s father’s. He spoke of a wife, of her intelligence and beauty. It was sweet, but also incredibly sad, because a large part of Louis was convinced that these people weren’t living anymore.

On the 23rd of January there was a hint at what they were doing there. He spoke of the gorillas, of their habits. How they interacted with his wife. That she felt as if they didn’t like her, and were growing more and more hostile.

One the 1st of February, Louis finally found mention of Harry.

_He is two today. She wants to go home. She doesn’t think it is right for a child to be here, for us to be all he has. She has threatened to leave again, but she won’t. We are so close to them. They think of him as their own. I can see it in how they look at him. How they hold him so gently in their arms. How they respond to his laughter. They do not see him as human, but another ape. She is worried about the largest female. She says it is getting harder and harder to take him back from her. That she’s holding him too close and too tight. She is just being jealous and overprotective._

“Liam?” Louis asked, and only knew that his mate heard him by the “What?” Liam answered him with; his eyes were still plastered to the page. “Has Harry been mentioned in your journals?”

“Yeah, loads. His birth is described pretty graphically on the first page.”

That had Louis looking up. “What?”

“It’s how it starts. With Harry’s birth.”

“Does it say his real name?”

“They didn’t name him.” Liam frowned. “Or if they did, it doesn’t say it in here. Harry’s Dad just calls him ‘He’.”

“Does it say what they were doing in the jungle?”

“They were Zoologists who met at Manchester. It gets a bit sappy in here, describes how they fell in love and that in one of the entries. Their fourth wedding anniversary, actually. They bonded over their interest in this one gorilla, Koko, who knew sign language and stuff, and they had this dream to move to the jungle to see if they could teach a gorilla something similar in its own habitat. They knew it was a long shot, but they made the move after being married for about a year. They found
out she was pregnant not long after.”


“There was nothing in the drawings, so I moved on to some of the loose pages. They’re all from random days after June 1996, I’ve just been sorting them into an order.”

“I don’t know if I want to do this any more.” Louis admitted, and Zayn and Liam both frowned at him.

“What’s in your journals?”

“Much of the same, but it’s starting to get a little weird. Like, between Harry’s mum and the gorillas. I think something’s going to happen soon and I don’t – I’m scared to read it.”

“Do you want me to?” Zayn asked, and Louis nodded.

He slid the journal over, and Zayn picked it up. He read from where Louis left off, eyes quickly scanning over the page before turning it over and reading on.

Louis picked up the loose pages Zayn had organized into a pile, only reading one line before he dropped them back onto the table.

_We still can’t find him. She thinks it’s time we go home._

“Fuck.” Zayn gasped, and Louis looked up to him, saw just how pale his mate had become. “They took him. The gorillas took Harry.”

And Louis let out his breath, because he’d never expected that. It should have been a relief that Harry’s parents were most likely alive, but all the news did was send shivers racing up his spine and turn his stomach inside out. How was he going to break the news to Harry?
“What do you want to do?” Liam asked. “Do you want to stop or keep reading?”

“Stop.” Louis answered, quick even for him. “I don’t want to read any more tonight.” He sat back in his chair, pressing his palms into his closed eyes. “It’s been such a long fucking day. I just want to not think for five seconds.”

There was a whoop from Niall and a cackle from Harry, drawing the attention of everyone that had been sat at the dining table.

“I just want to have some fun tonight, yeah? Weren’t we gonna go to a pub?” Louis asked, picking up his beer. “Let’s do that.”

Zayn watched Louis take a large gulp before saying “But that was before we picked up these journals. Don’t you want to talk to Harry? Tell him what we found out?”

Louis’ eyes widened and he shook his head hard. “Not tonight. I’ll – I’ve got to think about the best way to do it.”

Zayn’s jaw tightened, but he didn’t say anything; just nodded and took a sip from his own bottle.

“So we’re just going to go in there with Niall and Harry and watch the footy?” Liam asked, eyeing the two of them speculatively.

“Exactly. Then, when we’re sufficiently pissed, we’ll go to your local.”

---

Louis wasn’t enjoying it. Not the drinking or the telly watching or even how Harry’s arse was bouncing on his thighs as he got more and more excited by the football game on the screen.

There had just been so much that happened. Too much. At the worst possible time.

Louis shouldn’t have signed that contract. That was such a stupid and selfish thing to do.

He should have read those journals as soon as he had the chance instead of putting them off like he had. Or better yet, he should have given them over to the University so they could have figured it out for him. Been the ones to make the decision on whether to call Harry’s parents or wait until the news about Harry broke and waited for someone to claim him.

His mind wasn’t getting foggier the more he drank like he hoped it would. Louis was trying to escape from his thoughts for the night, but instead they were just becoming louder; more demanding. Instead of enjoying his time with Harry and his mates, he wanted to get away from everyone. They would look at him and smile in a way that was supposed to be reassuring, but it
just made him uncomfortable. They would try to distract him with mindless questions and silly topics but he just didn’t want to listen at all. Didn’t want to talk, either. Just wanted to sit and stew for a few seconds. Let his mind wander on its’ own accord. Which was a frustrating feeling, because he knew that if he did let it free it would be racing straight back to Harry and his newly discovered parents.

“That was so fucking close.” Niall groaned, muting the telly so they wouldn’t have to listen to the opposing team gloat about their win. “If we’d had a few more minutes on the clock we would have got them, I know it.”

“So what now?” Liam asked, taking the remote off Niall and turning the TV off all together. “You still want to head out for a pint, Lou?”

“Yeah.” He grunted in reply, even though all he actually wanted to do was sleep.

“Harry?” Liam asked. “You want to head out?”

Harry nodded his most enthusiastic nod, then slid his hand inside Louis’ before standing up from the sofa. “Lou monkey.” He giggled, and Louis looked down at himself.

He was still wearing the fucking monkey onesie. The thing was, though, that he didn’t even care. So he shrugged his shoulders and made his way to the door.

“Uh, Louis? What are you doing?” Niall asked.

Louis shrugged again. “Going out.”

“In that?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you, like, on the verge of a breakdown or –” Niall was silenced by a hard nudge to the ribs from Zayn’s elbow.

“He’s fine. It’s funny, yeah? It’ll be fun.” Zayn said with a strained smile.

Louis looked to Liam, whose mouth was half open as if he was going to say something, and glared until he shut it again. He didn’t care if they worried about him, he just didn’t need to hear why. They’d just be stating the obvious, anyway; how odd it was that Louis was fine leaving the house looking less than perfect.

He had two day stubblegrowth, he hadn’t put product in his hair since that morning so it had fallen into a shaggy mess about his head, and his skin felt tacky from all the rushing around he’d done that day. But fuck it. He didn’t care one bit about his appearance, and the feeling was actually proving itself to be rather liberating.

Especially since he had Harry on his arm, grinning so wide, genuinely happy by what Louis was wearing.

He ignored how his friends were watching him as he slipped on his Vans that were left by the door, and nodded his head so the others would snap out of it and get themselves ready.

“I guess – we’re all just going out as is?” Zayn said unsurely, which was to be expected. He was just as funny as Louis about looking his best at all times. The thing with Zayn though was that he looked good whether he tried or not, only he didn’t know it and so would spend an unnecessary
amount of time styling his hair and choosing between jeans that all looked the same, and once
Louis caught his mate combing his eyelashes. They'd never talked about that, though.

“Yeah, I suppose.” Liam shrugged. “We’re just going to the joint down the road, yeah? It’s a
complete hole at the best of times so we’ll fit right in.”

Zayn smiled at that, one that wasn’t so uneasy, and nodded his head. “Yeah, okay. Should be a
laugh.”

---

Louis had been there enough times not to have turned any heads. It was a small pub, one that was
filled with old guys by day and became a hotspot for the local students at night. They were friends
with a lot of them, had spoken to most of them at least once, so Louis wasn’t expecting to be
bothered. He’d figured he could go out as usual; drink a pint or four, play some pool with Niall,
dance to pub rock music.

Except, obviously the day’s tabloids made his time at the pub a whole lot less enjoyable.

It wasn’t that he was being harassed, there weren’t phones being shoved in his face or people
yelling for information from across the bar, but he did notice a lot more inquisitive glances. He saw
people taking pictures without asking, and when he grunted under his breath about smashing their
phones Liam gripped his shoulder.

“You are wearing a monkey onesie mate.”

“I s’pose.” He muttered, and turned back to the bar to grab his pint from the selection on the bartop
that Niall was in the middle of paying for.

“Let’s sit here.” Zayn said, nodding his head to a small high table that had stools scattered around it
and puddles of beer and crushed crisps on the top. It wasn’t ideal, but it was the only one with
enough seats.

“I’ll get a cloth.” Niall grunted, and hurried back to the bar.

Louis watched Harry look about himself, at the room and the people and the décor on the walls.
He was smiling, which was enough to appease him.

“Excuse me, mate.” Someone said, tapping Louis on the shoulder until he turned around to face the
stranger. It was someone he didn’t recognise, a boy who looked not long out of school. Louis
wouldn’t have been surprised if he was underage. “I’ve seen you around a lot in the papers today,
and was wondering if I could get a picture with you?”

“Do you even know my name?” Louis growled, and the guy blushed red.

“I – uh, well, no. But I mean – “

“Then no, you can’t fucking get a picture. I’m just trying to have a good night out, mate,” He spat.
“and people like you ruin it for me so if you’d kindly fuck off that would be great.”

The kid apologised as he stumbled away, and Louis knew he’d feel bad about it later on but at that
moment he didn’t care in the slightest. He was getting tired of feeling used.

He could feel his friends looking at him, but was thankful that again they weren’t voicing their
concerns. He picked up his glass, and smiled when everyone else did the same so they took a long
gulp of beer as one.

Harry made a disgruntled noise, but swallowed the liquid down all the same. “Yuck.” He said, and Louis grinned.

“So.” Liam said as they put their glasses back down. “Did you learn anything new at Uni today Harry?”

“Mum and Dad but not sex with Lou. How?”

Liam blinked. “What?”

“They gave him sex-ed and told him how babies are made.” Louis explained, and then groaned because Niall was grinning wide.

“You wanna know how to have sex with Lou?” The Shit asked. Harry nodded, and Niall opened his mouth to say more but Louis banged his fist on the table and the blonde shut it right back up.

Then he said “I’m telling him later.”

And Harry nodded and said “With bananas.”

Which really set Niall off. He laughed until he was bright red, clutching his stomach and rocking back and forth so hard even Louis was afraid the stool would topple over.

Liam stuck out his arm to steady Niall, and Louis said “It’s not that funny” despite the smile that was splitting his face. As annoying as Niall was, sometimes Louis really fucking loved him. The guy had the ability to make Louis smile even when he was at his lowest, and he needed someone like that. Just like how he needed Liam to keep him in check, and Zayn to be there for him.

“Fuck.” Louis grunted, and they all looked to him. “I’m melancholy-drunk.”

And Liam laughed. “You only just realised that?”

The thing with Louis was that when he drank, he either got insanely happy or terribly sad and there was rarely an in between.

“I’m not gonna be melancholy-drunk. I came out to have a good time, and that’s what I’m going to do. Who’s going to dance with me?”

Liam immediately picked up his beer and looked as uninterested as he could, while Zayn outright shook his head no. Harry just blinked at him, so that left Niall.

Louis grabbed his hand and dragged him over to the spot by the toilets that became the dance floor when it got late and everyone was pissed enough. It was not even 10pm, though, so ballads were still playing from the speakers and there was a group of people just standing in the spot talking.

Louis was drunk enough to ignore them, and Niall didn’t care enough about anything to be bothered.

So they began to sway to the Pearl Jam song about lost babies, Niall with his pint clutched between his hands and Louis shaking his hips so his tail swayed. It was quite fun, having a tail. He felt a bit sexy with it. Like having it hanging there was drawing even more attention to his arse. He liked that.

When he felt hands on his hips, though, he jumped and slapped the hands away, spinning around to
give whoever it was a piece of his mind. But the anger dropped from his face because it was only Harry.

“What?” Harry asked, and Louis grinned and put his hands atop his boy’s shoulders.

“We’re dancing. See?”

Louis swayed again, and Harry copied him, even going so far as to put his hands on Louis’ shoulders. Which made Louis grin, and move his own hands down to Harry’s hips. “Leave yours there.” He muttered, and when Harry nodded he said “But you can move a bit closer if you want.”

Louis smiled as Harry shuffled forward, and wrapped his arms tighter so that his hands were clenched together, resting on the small of Harry’s back.

And they swayed. Feet still on the ground, just shifting their weight from the left to the right and back again. Louis felt as if he was at a primary school dance, though that may have been because of the onesie.

The song switched to something equally outdated but much more boppy. Naturally Harry began to rock quicker, and Louis moved with him. Louis shuffled in closer, until their chests were pressed together and his nose was nestled into the crook of Harry’s shoulder.

Which was when he felt a hand grip his bicep, and he turned to see a frowning Zayn.

“You can’t do this in public, remember? The contract?”

Louis sighed and pulled back so that it was only his hands touching Harry.

“Con-tact?” Harry asked, and Louis nodded.

“The deal I made with the movie star means I can’t be seen looking romantic with anyone else but him in public. Like, I can’t touch you so much where people can see.”

“Go home to touch Harry?”

Louis grinned, and nodded his head. “Yeah, let’s just go home. I really shouldn’t have come out tonight anyway.”

He hadn’t heard anything from the star’s people, so he figured they hadn’t found them a hotel room just yet. Zayn had made the offer earlier for them to stay, so Louis took him up on it.

When Louis said he and Harry would be leaving, the three of his mates were up off their stools immediately.

“Don’t.” Louis said sternly. “You guys should stay, it’s a Friday night and you were planning on going out anyway so you might as well. I’ll see you in the morning.”

“All right. Just call me if you need me to come home and I will, yeah?” Zayn said with furrowed brows, and Louis rolled his eyes.

“Mate, I’m not that pissed so don’t worry. It’s just not exactly fun being out when everyone’s watching me and I can’t actually do what I want.”

“Okay.” Zayn nodded unsurely, so Louis clapped him on the shoulder and said his goodbyes to the rest of the gang before taking Harry’s hand and heading out.
Zayn lived by himself in a small two bedroom flat, having gone through numerous roommates that just hadn’t cut it with him. His parents owned the place, and he only had until he graduated Uni to find his own room because then it would be his sister’s turn to live there as she studied. The deal was that he could stay rent free but would have to pay for his own bills and food, and keep the place tidy. If Zayn wanted to, he could rent out the second room and use that money to pay for it all, but it was too hard for him to find someone he liked so instead he got a job and used the room to store his art.

There was still a bed in there, but it was covered in canvases and rolled up posters and a box of paints.

Louis stared at the mess for a moment, then rolled up the sleeves of his onesie.

He took everything off the bed with Harry’s help, resting the canvases against the back wall and putting everything else onto the desk, then got a set of sheets from the linen cupboard, as well as a few towels.

They both shared a quick shower, with Harry actually keeping his hands to himself for once, and changed into some clean trackies. Louis showed Harry how to stretch the sheet over the mattress, got him to help with putting a cover on the duvet, and when they were done they collapsed onto the freshly made bed together.

They weren’t even under the covers yet when Harry’s fingers found Louis’ stomach. “Lou tell Harry how soon now?”

Louis rolled on to his side to face him, then grunted because he’d left the lights on and would have to get out of the comfy bed to turn them off.

When he fell on to the bed for the second time, he snuggled in to Harry’s side and nestled his face against his chest. “Not tonight, Harry.”

“Why?” he whispered, drawing swirls on Louis’ chest with his long deft fingers.

“Because I’m tired. I want to sleep, okay?”

“But Lou said.”

“But Lou doesn’t want to right now. If someone changes their mind about sex, you can’t argue with them, okay?”

Harry pouted, but nodded his head. “Okay. Tomorrow?”

Louis let his eyes close, and muttered “I guess. Let’s just sleep.”

“Ohkay.” He heard Harry say, and felt the grumble in Harry’s chest against his cheek. He also felt it when Harry asked “Lou?”

“Mmm.”

“Harry not child.”

“I know.” Louis murmured.

“Harry knows sometimes. Things. I not baby.”
And he said it so sadly that Louis forced his eyes open. “I know that Harry.”

“Harry want to learn. But don’t want – If don’t know, don’t want to feel - silly.”

“You feel like that sometimes?”

Harry nodded, and Louis slipped one of his hands into Harry’s when he said “Feel like young when Lou talks like parent. Don’t like.”

“Fuck. I didn’t know I was doing that, I’m really sorry, Harry. Honestly.”

Harry nodded, and pulled Louis close again. “Know if someone doesn’t want, don’t do. Lou don’t need tell that. Lou don’t want sex Harry, Harry don’t sex Lou. Just cuddle now. Sleep.”

Louis nodded against Harry’s chest, and muttered “good night” into his skin, because he feared if he said anything more he would get teary.

Only, he hadn’t realised he was talking down to Harry; making him feel silly. It was just hard to forget sometimes, with Harry’s child-like innocence and naivety towards the world, that he was a grown adult. Harry had a fully developed brain; was capable of making his own choices and having his own thoughts. And yeah, he needed help with a lot of basic things like tying his shoelaces and making a sandwich, but it was only because he’d never done them before. Once he learnt how to do things, he managed to do them himself just fine.

Louis had to take a step back from the teacher role, and start acting like a friend, especially if they both wanted more from each other.

Even the sex had been a lesson; had been about showing Harry how to make himself feel good or Louis feel good instead of what felt good for the two of them together. It should have been a lesson for the both of them with trial-and-error, not with Louis acting as the specialist and Harry the keen student, because that just meant Louis was putting himself in a position of power and that wasn’t fair. Not when Harry didn’t know any better.

“Harry?” Louis asked, nudging the resting boy in the ribs with his knuckles.

“Mmm?” rumbled from his chest.

“Do you want to have sex with me?”

“Very yes.” Harry grunted.

“But why?”

“Feels good.”

“But its sex, anyone can make it feel good for you.”

Harry fluttered his eyes open and stared into Louis’ for a beat before answering. “When Lou touch me, I feel butterfly kisses tickly here.” He flattened his hand over Louis’, which was still resting between his pecs, and smiled. “When Lou kiss Harry, me feel butterfly kisses tickly everywhere.”

A laugh burst from Louis’ chest. “You’re sweet, do you know that?”

Harry smiled too, and for the third time that night pulled Louis’ head to his chest, leaving his hand resting at the back of it. “Lou want sex Harry why?”
“Because you’re beautiful, but I don’t think we’re talking about sex now, are we?” he laughed. Harry’s skin broke out into goose bumps where Louis’ breath had hit him, so Louis pressed his lips against his chest before saying “I think I – I mean, I like you. A lot.”

“Why?” Harry asked, prompting him by brushing his knuckles against his ribs.

Louis rolled onto his stomach, holding his head up with his hands on his chin so that he could look at Harry properly. See his expression. “I’ve been thinking a lot about this. I think, like, because good and bad and right and wrong are so simple to you. You haven’t been warped by the world. The way you think and are is how I wish I could be. Kind of how I was, actually, as a kid. In this world we’re taught to be cynical because everyone else is out to get you. You give me faith in humanity, which is a funny thing because I keep being told you’re more ape.” Harry smiled, and Louis sucked in a breath before continuing. “I just worry that you like me for the wrong reasons. Because I was the first human you’d ever seen since your parents lef – uh, disappeared. Do you just like me because I found you?”


“But is that –“

Harry pushed Louis’ hands from his chin so he fell into the pillow, and when Louis laughed he said “Harry not silly. Harry knows why. Lou know Harry knows?”

Louis snuggled back into Harry’s side, and said “Yeah, I know.”

Because it sounded like Harry trusted him, and was only asking Louis to trust him right back.

It’s the least he could do considering the information he was sitting on. The information that might destroy everything if it was to come out.

*When* it was to come out.

---

Louis first ‘date’ with the movie star was the Sunday, and it put a damper on a weekend that had been great up until that point.

He’d spent it entirely with Harry and Zayn, just drinking and watching telly and doing absolutely nothing. Recharging his batteries after a long two weeks, really.

They’d gone out a couple of times, for meals and to grab a few things from the Marks and Spencers around the corner, and Louis was stopped for pictures multiple times but it hadn’t been anything like the day the story came out.

It was why their first date was so soon; because people were already getting over the story. Had already began chalking it up to rumour.

Louis had been flicking through Netflix, Harry lying with his head in Louis’ lap and his legs across Zayn’s, when the call came through.

As soon as Louis had seen his manager’s name on the screen his heart sank. Which was an unusual reaction, because usually the sight of it had him excited; usually meant he had another modelling job.
“What is it?” was how he answered it, and his manager scoffed.

“What is it?” was how he answered it, and his manager scoffed.

“Hello to you too. My weekend has been lovely, thankyou, and yours?”

“Hello to you too. My weekend has been lovely, thankyou, and yours?”

“Sorry. It’s been nice. Just – how come you’re calling? Is it good news or bad?”

“Sorry. It’s been nice. Just – how come you’re calling? Is it good news or bad?”

“A bit of both. Which first?”

“A bit of both. Which first?”

“Good. Then break the bad news to me gently.”

“Good. Then break the bad news to me gently.”

“It’s not bad news, so much. To anyone else it would be the best news.”

“It’s not bad news, so much. To anyone else it would be the best news.”

Louis groaned. “So I’ve got a date with that wanker soon?”

Louis groaned. “So I’ve got a date with that wanker soon?”

“I thought you wanted the good news first?”

“I thought you wanted the good news first?”

“Fine.” He sighed.

“Fine.” He sighed.

“Well, the good news is that we’ve had loads of interest in you, and I’ve booked you quite a lot of jobs for the week!”

“Well, the good news is that we’ve had loads of interest in you, and I’ve booked you quite a lot of jobs for the week!”

“Yeah? With anyone good?”

“Yeah? With anyone good?”

“You wouldn’t believe how good. Rolex, Armani, Gucci to name a few. We obviously have to go through the offers tomorrow; see who needs you to represent them exclusively and who wouldn’t mind you being the face for other brands as well as them. But you’ve got choices, Lou. No more scraping at the bottom of the barrel.”

“You wouldn’t believe how good. Rolex, Armani, Gucci to name a few. We obviously have to go through the offers tomorrow; see who needs you to represent them exclusively and who wouldn’t mind you being the face for other brands as well as them. But you’ve got choices, Lou. No more scraping at the bottom of the barrel.”

“Shit.” Louis sighed, and fell back against the sofa. Harry rolled onto his back, looking up at Louis from beneath, and Zayn quickly glanced over to him but then went back to staring at the telly. “So I’ll come in tomorrow after we take Harry into Uni?”

“Shit.” Louis sighed, and fell back against the sofa. Harry rolled onto his back, looking up at Louis from beneath, and Zayn quickly glanced over to him but then went back to staring at the telly. “So I’ll come in tomorrow after we take Harry into Uni?”

“Before, if you can get someone else to take him. Now, about tonight…” she trailed off, and Louis just blinked expectantly until he realised she couldn’t actually see him.

So he prompted her with “What about it?”

“So he prompted her with “What about it?”

“You’ll be going on your first date tonight.”

“You’ll be going on your first date tonight.”

And that had Louis groaning. “I fucking knew it. Where to?”

“And that had Louis groaning. “I fucking knew it. Where to?”

“Just dinner. The two of you aren’t making headlines any more, and there’s been talk of you and a ‘curly haired stranger’. Just on small gossip sites, but you know how that stuff can easily spread.”

“Just dinner. The two of you aren’t making headlines any more, and there’s been talk of you and a ‘curly haired stranger’. Just on small gossip sites, but you know how that stuff can easily spread.”

“When are we going? And where exactly are we eating?”

“When are we going? And where exactly are we eating?”

“I’ll text you the exact details. You’ll probably get a text from him too. I gave your number to his manager just this morning so expect some kind of presumptuous flirty line.” She spat the last few words, and Louis was momentarily startled.

“I’ll text you the exact details. You’ll probably get a text from him too. I gave your number to his manager just this morning so expect some kind of presumptuous flirty line.” She spat the last few words, and Louis was momentarily startled.

“You don’t like him either?” he asked, frown slowly becoming a grin.

“You don’t like him either?” he asked, frown slowly becoming a grin.

She sighed. “No, but business is business. And quite frankly I think he’s going to do more good for you than damage. As annoying as this whole mess is, it’s mostly beneficial.”

“She sighed. “No, but business is business. And quite frankly I think he’s going to do more good for you than damage. As annoying as this whole mess is, it’s mostly beneficial.”

“Mostly?”

“Mostly?”
There was a brief pause before his manager spoke. “It’s obviously got downsides, but none that you weren’t already aware of before you took the job. That’s what it is, Louis. It’s just another job. You can handle it, you’ve handled worse. Remember that Primark gig you had early on?”

Louis shuddered at the thought. “Can’t forget it.” Then his gaze shifted back down to Harry, long hair splayed over his lap, mouth set in a little frown of concern as he watched the show Zayn had put on for him. “But what if there was something that I didn’t know before that I know now? Something that could hurt someone if it got out?”

“Is this about Harry?” she almost whispered it, as if she was the one trying to have a conversation about a boy while his cheek was pressed against her thigh.

“Yeah.”

She was silent, save for a deep breath she inhaled. It was four seconds before she let it out again; Louis counted. “Would you like me to call tonight off until after we’ve spoken about it?”

Louis wasn’t expecting that, and had to stop for a moment to collect his thoughts. It made him uncomfortable that he was being given a choice. He wanted to go on the date so that he’d be one closer to having fulfilled his contract with the star, but he also wanted it to be very clear to all involved that he was being forced into it. With the decision now in his hands, his stomach was rolling.

“Louis? You there?”

“Yeah.” He cleared his throat. “I’ll go tonight. Get a date out of the way. But we’ll talk tomorrow about the other stuff.” He caught movement out the corner of his eye, and looked over to see Zayn now staring at him, frown set deep over his face. His mate raised an eyebrow, and Louis held up a finger. “I’ve got to go. Text me the details.”

Not even a second after Louis had pressed the end-call button, Zayn was hounding him. “You’re going on a date already?”

“Yeah.” His phone buzzed, and he looked down to read the message from his manager. “At 8pm tonight.”

“Lou going?” Harry asked, pushing himself up from Louis’ lap and settling onto the sofa.

“I have to go out on one of those dates I was telling you about. Like, to see that man. For dinner.” Louis said carefully.


Louis grinned. “Yeah, definitely. It’s just a job.” He added, repeating his manager’s words. He liked that; seeing it as work. Felt a lot less like betrayal.

“Okay.” Harry said again. Then he looked to Zayn. “We have dinner too?”

“Yes,” Zayn laughed. “you’ll be fed, don’t worry.

Harry grinned and leant into Zayn’s side, fixing his eyes back onto the TV screen, still pressed against Louis’ best mate.

Before Louis could feel anything, though, Harry’s hand found his thigh, reassuring him with a squeeze.
It heated his insides, to have the boy trust him so implicitly. He hadn’t even blinked when Louis
told him of the date, but maybe that was just because Harry didn’t exactly know what a date was.
What one insinuated.

It helped Louis relax, too, because it was the truth that the date meant nothing, and to have Harry
believe it helped Louis believe in himself. That he could get through it without being seduced by
the star’s charm and looks and money.

Somewhere deep down, Louis was worried he’d slip back into that air-head he’d become when he
first met the star; when he was hypnotised by the man and felt honoured that such a person was
giving him attention.

But if Harry had faith in him, Louis was going to have it in himself too.

---

Louis had been to the restaurant before. He’d taken a prospective employer there to impress them,
and Louis could see now why his plan had failed.

The place was too much. It was obvious and over-the-top and desperate, stifling with how
pretentious it was; the waiters were walking with their noses leading them, face crumpled as if
there was a bad smell permeating the air. All that in addition to the way the movie star was eyeing
him with a gleeful smirk had Louis’ skin crawling. He had no idea how he was going to get
through the next ten minutes, let alone the entire evening.

“You’re meant to at least look like you’re enjoying yourself.” The actor said, eyes leaving Louis’ to
stare down their waiter.

The man was there in a second, and once he’d left with their drinks order, Louis replied. “You
aren’t exactly making this easy for me.”

“How can I make it easy?”

“You can stop looking at me like that, for one.”

The star grinned. “You look delectable, Louis, I just can’t help it.”

Louis rolled his eyes. “You look less like the cat that got the cream and more like a psychotic
murderer who caught his next victim. Try to hold back on the creepy staring and lip-licking will
you?”

That had the star throwing his head back in laughter, and the numerous patrons at the tables around
them turning to stare it was so loud. It was an obnoxious kind of loud, though; nothing like Harry’s
sweet and honest squawk. “I’ll try to control myself.” The man said, after he’d finally got over his
laughing fit.

Louis sighed, taking it for the empty promise it was, and picked his menu off the table. He
skimmed through, reading the names of the dishes with the hope that there’d be something he
would at least recognise.

“What would you recommend?” the star asked him, and Louis peeked over his menu, eyebrows
raised in disbelief.

“There’s only one thing on here that I’ve actually tried and I can’t even remember what it was, it’s
been that long since I’ve come here.”
“When did you come here? Doesn’t seem like your kind of place.”

“Firstly, you don’t know me well enough to be able to assume what my kind of place is. And secondly, it’s none of your business when I came here.”

The star grinned. “You can’t remember, can you?”

“Yes, actually, I remember exactly when.”

“Valentines’ Day?”

Louis snorted. “Fuck off. It was just before Christmas, for your information; the day before my birthday.”

“Is that why you were here? Celebrating it with someone special?”

“I’d never come here to celebrate, I’m a pub-with-mates kind of guy. It was a work thing.”

“I knew it wasn’t your kind of place. You look almost as put out as these waiters, your nose is so high in the air.”

“Probably because the waiters and I have a lot in common. We all don’t want to be here, but the pay is too good to turn down.”

“Touché.” The star said, smirk back in full force. “You know, this grumpy kitten act isn’t deterring me. I like claws.”

Louis visibly shuddered. “Just stop.” Before Louis could mutter I need a drink, their waiter appeared at the table with a bottle of wine.

Then he asked for their order, and Louis jumped in with his before the star could do something gross like order for him.

By the time the waiter left, Louis had already emptied his wine glass.

“Another?” the star asked, smiling in his special patronising way. “Drink as much as you like, doll, it’s all on me.”

“Don’t call me doll again.” Louis grunted as he refilled his glass.

“So tell me about your acting aspirations. And before you say something sassy and turn me on some more, this date will go a lot quicker for you if you talk to me.”

Louis released his lip from the grip of his teeth, and nodded curtly. The arsehole had a point.

“Acting was the dream all through Secondary. I did all the school plays, and then went on to study drama at Uni. I always knew there was a slim chance I’d get anywhere with it, but I figured if all else failed I could just teach it.”

“Sounds like me.”

“Only you were good enough to get somewhere.” Louis snorted.

“No, I was determined enough to keep at it until I landed a job. You gave up, and turned to modelling.”

“I didn’t give up. I just took an opportunity that presented itself to me.”
“Yes, the first one that came along. You took an easy out. I call that giving up.”

“You really want me to hate you.” Louis grunted, and the star had the nerve to laugh.

“I’m just trying to work out how passionate you are about acting. Who exactly I should be talking to about getting you work. I can’t introduce you to a top agent and have you reject their job offers; it would make me look bad.”

“I ‘spose.”

Their waiter put some bread on their table, and topped up their wine, all while the movie star never broke eye contact with Louis. It made him uncomfortable, but he certainly didn’t show it.

It was a few long beats before Louis realised the star was waiting for him to say more. So he cleared his throat and said “I am passionate about acting. I’d rather be acting than modelling, if that’s what you’re wondering.”

“How much do you want it?”

“I’m not gonna suck you off right here under the table, if that’s what you’re insinuating.” Louis spat.

Again the star barked out his obnoxious laugh. “That’s not what I’m getting at, no. If you’re offering though…” He waited for Louis’ snort of disgust before grinning. “I’m asking if you are willing to move to LA to do it. Would you leave London and all the people you know and love here in England for an acting career?”

Louis didn’t give him an answer. Well, he shrugged, but he was saved from answering properly by the waiter’s arrival with their entrees.

Louis had ordered the prosciutto, and was given a sliver of it with three peas placed in a triangle in the corner of the plate, and a drizzle of dark sauce in the other.

That was another reason why he hated fancy places like this. He liked to leave restaurants so full he had to undo the top button of his trousers, so the tiny artfully placed portions really didn’t do it for him. Yeah, they were delicious and rich, but they also always left him wanting more. He’d just have to order another few desserts, or hit up KFC on the way home.

“That’s why you always order the soup.” The star said, and Louis looked up at him, frown still small on his face.

“What?”

“You always order the soup at these places, because you get more bread with it and by the time your main comes you’re already half-way full.”

“Thanks for the advice.” Louis grunted. “But it’s a bit late.”

“We can swap if you like.” The star offered, and Louis gave him a small smile. It had been a nice gesture, and Louis wasn’t that rude as to ignore it, but he was still quite unsure of the guy’s intentions so he shook his head and stabbed a pea with his fork. The star smiled tightly back and picked up his spoon. “Suit yourself.” He grumbled, and took his first mouthful.

The rest of the date felt like Louis was on some kind of talk show. He wasn’t sure which one; it switched between feeling very Dr Phil-esque and emotional, to having Louis laugh at the star’s
Chatty-Man-type questions and general inappropriateness. He still didn’t want to laugh, but the star was definitely growing on him. Maybe they could at least be mates.

The main came, then the dessert, and by the end of it all Louis had drunk at least a whole bottle of wine to himself, and was feeling terribly hot in the face for it. The star had loosened his tie at some point, and was looking a little red himself. He’d probably drunk the same amount, they’d shared two bottles of good stuff between them, and the guy’s eyes were bloodshot and flicking about quickly.

“I’m still so fucking hungry.” Louis said, interrupting whatever crap the movie star was spouting off, and burst into a fit of giggles.

The star laughed too, his real one that had come out half way into the wine. The sound just sort of fell from his mouth, and his face scrunched up in a way that should have been unattractive but really wasn’t; it brought out his crow’s feet and the small wrinkles on his forehead, and he looked real. Not so manufactured and robotic as when he laughed with his head thrown back and eyes closed, short “Ha Ha”s forced from his throat.

“Let’s go get a pizza. My hotel makes amazing ones. I’ve had to have eaten at least twelve by now. I should probably be embarrassed Room Service know I want one as soon as I call them.” Louis stopped smiling, and the star was quick to assure him that “I don’t mean you should come back to my room. I wasn’t – that’s not what I was saying.”

“I know.” Louis said, forcing a smile back onto his face. It had been the image of it that had saddened him; of a grown man sitting on his bed, ordering pizza on twelve different occasions, and being so childishly excited about it. Is that how movie stars got their kicks? “Is it lonely, being famous?”

The star’s concerned expression turned to one of confusion. Then sadness. “Its fine when I’m surrounded by people, I love that side of things. The big events and the way everyone knows who I am and wants to speak to me. But when you’re alone, you start to think about why these people wanted to talk to you. What they wanted from you. I mean, I have to pay a decent guy to date me.” He was looking down at his hands now, mouth in a hard line, forehead crumpled.

So Louis reached out and placed his hands on the top of the star’s. “If we’d met a month ago, I’d have kicked up just the same fuss about getting the date, but I’d probably leave tonight with you and insist that you keep your money. I’ve just got someone now, who I deeply care about. Who needs me just as much as I need him.”

“Tell me about him.”

Louis couldn’t control his smile as he spoke. “He’s amazing. Like no one you’ve ever met before. His – upbringing – was incredibly unusual, and he’s got this whole different outlook on the world because of it.”

“He sounds amazing. How’d you find him?”

Louis laughed. “He kind of found me. Took me, really.”

The star was smiling despite his confusion, but didn’t say anything more. Instead, he waved the waiter over.

He paid the bill, and when they left he tripped on the uneven pavement, and Louis caught him. They laughed madly, and said goodbye with a kiss to the cheek, and made a show of getting in
separate cabs because they just knew there was a pap lurking around some place. That had been the whole point of this after all; to be spotted together.

When Louis got back to Zayn’s, Harry was waiting for him on the sofa. Well, he was asleep, but by the look of it he’d only fallen recently; his hair was still soaking from the shower he’d taken.

Louis nudged him, probably a lot harder than intended because Harry’s eyes flew open and he bolted upright. He blinked for a few moments, brain catching up to the situation, before throwing his arms around Louis’ waist and pulling him down onto the sofa with him.

“Harry’s Lou.” He grunted, nuzzling his way into Louis’ neck.

Louis giggled at how quick Harry was to unbutton his shirt, at how Harry’s wet hair fell against his torso and left cold drops on his skin that made him shiver. Harry rubbed his face into Louis’ chest, travelling further and further south until Louis’ breath hitched, then raced up again until Harry’s nose was buried in Louis’ hair.

He just kept nuzzling and rubbing, Harry’s chest moving against his erratically, bare skin against bare skin.

“Harry? What are you doing?” Louis asked, voice cracking when Harry’s cheek grazed his nipple on his descent down.

“Harry’s Lou.” He murmured, lips moving against his ribcage.

Louis just watched Harry, frown growing deeper and deeper until it couldn’t anymore. Then, realisation struck him and his expression went blank. “Are you, like, trying to rub your scent on me? Like a cat?”

Harry grinned guiltily and said “Meow” in a very human way; not an exact imitation of the animal like Louis knew he could most certainly do. Then he went back to rubbing himself all over Louis, claiming him, and want hit him like a punch to the gut.

He wanted Harry to make him his; to show Louis who he belonged to. Own him.

“Fuck me.” He groaned, and spread his legs until Harry’s hips fell between them.

“Lou?” Harry muttered into his neck, and Louis shivered at the feel of those soft plump lips against him.

His skin was thrumming; it felt as if his very bones were vibrating with need. “Harry.” Louis moaned, canting his hips up so his jean-clad cock rubbed against Harry’s. “Harry. Harry, please.” He begged, and Harry delivered by thrusting his hips down into Louis’. “Fuck.”

“You want Harry fuck Lou?” he grunted, breath hot against Louis’ neck.

Louis whined, high-pitched and desperate. Fuck, but wine always made him incredibly horny; numbed his thinking but heightened his senses. He felt rocky, like he was floating in the middle of the ocean, everything moving this way and that.

Except Harry. Harry was still, and solid, chest hovering over Louis’, blinking down at him from underneath his hair. His lips were so so red and plush, and his cheeks the slightest pink. All Louis could do was moan and thrust up against the hot body above him.

“Yes, Harry, fuck. I need you.” His breathing was ragged already, and they’d done nothing. Well,
Harry hadn’t. Louis hadn’t stopped squirming.

“How, Lou?” Harry groaned, and with a hand pushed Louis’ hair back from his forehead. “How Harry Lou fuck?”

“I’ll show you.” Louis panted. “Get me naked. And you naked. Let’s just get naked.”

Harry snorted out a laugh, huge grin on his face, and nodded quick.

Louis shucked his shirt off his shoulders while Harry undressed himself. He’d only been wearing some of Louis’ worn-out Adidas trackies, so he was nude after a single tug of his trousers.

Louis didn’t have it so easy. His dark jeans were incredibly fitted, and it took Harry standing at the end of the sofa and pulling hard before they were off him. It left Louis only in his pants, splayed across the sofa, panting hard and looking up at Harry hovering over him.

“How Harry Lou’s room?” Harry asked, voice low and husky, and Louis was quick to jump up.

Louis had Harry pinned to the bed as soon as their bedroom door was shut, bum on his thighs and hands pushing Harry’s wrists against the mattress. He shifted his hips forward a little, until Harry’s cock was pressed against his own clothed one, and jungle man purred low and rough, like that of a tiger’s.

Louis hadn’t seen Harry as a jungle man for a week at the least. Since Harry had begun wearing clothes and eating with cutlery and brushing his hair. But now, with the man tanned and toned and spread on his duvet, hair a messy halo around his head, eyes hard and pupil’s lust-blown, Louis couldn’t help but think of him as wild.

And fuck, was it doing things to his cock.

“Lou naked.” Harry growled. “No pants.”

“Yeah.” Louis whimpered, and rolled off of Harry to lie flat against the bed himself. He canted his hips up and tugged off his underwear, throwing them on the floor as Harry sat up to watch.

Harry lay his hand flat on Louis’ abdomen and asked “What I do?”

Louis’ breath hitched, and when he spoke his voice came out shaky. “There’s – in the bathroom, there’s this little purple tube. The one you thought was toothpaste?”

Harry cringed at the reminder. “I get?”

“Yeah.”

Harry was back quickly, holding the tube in front of him as he climbed onto the bed again. “Now?”

“I- I’ll start you off.” Louis reasoned, and took the lube from Harry’s outstretched palm. He squeezed some on to his fingers, glancing up at Harry from beneath his lashes because the boy was watching intently, eyes narrowed in focus, mouth set in a hard line. Then Louis looked back down at his hands as his fingers rubbed together to warm up the lube and said “So. Uh, your cock will go in my arse, yeah? But first I’ve got to open myself a bit, so it won’t hurt. You following?”

“Harry’s cock in Lou’s open arse.” He replied with a short nod of his head. “How Lou’s arse open?”

Louis couldn’t help but grin down at his hands, chin to his chest. Then he held out his wet fingers
in front of him. “With these. I put these in myself first.”

Harry settled onto his hunches, putting his hands on his thighs, and nodded as if to say go ahead, I’m ready to watch.

So Louis crawled up onto his knees and faced away from Harry, so the other man would see clearly the way Louis ran a dry finger along his taint, fingertip edging closer to his rim. “They go in here.” Louis muttered, and switched to a wet finger. He took a deep breath, and slipped it inside himself. With his other hand he gently cupped his balls, and rubbed at the back of them with the heel of his palm.

“Lou?” Harry asked, voice breaking. “I touch?”

Louis looked back at him over his shoulder. Harry had come as close as he could without touching, eyes watching intently as he pulled his finger out and pushed it back again. His eyes fluttered shut for a moment, the sensation too strong. It had been a long time since he had anything inside himself.

“Lou?” Harry asked again, a little louder and certain. “Harry’s turn?”

“Yeah.” Louis grunted, and pulled his finger out for good. “You remember what to do first?”

“Put not-toothpaste on here.” Harry said as he wiggled two of his long fingers. “Put inside Louis. Slowly to open.”

“Yeah.” Louis breathed out, and pushed the tube into Harry’s waiting hand. “Be quick. Fuck, I’m – I need you soon.”

Harry nodded his head hard, curls falling into his face. He uncapped the tube and squeezed it hard, causing far too much lube to spill out over his fingers. “Fuck.” He grunted, and Louis couldn’t hide his grin.

Until he realised how hard Harry’s hands were shaking, then he stopped and asked “Are you sure you want to do this Harry?”

Harry looked up from his lube-covered fingers and stared back at Louis with wide eyes. “Yes. Want to fuck.”

“Are you scared?”

“Of hurting Lou. Yes.” He nodded. “What if I can’t open you?”

Louis smiled kindly, and curled his hand around Harry’s wrist. “You will. I’ll tell you how, okay? Just listen to me and you’ll know.”

“Okay.” He said, then shuffled forward. He put one hand on Louis’ hip, then clenched the other into a fist save for his index finger. Louis got back onto his knees and pulled his arse cheeks apart with his hands. He looked down at the duvet and waited for the moment when he would feel Harry.

The first touch was teasingly light.

With his outstretched finger, Harry traced along Louis’ taint. He ran his fingertip down the back of Louis’ balls, then moved it back up to circle his rim.
“Lou good?”

“Yeah. You can go a bit quicker.” He muttered.

Then Harry slipped his finger inside, all the way to the knuckle, and Louis pushed his arse back to feel more.

It felt amazing, just that one finger, and Louis couldn’t help but want a second desperately. Harry’s was so much longer than his own, so much thicker. The pad of his fingertip was rougher, and his knuckle was bonier, and just the fact that the finger felt so obviously like Harry’s made him moan.

“Another one.” He whimpered, thighs already shaking. He wasn’t sure if it was still the wine that was making him weakly desperate, or if now he was just drunk off Harry.

“Which one?”

“Any.” Louis just managed to get out before a second fingertip was running along his rim, tracing where the first finger had disappeared inside Louis’ body. “I want it.” Louis added, and Harry pushed it carefully in beside the first.

“Okay?”

“Yeah Harry.” Louis sighed, letting go of his own arse cheeks so he could hold himself up with his hands on the bedhead. “Feels amazing. You – can you move them a bit?”

Harry pulled his fingers out halfway, then pushed them back in together, slow and experimental.

“Faster. And – and pull them apart from each other.”

Louis could feel the exact moment Harry begun to scissor his fingers, stretching him wider.


Harry was fingering him quick and hard now, free hand gripping Louis’ hip harder to keep them balanced. His fingers were twisting and scissoring, pulling out enough that his knuckles caught on his rim before ramming back inside. “Another?” Harry grunted, and Louis nodded quick.

“Yeah. Yeah, another.” He panted, and dropped his head so it hanged low, chin against his chest. He could see his cock between his legs, full and red and wet.

As the third finger slipped inside and brushed against his prostate, a moan ripped itself from his throat.

“Fuck, Harry, I’m gonna come. Get inside me before I come.”

“Is Lou open?” Harry asked, voice wavering as if he was just as desperate.

That would be impossible though; no one had ever been as desperate as Louis was in that moment, he was certain. It was why he almost barked out a Yes. “You’ve got to put more lube on your cock. Rub it on there until you’re fully hard.”

“Harry hard for already ages.” He chuckled, and pulled his fingers from Louis’ arse.

Louis looked back over his shoulder, watching as Harry squeezed the tube more gently this time, and covered his cock in lube. He hadn’t been kidding; the head of his cock was almost purple,
peeping out occasionally from his circled fingers as his hand raced up and down his shaft, covering it in lube.

“You can’t come.” Louis said hurriedly, and Harry immediately stopped moving his hand and blinked his eyes open. “You’ve got to come inside me. You’ve got to fuck me with your cock while it’s still hard like how you fucked me with your fingers. You want to do that?”

Harry nodded quickly, and shuffled closer. Louis reached around behind himself and took Harry’s cock in his hand. He lined it up by feel, rubbing the head of Harry’s cock against his rim before slowly pushing his arse back, sighing as he fed himself more and more of Harry.

“Fuck.” Harry groaned when he was fully seated, and Louis took his hand to wrap around his own cock instead, holding the base hard so he wouldn’t come already. Harry was painfully big, but it hurt in all the right ways. Slowly, without being prompted, Harry began to rock his hips minutely, and Louis whimpered.

“Yes, Harry, fuck. Keep doing that. More.”

Harry circled his hips, and pulled out a little further each time before pumping back in in short hard thrusts, and Louis’s eyes rolled back inside his head when Harry hit his prostate after only a few rocks forward.

“There, Haz, try to hit there.” He whimpered. “And go harder. I can take it. Please.”

So Harry gripped Louis’ hips tighter, and pulled out until only his cockhead was still inside, then rammed forward.

Louis moaned high and long on the pull out, and Harry grunted deep and gruff on the push in, and they both groaned loud as Harry picked up the pace and fucked Louis harder.

Louis’ orgasm hit him suddenly; punched through his gut and whited out his vision. His arse clenched spasmodically, gripping onto Harry.

Harry groaned “Lou” at the sensation, and slowed his hips and just let himself feel the way Louis’ arse squeezed his cock, desperate to keep it inside a little while longer. It’s what ultimately made him come, that feeling, and Louis felt another roll of pleasure as Harry released inside him.

After Harry’s hips stuttered to a complete stop, he slowly pulled out of Louis, and pulled the boy back to rest on his lap.

“Wow.” Harry said breathlessly, and Louis rolled his head back to smile lazily up at him.

“Yeah. It’s good, hey?”

Harry grinned, and nodded fast. “No bananas too.”

And that had Louis barking out a laugh, in a way that was very much Harry, and shook his head at his jungle man.

“Lou fuck Harry next? Want to come from inside.”

“Of course.” Louis said, though the words came out broken through his yawn. “But that time will not be today, I’m fucked.”

“By Harry.” He grinned, and Louis rolled his eyes.
“Yes, by you. But I meant I’m tired. Still a bit dizzy, too, actually. Drank too much wine with dinner.”

“Okay.” Harry said, and moved them around on the bed so they could settle against their pillows. “Was dinner good?”

Louis shrugged his shoulders, then rolled onto his side and threw an arm around Harry’s chest. He let his eyes shut, then yawned again, and said “The food was nice but not enough of it. Wine was amazing, but. Company was okay.”

“Him okay? Man be mean or nice?”

“He was nice, I guess. Can we talk about him tomorrow? Kinda don’t want to think about him when I can feel your come dripping from my arse.” Louis muttered into Harry’s skin, and he felt Harry’s stomach move as he snorted.


It wasn’t until Harry’s soft snores filled the air that Louis’ eyes flickered back open to look at the boy underneath his arm. Had he really just said Love?

---

“You’re late” was the first thing his manager had said to him when he walked into her office.

Louis just shrugged; it wasn’t exactly anything he didn’t already now. Besides, he wasn’t going to let anything kill his buzz today. He was on top of the world, and he was going to stay that way, because Harry and him had fucked the night before and it was incredible and it was only going to get better. Better than incredible sex.Louis couldn’t wait, and Harry was just as excited if that morning was anything to go by. Louis had woken to his cock getting eagerly sucked; his day couldn’t have begun any more amazing than that.

“Where’s Harry?” she asked, still frowning though her voice was a little gentler.

“Dropped him to Uni on the way in.”

She nodded, short and sharp. Then breathed in deep from her nose, held it, and slowly released the air through her mouth. She smiled big, held it, then let her face fall. The first time she went through that little ritual of hers, Louis couldn’t hide how weirded out he was and she had to explain what it all was about so he’d get over it. Something about relaxing when she was stressed, or helping to forgive when she was mad. This time it would have been the latter. “So you said something new has come to light about Harry. Want to tell me about it?”

Now that the air was a whole lot less tense, Louis dropped down on the seat in front of her desk. “Yeah. Uh – did I ever tell you that I found some stuff when I was lost in the jungle with Harry? Like, in his tree house?”

She blinked. “Absolutely none of that made sense to me. His tree house? And stuff? You’re going to have to go into a bit more detail.”

“Okay. So. Like – Okay.” Louis stammered, and stopped when his manager raised her eyebrow. Then he cleared his throat, and continued. “When I was in the jungle with Harry for those few hours, he showed me around a bit. Introduced me to his gorilla family, and took me up this giant tree to this house. It was totally abandoned, but there was all these clothes and books and furniture and human
shit in there. And it made me wonder – who was living there? I mean, it was obvious Harry hadn’t been because he had no idea what a lot of it was. Except a crib. He said that was his. So that made me think it was where he lived as a baby, presumably with his parents.”

“Makes sense.” She nodded.

“Right? So that made me wonder what the hell happened to his parents. How Harry could have ended up the only human in that jungle, living with monkeys and the like. There were loads of books and papers and stuff on the floor so I took them. Figured I’d read them to get some kind of idea. But I – put it off, I guess, until the other night. Me and Liam and Zayn went through it, and we discovered something pretty big about Harry.”

Louis stopped, and the room was silent, until his manager prompted him with the question “Which is?”

“His parents are alive. Or, they were when Harry – when those gorillas became his family. They stole him. The monkeys, I mean, they stole him from his parents when he was a baby. Or like, when he was two, but that’s still a baby yeah? And so they might be out there somewhere, thinking Harry’s dead but actually he’s here with me.”

“Have you told him?”

Louis shook his head, and his manager gave him a look that made him clench up. “I’m going to. I’m just waiting for the right time.”

“The right time was when you found out. I thought you wanted him to make his own decisions and be his own person? That’s what you were saying when you took him to those interviews at the universities.”

“Yeah, I do! I just –“

“Don’t want him to leave you?”

Louis blinked. Then collapsed back into his chair with a groan. “I haven’t even thought of that! Do you reckon he will? I just didn’t want to scare him. I don’t want him to panic, you know? I don’t like it when he’s scared. But like – fuck. He won’t have just me anymore, will he? And Zayn and Niall and Liam, obviously, but I’m his favourite human ever and I won’t be when he meets his parents, will I? This fucking – fuck. Fuck this.” Louis kicked at the leg of her desk, pushing his chair back a few inches.

“Stop sulking.” She said with a roll of her eyes, and Louis kicked at her desk again. “It’ll be good for him to have family instead of just friends. You were going to have to share him at some point.”

“I know. Don’t want to though.” He grumbled, and crossed his arms. He was already acting like a child; might as well complete the transformation with a pouty mouth and jutted chin.

“That’s selfish and you know it.”

“Yeah.”

“If you love him you’ll do what’s best for him, and I think the best thing is to tell him about his parents. Whether he wants to find them or not, it’s his decision to make, not yours.”

“Yeah, it is.” He muttered, chin to his chest because now that his tantrum was over he was beginning to feel like a knob and he was too embarrassed to meet his manager’s eyes. But then
realisation hit him and he had to look up at her to scowl and grunt “Wait, who said I loved him? I met him, like, a month ago or something.”

“It doesn’t have to be that kind of love. Could be the same type of love you have for Zayn. Speaking of which, you convinced him to sign with us yet?”

“Nah, you know he’s set on his art shit.” Louis scoffed. She sighed, and nodded her head. Then she relaxed back into her seat and asked “So how was last night?”

Louis had to think for a second; it honestly had slipped his mind. When he heard last night he immediately thought Harry fucked me and that surely wasn’t what she was asking about. “The date, right. Umm, it was okay. He’s not as big an arsehole as I thought.”

She smiled. “Good, I’m glad to hear it, because you’ve got another date on Thursday, when you’ll be attending his movie premiere. Then on Saturday the photographer that went with you to the jungle is running an exhibition and has invited you and the arrogant git along. He’s invited Harry too, actually, but I don’t think it’s a good idea for him to come.”

“Why did he invite Harry?”

“Not sure, but like I said, he shouldn’t go. I can’t predict how he’ll act and it’ll be distracting for you. It’s meant to be your third date with the movie star.”

“I s’pose. I’m gonna tell him about it though, and that he’s invited.”

“And about his parents?”


“Good. Now, I’ve just received an email about a hotel room that’s been booked for you. And Harry, I guess. It’s two bedrooms.”

Louis frowned for a moment. Then he remembered what was promised to him in the contract, and he grinned. “Yeah? Is it a decent one?”

“It’s one of the best. Your big shot movie star is staying there so it has got to be good.”

“Oh course he is.” Louis snorted. Still, he figured it would be nice to stay there for a week or so; to live in luxury and so Harry could see a different area of London. No doubt the place will be central, all the good hotels were. “When can we move in?”

“As soon as you like. Now if you want, it’s been booked from today.”

“Sick, I’ll go pack our things up. Zayn’ll be happy to have his art room back. He’s got exams and shit coming up, I’m pretty sure. Anything else we need to talk about?”

“Yeah, your career. I’ve got a list of jobs we’ve been offered and I need you to go through them. Circle the ones you’re interested in. I’ve underlined the ones I think would be best, but ultimately it’s your decision. I’ll be seriously annoyed if you don’t take the Armani gig though.”

“Fuck. Armani?” Louis grumbled as he pulled the sheet of paper closer to him.

“Yeah, there are some big hitters on here Louis. Take the list home and think about it, then call me later today with your thoughts. I’m sure your busting to get back to Zayn’s to talk to Harry.”
“He’s at Uni though.” Louis muttered, eyes still fixed on the list. Fucking hell. Gucci? And Hugo Boss want him again? “Do any of these jobs need me to sign up to them exclusively? You said that might be an issue on the phone.”

“Burberry is the only one, as far as I know. Mind you, Louis, these are only offers to try out for the job. It’s better to go for as many as you can rather than to limit yourself just in case.”

“Alright, yeah.” Louis nodded, and pushed himself up from the seat. “I’ll take this home and check it out. Probably should get the talk with Harry out of the way though first. Hopefully he won’t be too pissed off I held out on him.”

---

Louis lasted only an hour at Zayn’s before he couldn’t handle it anymore and rushed off to the university to see Harry.

He wasn’t completely convinced it was the best idea, but he brought the journals with him anyway. He’d give them over to Harry, because they were ultimately his to deal with and not Louis’.

Harry was in the middle of some kind of research experiment when Louis got there. He was sitting behind a computer and clicking the mouse occasionally, and when Louis asked what was happening a researcher said it was a reaction time test. She didn’t say any more than that, and Louis didn’t bother asking.

As soon as the test was finished, Louis hurried into the room, and Harry jumped up and grinned. “Lou!” he shouted, and Louis smiled back.

“Hey Haz.”

“Lou come for watching?”

“No, Haz, I came here to tell you something.” Then he turned to a researcher and asked “Can Harry come home early today?”

“We had two more experiments planned for after his break. Can it wait?”

“I go now.” Harry said, and walked out of the room without another word. Louis smiled apologetically and rushed out after him.

Harry only stopped walking when they left the building, and that was to plop down onto a bench. “Lou got banana?”

“Nah, but I can go buy you one if you like?”

“It okay. Harry wait. What something you want to tell? Serious? Import-ing?”

“Important.” Louis corrected kindly. “And yeah, it’s pretty important. I think we should go back to Zayn’s before I tell you, actually.”

Harry shook his head, and held out a hand for Louis to take. When the city boy did, Harry pulled him down to sit on the bench with him. “Tell me now, please. If it important.”

“Right.” Louis took a deep breath, then held out the journals for Harry to take. The man just blinked at them, though, so Louis said “I brought these back with us from the jungle. They were
your parents’. Your human parents, I mean.”

Harry frowned. “What they?”

“Journals. Your parents wrote in them, and I – uh, I read them.”

“What they words say?”

“I- fuck. Okay. They said that you were taken from them. By the gorillas. Did you know that?”

Harry didn’t react for a moment. He just sat completely still, not blinking or breathing, and Louis was about to say something before Harry nodded once, hard and sharp.

It was Louis’ turn to freeze. “You knew?”

“Yes, I knew. Harry knows.”

“Did Zayn tell you?”

Harry shook his head. “Mother gorilla told. Said I was sick. Said took to make better. Came back, humans gone.”

“But they stayed looking for you for days. That’s what it says in the journal. It says they stayed and looked and then gave up and decided to move back home. Did – do you want to find them?”

Harry ignored the last question, and instead grunted “Mother gorilla not lie. Humans lie. Gorillas never lie.”

“I – I don’t get it, Harry. I don’t understand how she told you in the first place, how you can be sure that’s what she said, and how you can trust her over your own parents.”

“Gorilla is parents. Not mother in human way, but mother in Harry way.”

“Don’t you want answers? Don’t you think we should find them?”

Harry blinked again, then stood and took the journals from Louis’ outstretched hands. He turned, and stormed off in the direction they’d come from.

Louis was up out of his seat mere seconds after, tailing behind Harry as the man hurried off. “Harry, wait up! I’m sorry, okay, we don’t have to do anything about it.”

“I am.” He threw over his shoulder, and Louis was about to ask what he meant but the question was answered for him the moment Harry went back into the Psychology research building.

And Louis could only watch when Harry thrust the journals into the hands of the researchers without a single word.

“Harry?” Louis said carefully, when the boy turned around to face him.

“They find them for you. They answer your questions. I want go home.”

“But I don’t – that’s not what I meant. I don’t need to know, I just thought you would need to know.”

“I believe you Harry, I do. You don’t have to do this. I just don’t un-“

“Understand.” Harry finished for him with a curt nod. “So Harry will show.”

It was silent between the two of them, both just staring at the other, waiting for the silence to be broken. Louis couldn’t get a read on Harry; whether the indifference he was showing was just an act, if he was actually angry or upset somewhere beneath the surface.

“We go to Zayn’s.” Harry said, and slipped his hand into Louis’.

Louis nodded, and let Harry pull him along in silence. It was bothering him, what Harry had said. Not about humans and lying, or that he knew this whole time that his parents left him in the jungle but hadn’t said anything.

He let the thoughts swirl around in his head for a moment before stopping on the concrete path and outright asking “Harry, when you say home, what do you mean?”

“Jungle. I want to go back. But only when you want.”

“I’m never going to want you to go back. I want you to stay with me.”

“No, I mean – when Lou wants to go back to jungle too, with Harry. But Harry stay in city for with Louis. Until Louis comes home, Harry stay here.”

“But what if I never want to go to the jungle?”

Harry just smiled. “You will. When Lou knows loves Harry, Lou knows where home is too.”
“But why?” Harry said not for the first time as they walked into the foyer of The Langham Hotel. He’d asked that on the way back from Uni, and as they packed up their stuff at Zayn’s, and in the car on the way over.

“Because we can.” Louis replied, just as he had all those other times.

“But I like Zayn’s.” Harry grunted as he eyed the space around them. Louis found it beautiful, the white marble and large chandelier and bright flowers, but he was unsure if Harry did. The boy looked put out, more than anything.

“I like Zayn’s too, but he needs his own space. Besides, we can be completely alone here. Don’t have to worry about him – walking in on anything.”

“Why not we go to your house?”

“I don’t have the best security there. I can’t protect you from the paps. Let’s just go check in, okay? Maybe you’ll like the room.”

But Harry didn’t like that either.

“No things in here. Empty.” Harry said from the doorway, peering in after Louis. “Silly.”

“Harry, this place is way nicer than anywhere I could possibly afford, for even a night let alone a week. Just give it a chance, okay? There’s a pool here, you’ll be able to swim. And a gym, too. And pretty sure this is the place with the amazing spa I saw on TV once, we can go get massages sometime.”

Harry blinked at Louis, probably because a lot of those words would have meant nothing to him, then finally sighed and took his first step into the hotel suite.

He dropped his bags by the plush patterned sofa, and took to peeking inside all the rooms.

It was rather large, maybe even bigger than Louis’ flat, with two bedrooms and two sitting rooms. There was even a small office with a laptop set up inside, and a fully stocked kitchen. Harry wasn’t impressed that the only fruit they were given was a bowl of green apples and a pineapple, but he did shriek with delight when he saw the shower in one of the ensuites. It was the size of about three normal ones put together, with four different shower heads that did fuck-knows-what, so no wonder Harry was already ripping his clothes off to climb in.

“Harry, we haven’t even put our stuff away.” Louis sighed with fake exasperation, because how could he really be annoyed when Harry was standing naked before him, fiddling with the taps to get the water flowing.

“Come on Lou! Help!” Harry whined, and Louis’ lips slipped into the smile he’d been desperate to hide. Then Harry grinned back, and shook his hips, and sing-songed “Lou can come on Harry if come on to shower.”

And that had Louis laughing, hard and straight from his belly. “Fucking hell, Harry, you really want a shower.”

Harry nodded, and added with a pout. “And to sex Lou.” Then he stepped into the shower that still
wasn’t running and waved Louis in. “Come on.”

How could Louis say no to that, really?

Harry eagerly watched as Louis pulled down his pants with his trousers, and made grabby hands until Louis had his shirt up over his head and on the floor.

“Shoes.” Harry added, pointing to his feet, and Louis grinned as he took those off too.

“How many showers have you had today, Harry? Three?”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Not even one. No time before Uni. Not since before Harry Lou fucked.”

Louis’ eyes widened, and he spluttered out an “Oh!”

“I smelly.”

And Louis blushed. “You smell quite good, actually. Like, proper musty.”

“I smell better soon!” he said cheerily, and waved his hand for the final time before Louis stepped into the shower next to him. “Now, how go on?”

Louis examined the different knobs, hoping somewhere written on them would be the answer. One looked to be the temperature gage, and the others must have been to control the different heads, but Louis had no idea which turned on what.

So he tried one, and Harry squealed as water suddenly blasted out from a hole in the wall at hip level and hit him in the right arse cheek. “What in fuck!”


“What even is the point of that one?” Louis grunted, and shut it off. It was his turn to choose one, so he turned the one next to it. Finally, something normal happened. The very highest and largest shower head came to life, spraying out water. Louis figured they’d just keep that one on for now, and worry about the other knobs later.

Harry, though, had a different idea. He turned the other two knobs at once, so that water came streaming out of the two removable shower heads. They were both at opposite sides of the shower, so if Harry and Louis wanted they could take separate ones but still be in the same stall. Harry didn’t want that, though, so he turned off one of them and pulled Louis in under the stream with him.

He reached for the shower wash, then lathered into his hands, and began washing Louis.

It was so different from the first time they’d done this, when Harry was rough and clueless and excitable. Now, he had a firm set mouth, concentrating on Louis’ skin as his hands ran over it.

Harry smiled, and slid a soapy hand down between Louis’ arse cheeks.

He squeaked, and fell forward into Harry’s chest.
“Harry washing Lou.” He explained, not even trying to hide his mischievous smirk. “Everywhere.”

“Harry.” Louis shook his head. “You’re terrible.”

“But Harry Lou sex yes?” Harry asked, and poured more soap in his hands to wash himself.

It was Louis’ turn to push Harry’s hands away and do the washing. He rubbed Harry’s chest, and his arms, and then the jungle boy turned around so Louis could wash at his back.

“Open me up with that, yes, Lou?” Harry tittered over his shoulder. “With soap and fingers in my bum.”

“What?” Louis squawked, and Harry answered by putting his hands against the wall and sticking his arse out. “Harry, I’m not going to fuck you in the shower! Not for your first time, anyway!”

Harry looked over his shoulder at Louis and pouted. “But I want to feel being opening.”

“What?”

“Want you to open me. Just fingers in the bum.”

“Oh.” And Louis looked down at his fingers, slippery and wet and covered in bubbles, and thought that might actually be okay. It would never be enough to prep him for his cock, but should be enough just to finger him with. “Are you sure? You want me to finger you now?”

“Yes please Lou.” Harry said, nodding hard, and sticking his arse out even further. “Quickly.”

“It’s not a thing you can just do quickly, Haz.”

“Yes, yes.” Harry sighed. “I knows.”

Louis nodded, more to himself than Harry what with him facing the tiled wall.

He slid his soapy palms up and down the smooth skin of Harry’s back, tracing his spine with his fingertips and pressing into the hard muscle at his shoulder blades. Harry visibly relaxed, and Louis moved his hands around to Harry’s stomach.

With one, he grasped Harry’s half-hard cock and slowly jacked, and with the other he cupped one of Harry’s arse cheeks.

Harry gasped, and Louis grinned.

“You gotta relax, okay? It’s easier to relax your arse when you’re distracted, so I’m gonna play with your cock for a bit. Yeah?”

“Yes, Lou.” Harry said, nodding his head wildly. “Yeah.”

So Louis stroked his shaft, slide eased by the slippery soap and water that was still falling from above them so his hand moved a lot quicker than intended. It didn’t take long at all for Harry to be completely hard and stiff against his belly.

Louis grazed one of his knuckles along Harry’s taint, and grinned when the cock in his hand jumped.

“You ready for my fingers inside you, babe?”
“Yes. Hurry, Lou, yes.”

Louis sped up his hand on Harry’s cock, bringing him close to the edge before stopping and pushing a finger inside him, right up to the knuckle.

Harry groaned long, and pushed his arse back even further, swallowing up more of Louis.

“Again.” He gasped. “More.”

So Louis did.

He jacked Harry off, and wiggled the finger inside him, and pushed in a second.

He felt the way Harry clenched around him, how tight and hot he was, and imagined what it would feel like around his cock.

“What now?” Harry panted. “Another one?”

“Do you want another?”

“Need something more.” Harry admitted.

“You need me to move them.” Louis said with a nod, and pulled his fingers out enough so that his knuckles caught on Harry’s rim, before pushing them quickly back inside.

He pushed them in and pulled them out over and over, fucking Harry harder with them as the boy’s groans grew louder.

“Lou!” Harry suddenly gasped, stopping his hips from their unconscious bucking. “That!”

Louis fucked Harry a few more times with his fingers, slowly and at different angles on every push in, trying to find the spot that made Harry hot.

He knew he found it when Harry yelled out “Lou!” again.

Louis slid in a third finger, and curled it so it fit against his prostate beside the other two.

Harry’s legs were shaking, desperate to keep his knees from buckling out from beneath him.

“How are you doing Haz?” Louis asked with a smirk as he fucked Harry with his fingers.


“Jesus Christ, Haz.” Louis moaned out. “You’re filthy, babe. Nasty when you’re filled up, huh?”

“Yes, filthy. Filthy in the shower. Nasty getting fucked.”

Louis couldn’t believe it, how Harry was quivering before him in full body shakes, begging dirtily as he fucked himself back onto Louis’ fingers.

Louis thought he was going to come completely untouched just at how Harry looked and sounded and felt around his fingers.
It was sudden and completely unexpected when Harry came.

He was rambling more about being dirty and feeling full when suddenly he stilled his hips and growled through his teeth. His body pulled harder at Louis’ fingers, sucking them in to squeeze on tight, refusing to let them go until his come splashed against the tile wall and he went completely lax.

“Fuck.” Harry groaned.

“Fuck indeed.” Louis muttered, and pulled his fingers out from Harry’s arse.

Then Harry slipped down onto his knees, and Louis bent down to help him back up but the boy just pushed his outstretched hands away.

“Gonna make Lou come now. With my mouth.” Then he grinned incredibly wide and licked his lips obscenely and gripped onto to Louis’ hips with his huge hands.

“Harry – I’m okay, really. It’s not gonna take me much to co-“ Louis thunked his head back against the shower, words caught in his throat when Harry sucked him into his mouth.

Harry was so eager for him. Licking his tip messily, lapping at the precome as it dribbled from his slit. Sucking him in quick down his throat, gagging at his girth but not pulling back an inch.

Louis’ fingers weaved into Harry’s hair, gripping on tight as Harry fucked him with his throat. It was surreal, and mind blowing, the way this boy was working him. And the noises he was making.

“So filthy Haz.” Louis groaned, when Harry slurped particularly loudly and proceeded to hum around him. “Where did you learn this stuff? I didn’t teach you this. You been watching porn, love?”

Harry pulled off and shook his head. “Just what I want to do.” he rasped from his fucked out throat, and hungrily took Louis into his mouth again.

“You can - fuck, what are you doing with your tongue?” Louis groaned. “Take it easier. You can take it easier if you want. Don’t hurt you- your- fuck – self.”

Louis was gasping now; hips rocking minutely into Harry’s bruising grip, cock hard and leaking down Harry’s throat.

Harry’s lips were tightening around his base, and his fingernails were piercing Louis’ skin he was holding on to him so tight.

Louis’ eyes rolled back into his head and he managed to get out “I’m gonna-“ before he came.

Harry pulled off midway through, so that the third spurt of come hit his bottom lip and chin. Then Harry licked his lips, and Louis’ cock twitched and dribbled the last of it.

“Yum.” Harry said with his cheeky grin, and Louis’ cock gave its last pathetic twitch of approval.

“I think everyone’s right. I don’t think you’re human. You are a minx.”

Harry ducked his head under the spray of water to get the come off his chin, and held out his hand for Louis to pull him up. When he was on his feet again, he said “Harry is human. What is a minx?”

Louis grinned, and felt a burst of happiness deep in his chest. It shouldn’t make Louis so happy,
hearing Harry call himself human, but it did. “Doesn’t matter. Let’s get out of here, we’ve wasted enough water.”

“Not a waste.” Harry pouted. “But okay.”

---

Harry’s favourite thing about staying in the hotel, second only to the shower, was the pool. There was clearly something about water that this man really just loved.

After their romp in the shower, they quickly pulled on some clothes and went to explore the hotel’s facilities.

Harry was intrigued by the gym, saying “Running no go?” when he saw the people on the treadmills. He loved the spa, which was absolutely huge. The waiting room had an actual waterfall in it, and small rock-pools with goldfish; Harry’s eyes lit up when he saw them. He enjoyed the smells wafting from the candles, and grinned at all the people walking around in their robes, and by the time they made it to the swimming pool Harry was well and truly over his initial hesitation at staying in the hotel.

His eyes bugged out of his head when he saw it.

And his hands went to the waistband of his trackies.

Before he could pull them down, though, Louis clenched on to his wrist and said “Can’t be naked in public, remember? We need to get you some swimming shorts.”

Harry pouted, but nodded nonetheless. “So this just water for swimming? Like lake?”

“Yeah! Plus there aren’t any, like, bugs and shit in there. Frogs and stuff.”

“No frogs?” Harry asked in pure bewilderment.

“Nup, only humans are allowed in there.” Louis said, grinning wide. He was beginning to feel quite proud for humankind at the invention of swimming pools. Which was utterly ridiculous, he knew, but Harry just looked so utterly amazed.

“Louis!” someone suddenly yelled, and both boys stopped looking at each other long enough to see who made the noise.

“Fuck.” Louis grunted under his breath, because of course it was the movie star. He was pulling himself out of the pool and onto the edge closest to them, slowly revealing his hard tanned torso.

He was much bigger in build than both of the boys, with a smattering of short soft looking hair on his pecs and abs. It looked good; too tidy to be totally unstyled. He had the typical body of an action-hero; hard and chiselled.

Out of nowhere, a man appeared holding a towel and the star took it gratefully. He smiled as he ran it quickly over his face and neck. “Hey. Didn’t know you were here already. Nobody told me, I would have welcomed you.”

“We got here an hour ago maybe, so…” Louis trailed off when the star’s eyes moved from him to take Harry in.

The star held out his hand to Harry and got out “Nice to meet you, I’m-” before the boy growled
and pulled Louis to him. The star blinked, and looked to where Harry’s hands were fitted against Louis’ hips, and frowned. “I take it this is your jungle man. Harry, is it?”

Louis’ eyes widened. “How did you-”

“You told me, more or less. In snippets, anyway. Just had to put them together.” The star was back to looking at Louis, and forcing out a smile. “I’m excited for Thursday. I was thinking if you were free tomorrow we could go shopping to pick out your tux. The paps are going to go mad when they see you on my arm.”

The star flashed one of his perfect white grins and Louis was startled for a second. Then Harry pinched his hip, and Louis got snapped right back into reality. “Umm, yeah. Okay. I’ve got to go in to talk to my manager for a bit but I can probably do that later. Had a few job offers and stuff I gotta sort through.”


“Yeah, actually. Armani and Gucci, which is pretty sick.”

“That’s amazing.”

Louis was grinning back now, quite enjoying how impressed this movie star clearly was. It was good to talk to someone who got it, how big a deal this was for him and his career. What these big-name jobs could do for him.

“Well.” The star said, and slapped Louis on the shoulder. He squeezed it as he said “I better be off. I’ve got my trainer waiting for me in the gym. I’ll talk to you later, Louis. Nice to meet you, Harry.”

And with a final smile he was leaving the pool area, followed by the towel guy and a bodyguard.

“Lou.” Harry scolded. “He silly man. Don’t like it when him talks to you.”

“I know, Harry. That’s called jealousy, but there’s no need for it. It’s just work.”

“But you smiley at him. You like him.”

“No I don’t. It’s a job. I have to be nice, remember?”

“What is Gucci and Arni?”

“Armani. And they’re brands. Just to do with my job.”

“Always job. Always work. I don’t understand what they is and Louis not telling.” He blurted out, and turned on his heels to hurry out of the pool area and back into the hotel corridor. He stormed all the way to the lift, with Louis rushing after close behind. “We up or down?” he grunted, and Louis noticed how his ears were turning red. He wondered for a moment what that meant; whether it happened because he was angry and frustrated at Louis, or embarrassed that he had to ask for help with the lift.

“Up.” Louis grumbled back. “We’re going up.”

___

Harry collapsed onto the sofa when they got back up to their room, and switched on the telly
without a word. He flicked through the channels, and stopped on a repeat of Cake Boss, and settled in to watch it.

Louis was slightly amazed he’d picked all this up, and a little alarmed that he himself didn’t know Harry could do it. He wondered what else Harry could do himself, what he’d learned without Louis explicitly teaching him.

“I’m sorry.” Louis blurted, and Harry frowned but didn’t say anything. “I can tell you about work, if you want. I just didn’t think you’d want to know. Or that you’d – well, that you’d understand to be honest. You’ll think it’s stupid.”

Harry turned away from the telly to look up at Louis. “I don’t think you stupid. You think I stupid.”

The words hit him right in the chest, and Louis collapsed onto the sofa next to Harry to put his arms around him. The boy didn’t move to return the hug, and it hurt. “I don’t think you’re stupid at all, Harry. I think you’re incredible. Everything you do amazes me.” Louis was snuffling into Harry’s neck like a pathetic needy dog, he knew that, but he couldn’t stop.

Not until Harry put a hand to his chest and pushed him back. “That’s why Har – I feel stupid. When you get happy I do human things. I don’t feel human if you notice when I act it. I want to learn more. I want to make food and clean. I want to know how to get dirt out of my clothes. Lou can live without Harry but Harry can’t live without Lou.”

“You want independence.” Louis nodded. “I can do that. I can teach you, Harry, I promise. I didn’t mean to make you feel like that. I didn’t know I was.”

“I knows you don’t know everything. I just thoughts you knew me.” And Harry got up from the sofa, and Louis grabbed the hem of his shirt before he could leave.

“I can’t, Harry. You said I can live without you, but I can’t.”

Harry frowned. “You were living before Harry here.”

“I was surviving, Harry. Living and surviving are different. I know what you mean, that you don’t think you could survive here in the city without me because you still don’t know how to do everything you need to do. But you said living and – I don’t see it. Me living without you, I just can’t picture you not with me.”

“Because you loves me.” Harry stated surely, and sat back down on the sofa beside Louis. He didn’t cuddle up to him, or even touch his hand, but he was there.

“I – I can’t say that, Harry. I don’t know. How do you even know what love is?”

Harry shrugged. “I just knows.

Louis nodded, despite the fact that he didn’t believe him. Louis reached for Harry’s hand, and when the boy took it and his frown lessened in depth, he near-whispered “I am sorry, Haz. I keep fucking up, I know that, but just bear with me, okay? I’m still learning too. I haven’t had anything like this in a while.”

“Like what?”

“A relationship, I guess is what this is right? We’re boyfriends, yeah? And I haven’t had an actual proper boyfriend in years, and even then it wasn’t nearly as real. Since school, the only dates I’ve gone on have been set up.”
“Okay,” he said simply, and pulled Louis in to his chest. “I not angry now.”

“Yeah?” Louis smiled.

“Yeah. Louis just stupid.” Harry said back with a grin, and Louis couldn’t help but laugh.

“I really am, Haz, and you’re far from it. I’ll teach you properly now, okay? It’ll be good. Means I won’t have to do all the washing all the time.”

“Yeah.” Harry grinned. “I not pointless. Useless? Not sure which.” He admitted with only the slightest downturn to his lips.

“You’re far from pointless. I’ll help you see that.”

“I know.” Harry nodded. “I just want Lou to see me serious. I like to make you laugh, but also I don’t want you to always laugh at me.”

“You want to be taken seriously.” Louis hummed. “I do - I’ll show you.”

“Okay.” Harry said, and pushed his hand through Louis’ hair. “We good now. Just no more making Harry like a child. Makes me sad.”

They sat like that until late into the evening, cuddled up beside each other on the sofa, watching Cake Boss reruns. To Harry’s delight, and Louis’ horror, there was an all-day marathon of it. Not that Louis was paying any attention to it.

He couldn’t get over it, what Harry had said. How he’d made Harry feel, intentional or not. Harry had told him before that he felt like a child when Louis spoke to him sometimes, and he thought he’d been treating Harry better since then. It was clear now that he hadn’t.

He wanted Harry to be happy. He needed Harry to be happy here, because if he wasn’t he’d surely leave. And Louis hadn’t been lying; it wouldn’t be much of a life if Harry wasn’t in it.

As soon as Louis walked into the Psychology Building, they were on him.

“How long have you known about all this?” the head psychologist fumed, and Louis looked down at his toes to hide his guilty expression.

“Since Friday. I’ve obviously had it for longer, I just hadn’t read it.”

Some of the anger fell off her face, but her jaw was still clenched pretty tight. “And why hadn’t you given it to us sooner? Do you know how much we can discover with this information?”

“Because I didn’t want to give it to you until I’d read it myself, and I hadn’t read it myself sooner because I didn’t want to. I get why you’re upset, but Harry isn’t yours and you aren’t entitled to that diary.”

“Oh, and you are?” she snapped, and Louis flinched.

“You’ve got it now, yeah? And I brought you the rest of the stuff I found in the jungle, so can’t we just leave it?”

She peered at him through slitted eyelids before she said “Fine. Show me what else you have and we’ll call it a truce. Just know it’s not only us that you’ve let down, but Harry too. We’re trying to
do what’s best for him.”

“While you’re reaping the benefits too, I find that hard to believe you have his best interests one hundred percent at heart. Especially since he hasn’t seen any of this money you promised him.”

She ignored his first comment, and said “We need his bank account details to pay him.”

“I’ll give you mine, he doesn’t have an account.”

Her scowl was back in full force. “You really expect us to put money he is earning in your account? You’ve already got a lot of control over his life, we aren’t going to give you financial power too.”

“Christ, what kind of person do you think I am?” Louis put his hands up defensively, and took a step back from the snarling psychologist. “I just never thought of getting him his own bank account, okay? I’ll take him to get one tomorrow.”

“Fine.” She replied. “I’ll see you this afternoon then, when you come to get him. And just so you are aware, we are trying to contact his parents.”

“Fine.” Louis repeated. “I’ll see you then.”

——

He ducked into the office first, deciding it would be better to meet up with his manager and discuss the job offers some more while he was out.

They organised a few interviews, and decided how they would reorganise his portfolio. While he was sifting through photos, the actor called him.

“You still on for today?” he asked as greeting, and Louis frowned.

“Will it count as a date?”

There was a pause. “If you want it to?”

“Mate, I meant will it count as one of our public appearances. Will I get paid for it?”

“Oh.” The actor said. “Well, no. It'll only take an hour or so, and we’re going so I can buy you a suit. Do you think it’s fair that I pay you on top of that?”

“No.” Louis grumbled, because he hated to admit it but the star was right. He’d feel a bit shit taking the guy’s money and an expensive suit. “So when will we go?”

“I can come down from my room now and get you.”

“I’m in the office, but I’ll be back at the hotel in an hour.”

“Okay, that’s fine. Just text me when you arrive and I’ll come down to the foyer to meet you.”

“Sounds good to me.” Louis said with fake enthusiasm.

Which the actor obviously bought. “Great! See you in an hour then.”

When he hung up, his manager was giving him a small frown. “What’s going on?”
“Just meeting up with the wanker to get me a suit for the movie premiere.”

“And you didn’t think to discuss it with me?”

“It’s not one of the public appearance things I promised him, it’s just so I have something to wear Thursday night. You know now, so.” He shrugged, and she rolled her eyes.

“It’s still business, though, right?”

“Of course.” Louis snapped. “I don’t like him, if that’s what you’re implying.”

“Just wanted to make sure. You sounded quite chummy with him just now.”

“I was just trying to be nice.”

She murmured something under her breath in reply, and turned back to the schedule they’d been working on. “Let’s give Gucci a call, then.”

---

He was already waiting in the foyer when Louis got to the hotel.

It was a bit pathetic, really, how the star was sat on a sofa with his bodyguard, eyes flicking between the phone in his hand and the watch on his wrist.

“You realise your phone has the time, right?” Louis said as greeting, and the actor looked up at him and grinned.

And pushed himself up to pat his back. “Louis! I was just about to call you.”

“Sorry, it took a bit longer than my manager thought. Were you waiting here long?”

“Not at all.” The star smiled, and then frowned because the bodyguard snorted. “Uh. So I was thinking Bond Street. Selfridge’s is close to it, right?”

“Yeah, close enough. It’s always busy too so we’ll definitely get papped together.”

“Oh.” Was all the star said in reply. He picked a bit of lint off his jacket, drawing Louis’ eyes to what he was actually wearing. He looked good. Amazing, really.

“Should I change?” Louis asked, because he was only wearing some dark skinnies and a band shirt, while the star looked as if they were going out to a swanky cocktail bar instead of a few shops.

“No, you look great! I should probably change. I’ve over done it.” He blushed as he looked down at himself, and Louis had never felt so powerful. He’d just made a big-budget action movie star turn pink.

“It’s all right. Kind of your signature look, isn’t it? The suit jacket and blue shirt thing?”

He frowned. “I suppose. Makes me look old and serious, though. Especially compared to your Harry. He’s very – hip, I guess is the word.”

Louis laughed. “I’ve never thought of you as old until just now. Nobody says the word hip.”

“Trendy?” The star grinned, and bumped Louis’ shoulder with his own. Louis exhaled in relief; he hadn’t realised how worried he was that his teasing would be misconstrued until the star’s playful
reaction.

“Better, I suppose. And anyway, Harry just wears what Zayn tells him too. I’d doubt he’d look so put together if he chose his clothes himself.”

The star laughed at that, and Louis’ stomach clenched up because he hadn’t meant it to be mean. He meant to tease, but he just made Harry sound incompetent; something Harry himself said Louis made him feel sometimes. And sure, it was in his nature to tease and joke and rib, but it just felt so wrong. He felt like such an arsehole.

Before Louis could take it back, the actor’s bodyguard cleared his throat, demanding their attention. “Excuse me, sir, but we should probably get going. Your personal shopper insisted that we get there by one o’clock.”


---

It was odd, being looked at like they were. Louis didn’t think he liked it.

They’d been noticed as soon as they stepped out of the car on Bond Street. Well, the Big Hollywood Actor had, but Louis still got phones shoved in his face just for being in his company.

The man smiled politely and allowed a few fans to take pictures, but after a small amount of time he stopped telling the bodyguard to back off and allowed the bulky giant of a man to do his job.

It was intense, and a little frightening, but there was also excitement that buzzed under Louis’ skin as people jostled to make contact with them.

When they got through the doors of Selfridge's, Louis realised that at some point or other he’d gripped onto the star’s hand and still had it clenched in his fingers.

“Sorry.” Louis muttered as he let the man go.

The actor just grinned toothily back. “You can have it back if you want.”

Louis smiled small and shook his head no, because he was beginning to worry the two of them were becoming overly familiar.

They had to walk through the perfume department to get to the escalator, Louis had been to Selfridge's enough times to know that, but before he made it out the star was grabbing his wrist and pulling him over to the colognes. Louis was about to ask what the deal was before he was struck by his own image plastered across an entire wall. There he was, six times larger than normal, sitting naked in front of that gorilla.

“Fuck.” Louis exhaled, and for a moment that was all he could think. Just a stream of Fucks because that was him. There he was, covering an entire wall in one of the most famous stores in London. And more than likely he was filling entire walls in stores all around the world. He’d seen himself on a bus and on a billboard and on posters in a few store windows but nothing could have prepared him for this. “Fuck.”

“I know. It’s incredible, isn’t it? You’re breathtaking.” The star murmured into his ear, and Louis simply nodded. “Get used to it, gorgeous, you’re only going to get bigger.”
Louis had to snort at the prices in this place. It was fifty quid for a plain white t-shirt, for fuck’s sake. “This is ridiculous.” He muttered as he examined the price of a hoody. “300 quid. Who the fuck would pay that?”

Louis could feel the star behind him, breathing down his neck as he looked at what was in Louis’ hands. “I would. Do you want it?”

Louis didn’t step away; had become accustomed to the star’s need for close proximity. It didn’t irk him like it did originally. The attention was flattering. “Fuck no. It probably cost a pound to make. It’s the principle of the thing.”

The actor reached around Louis’ hip to take the hoodie from his hand. “I take it you don’t own many expensive clothes, or you would know how good it feels wearing them. You feel expensive when you look expensive. I’m going to get you this -”

“Don’t!” Louis quickly interrupted, but the star just smiled and shook his head.

“Think of it as a lesson. Show business is superficial. It’s all about money. If you want to work for the big hitters of the fashion industry, you need to look the part all the time. You need to look like the street is your runway when you get papped; you can’t go slouching about in trainers and Primark sweaters. Not that you do.” He added with a grin. “Now I’m going to buy this and you are going to wear it.”

Louis sighed, refusing to respond with anything more, and looked over to where their personal shopper was picking through all the suits.

The man hadn’t said much to them, only really told Louis how to move his arms and turn around so he could be measured, and Louis hadn’t minded that; he wasn’t one for stupid small talk.

What he did mind, though, was just how many suits the shopper had pulled from the racks.

He had five piles of them, and at least two in each pile, and when he caught Louis’ wide-eyed staring he smiled. “You don’t have to try them all on. I’m just comparing shapes and colours.” Then he looked back to the tux he held in his hands and put it in the fourth pile. “I think a blue suit would be amazing but I’m just not sure about shape. I have a perfect picture in my mind of how you should look, but sadly without the time for me to make you your own suit we have to choose from – “ his top lip curled up as he waved his hand about himself “this place.”

“You say that like we’re in Primark or something. What’s wrong with Selfridge’s? There’s Armani here, and Versace.”

“They are designer labels, sure, but this is still a department store.” He spat the last word out in distaste, and Louis couldn’t help but smirk. This man was such a cliché; posh and superior with a hand on his hip at all times. “These suits are made and you are expected to find one you fit. There is nothing better than a suit tailored to fit you.”

“Alright, mate, didn’t mean to offend.” Louis laughed, and the man gave him such an awful once-over that Louis’ cheeks flamed red. Not in embarrassment – in anger – because who the fuck did this guy think he was. “I thought you were a personal shopper. Isn’t it your job to take people shopping at stores?”

The man’s face scrunched up and he turned a purplish red. “Personal shopper?”
The star cleared his throat. “He’s actually my personal stylist.”

And Louis frowned. “But you said –“

“I know. I just – thought that this would be less weird for you. Like, the fact that I employ someone full time to dress me.”

“Oh.” Louis said, then shrugged. “Hiring a personal shopper is just as weird a concept to me so whatever. I dress myself so –“

“Yes. In monkey costumes. We’ve all seen the pictures. Now come stand over here and try on these jackets.” The personal stylist said, snapping his fingers at Louis like he was a dog that needed to heel.

“Fine, sheesh.” Louis groaned with a roll of his eyes, but couldn’t help but smile. He was just glad to have got on the smarmy prat’s nerves enough that he physically looked mad with it. He was shaking, for fuck’s sake. “Which one first?”

---

Louis got back to the hotel when it was nearly dark, holding his new navy blue suit in its cover. He hadn’t been allowed to see the price, but it was Armani so it had to be more than 2000 quid. Then there were the shoes, and the watch, and the white crisp shirt; the whole entire outfit had to be worth more than all of Louis’ wardrobe put together.

The star escorted him to his hotel suite, pushing a Selfridge’s bag into Louis’ hands after he unlocked his door.

“It’s the hoodie.” He explained, and Louis’ forehead creased because he hadn’t noticed the man buying it. The guy said he would, sure, but Louis thought he was kidding.

“You really didn’t have to.”

“I know, but I told you I would and I’m a man of my word.”

“Right.” Louis replied, and pushed the door open with his hip. “Well, thanks for today. I’ll be seeing you Thursday for the premiere then.”

“Yeah. Or maybe sooner, I’m pretty much always in the hotel. Let me know if you’re ever free and want to do something.”

“Yeah.” Louis nodded, just wishing the guy would piss off already. The actor wasn’t even bothering to hide his interest, was so open about it, and it was so awkward. Louis wished he found it more pathetic than flattering, though, but he didn’t; he was still finding the attention a bit too nice. “Catch you later. And thanks again.”

The last thing Louis saw of outside the room before he closed the door was the star’s grinning face and slowly waving hand, and he sighed when the image finally disappeared from view.

“Lou?” came a whisper from behind him, and Louis jumped a foot in the air before he turned.

“Fuck, Harry! You scared me!” Louis whispered back, then cleared his throat because why were they whispering? “Why have you got the light off, love, I can hardly see anything.”

“Was sunny before so I didn’t need to. Now it dark but.” Harry smiled small, and looked to the
“Louis’ hands. “What that?”

“Just stuff for Thursday.”

“Oh.” Harry nodded, then turned back to the TV.

Louis went into his room to dump the shopping on his bed and hang the suit in his closet, then hurried out to plop down on the sofa next to Harry. “Sorry that I didn’t get you from Uni today. Did you get home with the driver okay?”

“Yes. I like him. He stop car to get bananas.”

“Yeah?” Louis grinned, and Harry hesitantly returned it. Something was off; it was becoming more and more obvious. “So. What did you do at Uni today?”

Harry huffed out a breath and changed the channel. “More tests. More questions. They very want to know about parents.”

“Yes?”

Harry nodded. “Trying to find them but can’t. Keep asking what I remember. What they look like and how talk. From England like you or America like movie man? That is what they ask today.”

“What did you say?”

“I don’t know.” Harry grunted. “I don’t know and don’t remember and don’t care.”

Louis reached out a hand and gave Harry’s thigh a reassuring squeeze. “I’m sorry babe.”

Harry turned to him with a frown. “Why? What you do?”

“Nothing. But, I mean, I’m sorry they’ve been harassing you with that stuff.”

“But it not your fault. You’re not sorry.”

“I am. It’s just a different kind of sorry. I feel guilty, I guess. I don’t know.” Louis stuttered, searching for a way to explain himself.

“Because I’m only doing the Uni so I can stay in London with Lou?”

Louis blinked, and his stomach rolled, because it was one thing to assume it but something totally different to hear it from Harry’s own mouth. At least before, he could appease his guilt by telling himself that no, Harry wasn’t just here for him, Harry wanted to stay in England for himself too. But there it was, out in the open; Harry was only going through the University tests and interviews and bloody interrogations so he could be with Louis. “Yes, umm. I suppose, yeah. Is that – is that the only reason you’re doing it? It’s not so you can stay in London, too?”

“Well, yes.” Harry nodded. “I doing it to stay in London so I can stay with Lou. Can’t stay with Lou if I don’t, so I do.”

Louis shuffled on the sofa, tucking his ankles beneath his arse. “Yeah, but. Isn’t there anything else you like about London that makes you want to stay? Besides me?”

Harry scrunched up his nose and shook his head quick. “Nothing.” Then he grinned. “Just Harry’s Lou. Even bananas don’t taste so good in London.” He chuckled, and Louis forced out a smile for him.
“I suppose you haven’t seen much more than Zayn’s and my flats and the Uni campus. And now the hotel. Maybe we can do some sight-seeing tomorrow? Oh wait, I gotta do a few test-shoots. What if Zayn took you out tomorrow, and then you and I do something together Thursday?”

“Lou got the pre-mee –“

“Premiere. Fuck, I forgot. Friday? After Uni? You and Zayn can figure out what you want to see and then Friday we’ll see it! There’s loads to do, Harry, you’ll fall in love with London I promise.”

Harry didn’t look very convinced, but he nodded his head anyway.

It was all the confirmation Louis needed before he called up Zayn to make some plans.

---

It ended up being a great idea, because when Harry stumbled into the hotel room the next evening with Zayn trailing behind him, they were both grinning like loons.

“I bought us some beer!” Zayn shouted, and Harry threw his hands up and cheered.

“You’ve clearly been on the piss already.” Louis laughed, and Zayn shrugged his shoulders.

“A bit.” He admitted, stoney faced. It cracked, though, when Harry barked out his seal laugh.

Louis shook his head, still grinning, and took the beers from Zayn so he could open them up. He found a bottle opener after scurrying through most of the drawers. While he was in there, Zayn asked “Why’s your hair wet? It’s not raining out there is it?”

“Nah, I just got out of the shower. Been home for almost an hour now.” He put the bottle opener back in the draw and carried the three bottles to where Harry and Zayn were sitting on the sofa.

“So what did you two get up to?”

“Well, we spent about forty minutes on the Tube doing a trip that should have taken 10, but Harry wanted to get off at almost every stop. Even though the stations all look exactly the same.” Zayn grabbed the beer from Louis’ outstretched hand before continuing “The trip back was way quicker though, he was pretty over it by then.”


“Oh. Well, after that we just did the British Museum which is always cool, Harry had loads of fun there. Liked the Neanderthal exhibit best, obviously. Not a fan of all the stuffed animals though. Uh, then what did we do Styles?”

Louis raised an eyebrow. “Styles?”

“He needs a last name, doesn’t he? It suits; just look at him. Anyway, I remember now, we came back here to the hotel because Harry wanted to show me the spa, didn’t you?” Zayn looked to Harry, who nodded back. “Said the fish were cool. They are quite, actually.”

“Then we got touched!” Harry squeaked.

“Yeah! We got a massage, it was hilarious. Harry wouldn’t stop squirming around to see what the woman was doing and it was driving her bonkers.”

“I wish I’d been there.” Louis pouted. “All I got to do today was stand in front of a camera and pose in my pants. Drank a fuck tonne of black tea because I couldn’t eat or I’d bloat up.”
“Yeah, that’s shit.” Zayn frowned.

Louis sighed. “So what did you do in between the massage and here that got you drunk?”

“We went to the bar!” Harry cheered. “Down in the hotel where there food! We got chips and beer. Yum yum.” He added with a pat to his stomach.

Which made Louis laugh. “So you had a good day then?”

Harry grinned big and nodded his head hard, and wrapped his arms around Louis to hug him tight. “The best. Really fun! We do it us on Friday like you say, yes?”

“Yeah, Harry, of course! There’s loads we can do. We’ll look up some places tonight, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Harry grunted into his neck, breath hot and wet against Louis’ skin. Then he pulled back and said “I got things to do for you! Zayn told me.”

Said boy cleared his throat. “I s’pose I better be off, then.”

“Mate, stay for another! We’ve got to catch up, feels like I hardly see you anymore.” Louis begged, but it just made Zayn laugh.

“You were staying at my place all weekend, we saw each other loads. I’ve got Uni stuff to do, and you’re about to be really busy, so I’m off. Thanks for today, Haz, it was fun.”

Harry let go of Louis to cuddle Zayn, smile still wide. He hadn’t stopped smiling since he’d walked through the door, really, and it was beautiful to see. “Bye Zayn, love you.”

“All right, mate, you too. We’ll chat tomorrow, Lou, after the big movie thing. Call me, yeah?”

“Yeah, of course!” Louis said with a small frown, because Zayn was being weird. He was obviously in a hurry to get out of there, but only five minutes earlier he’d been ready to sit in and drink beers with them. “You know how to get home?”

“Yeah, ‘course.” Zayn rolled his eyes. It was a pretty dumb question; there was a tube stop not far. “Enjoy.”

And with that, and a final wave, he left them alone. Louis raised an eyebrow at Harry. “Enjoy?”

And the man grabbed his hand and hurried him into the bedroom. “Get naked!” he demanded, and pushed Louis down onto the bed.

Louis laughed, but did as he was told. As he pulled his shirt up and over his head he asked “What’s this about? Not that I’m complaining.”

“Want to give you touch like me and Zayn got in Spa. Muss-idge?”

“A massage? Yeah, all right.” Louis grinned, and pulled off his pants with his jeans. “How do you want me?”

“On tummy. I bought things from shop. Cream and oilies.”

“Oils. Shit, sorry, I gotta stop correcting you.”

“Okay, okay.” Louis laughed as he rolled over, and pulled a pillow beneath his stomach so his face wasn’t squished into the mattress.

It didn’t take long at all for Harry to come back into the room with a little paper bag. From it he pulled a rather large tube of cream, and when he looked up and saw Louis watching him he pouted. “Close eyes and relax!”

“Sorry.” Louis chuckled, and did as he was told. When he felt Harry’s hands on his back he shivered. “’s cold, Haz.”

“Shush.” Harry commanded, and all Louis could do was grin into the bed.

Louis probably shouldn’t have been surprised, but Harry’s hands felt good. Amazing, actually. He started with just some light rubbing to spread the cream over his skin, then squeezed Louis’ shoulders with firm fingers.

He pressed down with the heel of his palms and ran them along either side of Louis’ spine, then in circles around Louis’ shoulder blades, and soon Louis was jelly under his hands.

“Good.” Louis muttered, and Harry oooed in agreement. Which made Louis smile again, because it had been too long since he’d heard that noise.

Harry kneaded his back like it was dough, rolling his knuckles into his muscles and putting all his weight into pressing out knots.

“You learnt all this just from today’s massage?”

“Relax!” Harry demanded, and smacked his arse with his palm. It was so quick and hard and unexpected that Louis jumped. His cock did, too, right against the mattress.

And when Harry went back to rubbing at his shoulders, he moaned loud and telling.

“It good, huh?” Harry laughed. “Very nice. I learn lots of things today.”

“Mmm” was all Louis could reply with.

It was like Harry knew, could read his mind or perhaps see his hardening cock between his stomach and the mattress, because all of a sudden Harry’s hands were moving south.

Louis sucked in a breath, but Harry stopped moving when his palms were at the small of his back, facing outwards so his fingertips could curve around Louis’ hips.

“Lou?” Harry asked in his innocently inquisitive little way. He was probably tilting his head all cutely, too. Louis grunted and hoped it would be enough of an answer.

It must have been, because Harry started moving again. Upwards, sadly.

His hands were roaming and pressing and rubbing and palming, and Louis felt like he was floating. Still, though, his cock was throbbing underneath him; desperately reminding Louis it was there, not wanting to be forgotten, needing attention.

Harry’s palms slid over the curve of his arse cheeks, rested for a moment, then squeezed.

Louis groaned, and Harry did it again.

“Now want to try what Zayn told me.” He grumbled. And pulled Louis’ arse cheeks apart.
Louis felt warm breath against his hole and squeaked out a “Harry?” before he felt the boy’s tongue on him. Harry was using the flat of his tongue to lap over his hole in long swipes, and Louis let out a shaky moan and gripped the bed sheet tight in his fingers because fuck did he need something to hold onto. “Fucking – Harry. What are you -”

“Trying new things.” Harry grunted into the crack of his arse, then went back to licking his skin.

“Harry. Usually you –“ Louis gasped as Harry’s tongue breached him, and had to suck in a few breaths because the things this boy was doing. He was prodding at the skin with the tip of his tongue, then pushing it inside so far Louis could feel his lips pressed against his rim. The wet plush inside of Harry’s bottom lip was pressing right against Louis’ taint and he wanted to cry he was so hard. Everything he was going to say was forgotten, dribbling from his mind as quick as the precome from his cock.

Harry was slobbering into his arse; Louis could feel his saliva slipping down his skin and hear the sloppy noises he was making and knew how wet his arse must be. Harry was moaning, too, making these hungry desperate little whimpers as if he was the one getting his arse enthusiastically eaten.

Harry’s teeth grazed his rim and Louis gasped out a Fuck and rutted into the mattress.

The friction it gave his cock wasn’t nearly enough, but it was something, so he did it again. He pushed his arse back into Harry’s face, then his cock down into the bed, and groaned desperately with how good it all felt. His cock was throbbing, so desperate to unload, but nothing was enough. He needed fingers around him or inside him.

Harry pulled his face away from Louis to ask “It good?”

“Yes! Fuck, Harry, so good. I need more. I need –“

“To come.” Harry said determinately, and stuck his tongue back inside him.

And Louis couldn’t pinpoint what it was exactly, maybe those few seconds of nothing but cool air on his hole broken by the sudden wet heat of Harry’s breath and tongue and lips, but he came with a groan into the mattress beneath him. It rippled through him, hips jerking and spine stretching and hole contracting around Harry’s tongue, hands still clenching the linen.

“Lou, I did it!” Harry cheered, and Louis fell back against the bed, body and mind spent.


“Harry get a turn?” he asked hopefully, and Louis couldn’t do more than lift his head enough to see the boy still sitting between his thighs.

“Now?”

Then Harry slapped his arse once with the flat of his palm and laughed as he clambered into the bed beside him. “No, you look sleepy. Just another time, could Lou do that for me?”

“’course, babe.” Louis said, smiling dreamily back. His mind was a foggy mess, everything he did felt slow and lazy. “You said Zayn taught you that?”

“Yeah!” he nodded, hair falling into his face. He pushed his stray curls out of his eyes before saying “We talked. It was fun. Told him what we did in the shower and Zayn asked if I licked your bum!”
“He what?”

“He asked me if I did the rimming, and I don’t know. So he said it arse eating and I got mad because why would I eat your bum, Lou? But he told me what it was really and I like it so I did it! It was fun, yes? I found it very fun. I want to do it more but you come already.” He said, matter-of-fact, and Louis couldn’t wipe the smile from his face.

“You’re so fucking cute.” Was what he said that made Harry grin and throw an arm over his back.

“I didn’t even show all the massage things! Or get the oils! I do that now?”

“I’ll fall asleep halfway through, love.”

“That okay. That good, Lou needs sleep. Big night tomorrow with the movie premmy!”

But as Harry made to get up, Louis stopped him with a hand around his wrist. “Just stay here next to me? I want to sleep this way.”

“Okay.” Harry said, smiling softly, and pulled Louis to his chest. He kissed his head and muttered “You sleep” and that was the last thing Louis could remember before he drifted off.

---

Louis still felt a bit foggy and weak the next day, but he wasn’t sure if it was still the incredible orgasm he’d had the night before, or the amazing sleep he had because of it, or the fact that he was nervous as all hell about that night.

He’d gone into Uni with Harry, having spent an amazing room-service-breakfast with him in bed and not quite wanting to say goodbye just yet. It was also a pretty awkward one, because Louis had to explain to Harry that a talk about personal hygiene was usually done before any kind of arse-eating.

“But Louis, you said you’d been to shower!” Harry defended himself, and Louis supposed that was true.

Once Louis had said goodbye to Harry, and had a little talk to the researchers about his progress in speech, he got back into the car.

Which was when a wave of nausea and nerves crashed over him.

He was going to a real proper event that night, where there’d be cameras and celebrities and invasive questions and judgement and presumptions and fuck. He couldn’t do it. He couldn’t pretend to date Hollywood’s hottest star.

“Go into the office!” he told the driver. “Please.”

“You okay? If you’re going to be sick tell me so I can pull over.”

“Do I look that bad?” Louis groaned.

“You’re white as a sheet, mate.” The driver said, smiling politely but looking incredibly concerned for the interior of his car.

“I’ll be fine. Just – hurry.”

As soon as they got to the building, Louis rushed to the lift and ran down the hall to his manager’s
office. He pushed open the door, saw her on the phone and motioned for her to put it down.

After she did, and raised an eyebrow, Louis blurted out “Convince me this is a good idea!”

“That what is, Louis? Pretending to date a star, or having a jungle man as your secret boyfriend?”

“Tonight! The premiere!” He sat at the chair in front of her desk, clasping his hands together against the desk as if he was begging. He kind of was, to be fair. “Tell me why it’s good for me to go. I’m nervous as fuck and I just need some reassurance, okay?”

She sighed, and lent back in her chair so that it made a high squeaking noise. “It’s the best thing for your career that could possibly happen. There’ll be pictures of you from tonight in magazines all over the world. Not just fashion magazines, too, but gossip ones. You’ll be on the arm of America’s biggest film star, maybe even the world’s, and everyone will be climbing over themselves to know who you are. When they hear that you’re a model, they’ll be begging to book you. Tonight is so important, Louis. You’ll be moving up that final step. No more auditions for model jobs, you’ll get anything you want.”

“Ohkay.” Louis’ breathed; it felt as if he’d been drowning for the last half hour and could finally take a breath of fresh air instead of murky water. “Thanks.”

She laughed. “Any time, you know that. Just call the next time you freak out, okay? No need to come barging in here.”

“Right. Yeah, okay.” Then he paused. “Did you mean all that, or were you just trying to make me feel better?”

“I definitely meant it all. It’s the best thing for you. Well, for your career. Maybe not for you. I think the best thing for you is sitting in a university psychology research building right now.”

Louis frowned. “But my career is who I am. So if it’s good for my career, it’s good for me.”

She rolled her eyes. “You’d still be you without this job, Louis. You might not be able to live in such a nice place or help your family out so much, but you’d still manage fine.”

“Yeah, but I don’t want to just manage. I grew up just managing. I like the life I have now, and I’m not going to just throw it all away for someone else. Harry’s happy no matter where he is. And that’s great, I love that about him, but I’m not the same way.”

“Do you really believe that, Lou?” she asked, and when Louis nodded his head hesitantly like he was expecting to be hit if he got the answer wrong. She just raised an eyebrow and sighed. “You’re such an idiot sometimes, I swear to God.”

---

Louis was expected in the star’s hotel room before three in the afternoon. Which was ridiculously early considering the bloody thing didn’t start til eight, but he would have spent all afternoon freaking himself out otherwise so it was probably for the best.

The star’s bodyguard came to his room to collect him, and they got the lift up to the penthouse suite.

Which was fucking incredible. Ridiculous, more like, but beautiful.

And they’d only stepped into the suite’s foyer. Which was probably nicer than the one to the entire
hotel. It had marble and mirrors and chandeliers, the bloody décor of just this one small room looked more expensive than his entire flat.

The star welcomed him in with so much serenity that just being in his presence made Louis feel better.

“This place is incredible.” Louis said as he was given the tour.

“It is, isn’t it? Definitely in the Top 5 list of rooms I’ve stayed in.” The star admitted, leading Louis to his bedroom where four other people were waiting for them.

There was the personal stylist Louis had met the other day, two women and the man he recognised as the star’s manager.

The actor introduced them all, and led him over to one of the women. “She’s going to take you into my bathroom and get started.”

“Oh what?” Louis asked as she took his hand.

And the star grinned. “You’ll see.”

Louis hadn’t realised that getting ready for a film première would be so much work.

He was put in a bathrobe before he had his eyebrows done, and then he was given a shave that took bloody ages; this lady was a perfectionist. She’d take off a tiny bit of his facial hair, then examine his chin forever before taking off bit more. He looked good at the end of it, sure, but was that hour spent on removing hair really worth it? Probably not.

Afterwards she called in the other woman, who came in with a makeup kit. She brushed on some foundation and bronzer, filled in his eyebrows a bit and smiled when she pulled back to examine her work.

“You’re bone structure is incredible.” She said, American accent strong.

“Did he bring you with him to London?”

“Yeah, he takes the three of us everywhere.” She replied, then stepped out of the way so Louis could see himself.

He looked good, perfect almost, and it was a little startling. “Wow.”

“I know. I didn’t even have to do much.” She added with a flirty wink, and Louis grinned.

“As if.”

She pushed her white-blondie hair away from her eyes, and bent back down to run the brush down his nose. “I honestly didn’t. Usually it takes a lot of contouring to give someone incredible cheekbones, but you’ve just got them. You’re perfectly symmetrical, too. And your eyes.”

“All right!” the star said from the doorway, and Louis turned to look at him. He was grinning wide, but his jealousy was obvious.

Louis went back to inspecting his face, slightly disappointed that the makeup was unable to hide the reddening of his cheeks. Then he looked up to the woman and asked “Am I done?”
“Yeah.” She laughed. “I’ve got to do Big Shot now. It’s time to get your hair done, anyway.”

And back in came the other lady, only she’d replaced the tweezers and razor that had been in her hands with some hairspray and a comb.

Louis hadn’t seen much of what she was doing because of his closed eyes, but he’d heard the blow-dryer and felt the heat of the straightener. When he was finally told to open them up and look at his reflection, he couldn’t help but smile wide.

“How’d you do that?” he asked, not even trying to mask how impressed he was. His hair was combed forward, the top of it curled or combed or *something* to make it artfully flick about in all directions. Except for the fringe, which came together in the middle to curl its way down his forehead. It looked both like he’d just woken up like that *and* that it had been professionally styled, and Louis had no idea how it worked but it did.

And the effect of it, teamed with his carefully shaved chin and plucked eyebrows, made him look ten years older. He looked tough, and deadly, and expensive; he felt it, too.

“These two are incredible, aren’t they?” the actor said from behind him, and Louis was too stuck admiring his reflection to even be startled by the other man’s sudden movement. “You look – I don’t even have words.”

“Same.” Louis near-whispered. Then chuckled. “Well that was a bit conceited of me.”

The star laughed. “You’re allowed to be when you’ve got that face. Come on, it’s my turn for hair and makeup. Your newest friend is out there waiting for you.”

Louis was confused what the man meant until he walked back into the bedroom and found the stylist sitting on a plush maroon chair in the corner.

Wow, did Louis hate this guy. He was just every single thing Louis disliked about the fashion industry personified. The arrogance, the judgement, the flashiness; he had it all.

The man sighed. “Well, let’s get you dressed.”

“What’s the time?” Louis asked as he approached his suit that was lying at the foot of the bed. The last time Louis had seen it was when it was in the hands of the bodyguard, so obviously someone had taken it out of the cover and got it all ready for him. And socks and pants, too; it was all there.

“It was five the last time I checked.”

“When have we got to leave?”

“Around seven I’ve been told. And before you bother asking, we get you ready now so it can be one less thing on our list. It’s a long one, and getting you dressed is the lowest of our priorities, so once you’re done than you can watch television until we leave.”

“When do we get to eat?”

The stylist scrunched up his face. “While you have this suit on you won’t be eating anything. Not until the after party, anyway.”

“Fuck. There’s an after party? I didn’t know that.”

“Everything has an after party.” He replied with exasperation.
“Well nobody told me.” Louis grunted back.

“They would have thought it was a given!”

“All right, no need to shout. I’m going to order something to eat now then.” Louis walked over to the hotel phone that was beside the bed and called the number for room service. “You want anything?”

The stylist snorted and stormed out of the room.

Louis ordered a couple of pizzas, and watched some telly until it arrived. It didn’t take long at all, maybe fifteen minutes, and it wasn’t until Louis was returning to the bedroom with plates in his hand that the star emerged from his ensuite.

“Fuck.” Louis muttered, eyes raking up and down the man before him. His hair was coiffed, his skin looked perfect, and his eyes looked shockingly steely with how his makeup was done; the effect was incredible.

“You remembered!” the star said as he strode over to Louis and took a piece of the pizza from his plate.

Louis blinked a few times before it clicked; the man had mentioned the hotel’s pizza on their first date. “Of course.” He said, when he’d finally found his voice. “It’s our thing.”

That made the actor smile wide before he took a bite.

The two of them ate the pizza in silence, and afterwards the star opened a bottle of wine. It was only going on six, but fuck it; Louis needed a drink.

“How are you feeling?” the man asked as he poured glasses for himself, Louis and his stylists.

“Oh, I think.” Louis answered truthfully. “I mean, I was mad with nerves this morning but I think now I’m just excited. Can’t wait to see what it’s like.”

“The première itself isn’t that much fun. The red carpet bit is quite tedious, you get blinded by camera flashes and have microphones shoved in your face while reporters throw questions at you. And then there’s the movie, which I already saw at the L.A. one. I guess you have that to look forward to. The after-party is when things get fun.”

“I don’t think I should go to that.” Louis admitted, and the star frowned.

“When you agreed to come to the première, I assumed that also meant the after-party.” The star replied coolly.

“Yeah, okay. I get that but –“

“I didn’t buy you this suit just so you can wear it for three hours and then piss off back to your suite with Harry. Which I am also paying for, by the way.”

“I guess.”

“So you’re going to come, right, or are we calling this whole night off?”

“No!” Louis hurriedly reassured him. “I’m coming. I want to come. I’m just – I was surprised, that’s all. I didn’t know.”
The star’s smile returned so fast it was chilling. “Good. Now drink up, and then we’ll suit up. It’s not much longer until we have to go.”

Louis nodded, and skulled down the wine that was left in his glass. He just watched silently as the actor called his stylists back into the room and told them to finish up. And just like that, Louis was back to dreading the whole thing.

---

The star hadn’t been exaggerating what the red-carpet would be like; when they first stepped out of the limo, Louis couldn’t see a thing. His vision was whitened out by the flash of the cameras, and he instinctively gripped on tighter to the star’s arm so he wouldn’t blindly stumble to somewhere he shouldn’t go.

He’d been given strict instructions to remain with the star until they were seated for the film unless he was told otherwise, and he didn’t want to break his promise only ten seconds into the thing.

After a few hard blinks, Louis could see again. He could make out the other celebrities on the carpet with them, then out further the photographers and interviewers, and then the fans screaming out for the star’s attention behind the barrier. It looked a lot like the red-carpet events he’d been to before, only ten times bigger and more hectic.

Before, he’d only ever been to British award shows and charity events, and they were nothing in comparison. The amount of people on the carpet with them was a lot less, but there were infinitely more press people and fans.

“This is insane.” Louis said under his breath, and the star just laughed. It was loud and exaggerated, and reminded Louis why he was there; to put on a show for these people.

“Just stay here with me.” He said through his perfect white teeth. “Wave at the fans, smile at the reporters, pose for pictures; that’s what we’ve got to do until we’re called for an interview.”

“We? They won’t want to interview me, will they?”

“Probably not, but you need to be in their frame at least. Anything they do ask you will be related to me.”

The star stopped talking to grin and wave some more, then pulled Louis along to an X that had been taped onto the floor. Photographers shouted at them to turn this way and that, screamed for their attention, and it only took a few clicks of the cameras before Louis snapped back into it. He smouldered into their lenses, following the star’s lead on which photographer to look at, and after a few minutes of posing Louis was told to move so they could get some shots of just the star, then him with his co-stars.

Louis stood back and watched, admiring how the man worked, before he heard someone yell his name. He turned around, squinting through the lights to find who it was, and his eyes stopped on a hand enthusiastically waving to him. It was a reporter, that much he could tell, and without thinking he walked over to her to see what she wanted.

“Louis Tomlinson?”

“Yes? Who are you?”

“From the Daily Mail. Just got a few questions for you. Can you confirm that you are dating –“
“All right, that’s enough.” A voice interrupted, and a hand wrapped around Louis’ bicep and tugged him away from the barrier and back into the centre of the carpet. It was the star’s manager, looking slightly pissed off.

Louis just muttered an apology, and the man shook his head and herded him back to where the star was finishing up getting his photos taken.

“Where’d you get off to?” the actor muttered under his breath, false smile on his face.

“Just heard someone call me over and went to see what they wanted. I didn’t talk though. Your manager got there in time.”

“Good.” He nodded. “You’re not meant to have any interviews alone. This is supposed to be my night, remember? Saturday will be all about promoting you.”

“Saturday?”

“That photo exhibit. Now come on, we’ve got interviews to do. Well, I do, but you’ve got to come stand by me and look pretty.”

Louis grunted his affirmation and trailed behind the star, quickly realising that this night really wasn’t going to be much fun at all; he should have known, it was a job after all.

---

When Louis stumbled into his hotel room it was nearing on 3am. He was drunk and tired and grumpy, and it hadn’t even occurred to him that Harry was probably sleeping. He slammed the door closed, and collapsed onto their bed with a sigh.

“That was awful.” Louis groaned, and Harry grunted back.

“Lou look nice.” He managed to say, slow and groggy, which should have indicated to Louis that he’d been asleep not five seconds ago.

“It’s an expensive suit. Probably the most expensive thing I’ll ever own. I should take it off.” He said, but made no move to actually do it.

“’mm kay.” Harry grumbled, and turned onto his side to look at Louis properly. “Want to tell what happened?”

“It was horrendous. Kind of cool at first, and flashy, but then I just got dragged around the entire night. I didn’t even get good seats to the film, I was shoved at the back with the other friends and family. I thought I’d be front row considering I’m dating the star. Like, fake dating. Sorry. Anyway, the film was okay. Just loud and violent and would have cost a fuck tonne to make. The dialogue was really stupid, I accidentally snorted out loud a few times and got funny looks for it. Afterwards we went to this thing the director threw, and it was awful. So many absolute twats. Nosey fuckers, too, asking me all this personal shit. It was awful, Haz, don’t know how I’m going to deal with it when I’m proper famous.”

“Don’t have to be.” Harry mumbled, eyes slipping shut again.

“But I want to be.”

“Okay, Lou, if you sure. You will be.”
Louis rolled onto his side to say more, but Harry's eyes were clenched shut; he was out cold. Louis needed to convince Harry that it was what he wanted, he was sure, because if he'd said all his reasons out loud, explained exactly what he'd wanted since he was a teenager, than maybe he’d be able to convince himself too.

"Lou?" Harry grumbled.

"Yeah? I thought you went to sleep. I was just thinking -"

"We know how to find my human parents. We got to tell them about me."

Louis' heart stopped. "Tell who?"

"Everyone, Lou, and then they will come to me. We need to tell the world."
Louis was roughly nudged awake, and when he opened his eyes he saw Harry hovering over him with a big grin.

“What is it?” he groaned, and Harry poked him in the chest.

“Breakfast! I order it and it come. Now up!”

Louis grunted some more, but did as he was told.

He pushed himself up, rubbed his eyes, and saw Harry’s bare arse wiggling its way out of their bedroom door.

“Harry!” Louis called after him, rolling out of the bed to follow. “Did you answer the door to room service like that?”

“Yeah! Sorry.” Harry said with a grin that made it obvious he felt everything but. He’d set out everything on their little table, the cutlery and the plates of hot food and even glasses of orange juice.

Louis grinned wide when he saw the cup of tea. It was the first thing he tried after he’d sat down, and from the taste Louis could tell Harry made it himself.

It was too weak and too milky, but he was going to drink every drop.

“This is really nice, Haz.”

“Yeah, it is.” He grinned, and shoveled in a forkful of scrambled egg. A chunk of it dropped from his lips when he asked “What we gonna do today? Exploring London with Harry and Lou, remember?”

“I remember.” Louis replied as he buttered some toast. “We can go anywhere that you want. Did you and Zayn come up with some places?”

“Zayn said I could go all the big things. The big clock and the big eye.” He widened his eyes as he said it, and pointed to his left one. “How big is eye? Bigger than mine?”

Louis snorted out a laugh, then choked on the sausage that was halfway down his throat, which served him right. “It’s a big Ferris Wheel. Like… I’ll show you a picture, I don’t know how to explain it.”

“Okay.” Harry nodded. “Also Zayn said big bridge. Can we go to the Tube? It fun.”

“It’s busy too, though. What if we get driven to the Eye and stuff, and then we can get the Tube to the Tower once we’re done there?”

Harry shrugged. “Yes, that good.”

“Do you need to go into Uni today at all?”
“I told them I am not coming. But they want Harry and Lou to see tomorrow. Said important for the finding parents.”

Louis swallowed his mouthful with a loud gulp. “You said last night that you were going to tell everyone about you. What did you mean?”

“Professor think it good idea to say to world I am from jungle. Then I will be on news everywhere and my human parents will come to see me.”

“But there was loads of information in their journals, about where they studied and roughly when. Surely there aren’t that many scientists that ran off to the jungle straight out of Uni, it can’t be that hard to track them down.”

“They said it too hard, so this is easiest way.”

“For them, not for you.”

Harry shrugged. “I want to,” then he added with a smile “I can be on TV and posters like you. People get pictures with Harry and Lou, and you don’t need the movie man anymore.”

And Louis’ stomach dropped. “Harry – “

“I want to, really. I want to be famous too. Then I understand things you do sometimes.”

“Christ, Harry.” Louis choked out. “You can’t just – just say those things.”

“But it true.”

“Yeah but – “ it makes me feel like shit, he wanted to say, but he caught himself before he did. Fucking hell, he was such a selfish arsehole. ‘I’m sorry. Fuck, I’m sorry, Haz.”

Harry scrunched up his nose and asked “Why?”

“Because you shouldn’t be trying to fit your life around mine. You shouldn’t do something that big, that life-changing, for me. It’s going to make everything completely different, Harry, did they tell you that?”

“Yes. And I want different.”

That had Louis stopping short. “Why?”

“Don’t like following you around always. Like I a dog on string sometimes. I want to do things myself. Have own job. It not for you that I want change, it for me.”

“Oh.” Louis blinked. Harry really wasn’t holding back. “But you just said you wanted to be famous so I didn’t have to see the star anymore.”

“Yes, because if he gone then I can have Louis to myself and not be jealous anymore.”

Louis laughed at that, which probably wasn’t an appropriate response because Harry frowned. “Sorry. I think I get you. You want your own life with me in it, not just to have my life. That’s good. That’s for the best.”

Harry nodded. “Healthy, says the professor. How I get happy here. To have my own things.”

“Yeah. They’re – you’re right.” Louis muttered, more to himself. Maybe if he said it enough times,
he’d not feel so shit about it. He liked things how they were, he didn’t want change, and he knew he was an arsehole for it because Harry had said enough times that he was unhappy. Things had to change for Harry to want to stay in London. Louis needed to accept that.

Harry grinned. “Of course I am!” and shoved in some bacon. “Hurry so we can go. I want to see the big eye wheel!”

---

Harry was quite underwhelmed when he saw the London Eye, and had no interest in actually riding it.

He simply looked up at it from the very bottom, and shrugged, and leapt.

It had been a complete shock, Harry had been on the ground one moment and 10 feet up the next, and Louis could only watch, mouth agape, as Harry climbed.

The people around them began screaming, and the security men shouted for him to come down.

Harry stopped, and looked at the crowd gathered on the ground beneath him. He spotted Louis and yelled “What?” and Louis waved him down.

Security was on him as soon as his feet were back on the cement.

He screeched and wormed his way out of their hands, and Louis pulled him behind him so he could explain with rushed words.

“He’s not from here!”

“That doesn’t bloody excuse him!” one of the men replied.

“He honestly has no idea what he’s doing! He’s not – civilised.”

The second security man said “You got that bit right” and tried to reach around Louis.

“No! You don’t get it, he doesn’t know how to behave.”

The men both looked at him like he was insane, before a look of recognition fell over one of their faces. “Hey, don’t I know you?”

“Yes! Well, maybe. I’ve been in some ads.”

“You’re with that guy, the American. You know, what’s his face?”

“Oh yeah!” the other guy said, and Louis was quick to nod.

“Hey! Yeah, I can get you autographs if you like? Just, please, let my friend go. He’s sorry.”

Harry nodded. “I am sorry! I didn’t know no climb.”

One of the men rolled his eyes, and the other snorted.

“I’ll get my – the actor – to call you, okay? Or send you a video saying hi. Just, please.”

There was a pause before the leader said “Get him to send my daughter a video and you have a deal. And you call my son, I’ve seen a picture of you in his bedroom.”
Louis nodded, and took the man’s phone from his hand.

So he spent the next few minutes video chatting to his supposed biggest fan while Harry looked on from behind, grinning at how the teenager on the phone squealed.

They were finally let go after Louis took their details, and promised a million times over that his ‘boyfriend’ would contact them.

Harry laughed as they hurried off, and Louis stopped him with a snarl. “Harry, you can’t just do shit like that! It’s dangerous, and illegal! You could have gone to prison just now, and then we’d all be fucked!”

“Sorry.” Harry muttered back. “You know I don’t know.”

“This wasn’t a good idea. We haven’t even been out here for ten minutes and you’re already getting into trouble.”

“I’m sorry.” He near whispered. “I won’t again. I stay with Lou. I promise. Please?”

“Fine. If you pull another stunt like that, we’re going home.”

Harry nodded. “You angry at me?”

And Louis sighed. “I’m just scared, okay? I was scared. I thought they were going to take you away.” Of what would happen if they did, of how Harry would react. He wouldn’t understand, he would be so scared, of those strangers pushing at him. And if they arrested Harry, took him to a cell and locked him up, what would he do then? What would Louis do?

“They not get me, I too fast.” Harry grinned, and nuzzled his way into Louis’ neck. “Don’t be scared for me Lou.”

“Just nothing like that again, okay?”

Harry nodded. “Yes, okay. I want to see big clock now.”

“It’s called Big Ben.” Louis smiled, and gave Harry’s hand a reassuring squeeze. It felt cold against his skin. Perhaps they should have worn gloves, now that it was getting so chilly, and being so close to the river didn’t help anything.

“I see it now. That it there, yes?” Harry asked as he pointed. “It very beautiful. Very big.”

“It is.” Louis smiled. “But let’s get a closer look, yeah? We can take a look at the Abbey too. You want to stop for a hot chocolate?”

Harry pouted for a moment, thinking quite hard about it apparently, before nodding slowly. “Yes, but on the go. Zayn said you can do that. We had coffee on the stay in at the table, but we can take it in the special cups. The cups are special because you take them but it not stealing, Zayn said.”

Louis’ cheeks ached with how wide he grinned. He linked his arm with Harry’s and began the walk to the bridge. “Yeah? What else did Zayn say?”

“He said about the rimming, remember?”

“Can’t really forget.” Louis muttered, heat crawling beneath his skin from embarrassment.

“We talked about your family. You have three parents. How?”
“Oh. Well. Umm, there’s this thing called marriage, yeah? Where two people in love – get one. And, like, you can stop it if you don’t want anymore. Get what’s called a divorce. So my Mum had me and my sisters with my Dad, but they got a divorce. Then she remarried someone else, but they’ve actually gotten divorced too. He’s still a part of my life, though. He raised me with my mum, so I still would call him my dad. Even though he’s not my father. Do you get that?”

“No.” Harry frowned. “Maybe you draw a picture? That’s what psychologists do for me sometimes.”

“Yeah, I can do that. Later on, when we’re at home.”

Harry nodded, and went to step out onto the road but Louis pulled him back quick.

“You only cross when there’s a green man!” he huffed, cars speeding past them. His heart was racing; he couldn’t possibly take another of Harry’s near-death experiences.

“Green man?”

“That light.” Louis pointed. “See how its red? That means we can’t walk. When it goes green, we can. Didn’t that ever come up with Zayn?”

“No. We held hands so I just did what he did. He didn’t explain. Can we hold hands?”

“I can’t be seen like that, Haz. Holding hands counts as intimacy, and I can’t show that with anyone besides the actor remember?”

“Fine,” Harry grunted, and added under his breath “Man is green now.”

“I’m sorry, Harry, but you know I can’t –”

“Yes, I know!” Harry snapped. “But I am still mad at it.”

“Sorry.” Louis muttered as Harry pulled him across the road, swerving through the pedestrians going the opposite way to them with ease. Harry didn’t bump into a single other person; Louis was impressed. It’d taken himself months to get to that point.

“I know that too.” Harry rolled his eyes. “It okay. Let get drinks in special cups to go now.”

They walked until they found a Starbucks, and Louis wondered what it said about society that Harry picked it out himself. When Louis asked him if this is where he went with Zayn, Harry answered with “Not this one, but the same green lady.”

Louis got himself a latte, and Harry a hot chocolate, and just as they were about to head out the door it began to rain.

Louis grabbed the two free seats by the window before anyone else could, and he’d been so fast Harry was still by the door, looking about himself.

“Haz!” he called, and Harry nodded his head in recognition before hurrying over. He sipped some of his drink as he walked, and Louis felt oddly at ease. Just from that one simple act of normalcy, something Louis had seen countless people do every single day, for a moment Harry became one of them. Just another Londoner, another human. For a second Louis completely forgot he belonged in the jungle, for a second he truly believed Harry’s place was here in the city.

And all he’d done was drink his bloody drink.
Maybe Louis was losing it.

He grinned when Harry sat down on the stool beside him, and tipped his cup too far to the right so that some of the chocolate drink bubbled out through the lid.

“Oops.” Harry laughed, and lapped at it with his tongue.

“Harry? What are you doing Saturday?”

Harry frowned. “What?”

“Have you got plans?”

“You always make the plans. If you don’t know than I don’t know.”

Fuck, another thing to add to the list of shit Louis was doing wrong. “I was just wondering, because you were invited to an art show this Saturday? Well, like a photograph exhibit. Remember that guy who did the shoot in the jungle?” He waited for Harry's nod before he continued. “He’s invited us both to go. But, the only thing is that I’ve got to bring the actor as my date. You’ve been invited yourself, though, so if you want to come then you should! You can meet some new people and stuff.”

“But I can’t come with Lou?”

“Maybe. I mean, I’ll have to ask about it, but there’s no reason why we can’t come as friends. Even though we’re more, we can hide it, yeah? Just for the night?”

Harry thought for a moment, forehead creased and lips pursed and eyes fixed on something out the window before them. “Can I bring Zayn? Like how you bring your man, can I bring a man?”

“Yeah, I suppose? If I get a plus one then you should too. I’ll have to ask for you, though, but I don’t see why not.”

Harry nodded, then looked back to Louis and smiled. “Okay. Will be fun, yes?”

“Yeah.” Louis grinned back. “Definitely!”

***

The Tube wasn’t nearly as bad as Louis expected.

In all honesty, he thought Harry would be hanging off the ceiling poles and jumping from seat to seat.

But he sat there in his seat like the other commuters, only looking a lot more alive than the lot of them. He wouldn’t stop moving his head about to take note of every single other person, but he wasn’t annoying anyone.

Perhaps the only thing linking Harry to the jungle now was Louis’ expectations of him, and that was a horrible feeling. Maybe it was Louis himself who needed to do the changing, not Harry.

“This is us.” He said as he stood, and Harry followed him up.

“Already?” He pouted. “Only two stations. I want long ride.”

“Maybe after the Tower.” Louis replied as he waited for the door to open. When it did, he grabbed
Harry’s hand and pulled him out before others could push their way on. It was one thing that had always pissed Louis off about the Tube; people seemed to leave their manners as soon as they got to a station.

“We get to go in this time? Not in clock or the Ab-ley.”

“Abbey. And yeah, we can go inside. I don’t know how much you’ll like it, but we can take a look at the Crown Jewels and see where Anne Boleyn got executed.”

“I don’t understand.” Harry said with a little frown, and Louis wasn’t exactly surprised. History was probably the last thing he’d be taught by the psychologists, if at all.

So Louis found himself acting as some kind of guide as they toured the Tower of London, spouting off facts he’d learnt from school and was surprised he still even remembered. He’d hired one of the little electronic guides as a precaution, but found himself barely needing it.

It was quite fun, even, telling Harry all about the past kings and queens who’d at some point in time been in the very places they were standing.

“It strange to think about, yes? The humans who lived before? Who made all of London. In the jungle, you not need to think about these things. There is nothing there that a human made. There trees that grew, and fruits that die if don’t get eaten. There is rivers that change how they flow and where they go. But everything because of nature. Here, everything is because someone thinks and does. It is all because of people. That is strange.”

“I – yeah. It is, isn’t it?” Louis had never really thought of it like that, just took everything for granted. He’d never really had an existential crisis before, and he wasn’t sure he liked it. He wasn’t used to thinking about much more than his own actions, and now he was considering those of the human race. “They say, though, that people are changing nature. What we use to keep all of this going - to make cars go and lights work and clothes get made – practically everything humans in big cities use to live their lives puts toxins in the air. We call it pollution. But, like, maybe what we do here does actually have an effect on what goes on in the jungle, too.”

“That not fair.” Harry frowned. “That people here driving to a shop to buy some food can kill the tree my family eat from.”

“I know.” Louis muttered, feeling suddenly guilty. But it was what he’d grown up with, what he’d had all his life. Those little things that Harry saw as unnecessary, like driving and being able to eat by simply purchasing food rather than growing it himself, were all things Louis couldn’t possibly live without. “It’s just how it is now, though. Things change over time. People change. Obviously.” He added, motioning to the old stone gate they were walking out of.

When the big buildings came into sight again, all tall and shiny and modern, Harry snorted back “Obviously.”

***

Louis’s manager was not entirely happy that he’d passed on the photographer’s invitation to Harry, but agreed that it was a good idea he take Zayn along.

“It would put less pressure on me and Harry to hide our relationship.” He’d explained to her.

“And what did they say this morning?” she asked, referring to the visit Louis and Harry had to the university.
Which was something Louis was more than ready to forget. “They just said that we should think of a time for him to come out to the public, and what would be the best way. They wanted my opinion because they figured I’d be able to reach a lot more people if we made a press statement. I could say I found him and all that.”

“Oh. I suppose, but if it is you that is telling everyone then you need to discuss it with me too.”

“I’ll keep you in the loop.” Louis said, and ended the phone call with the excuse that he had to start getting Harry and himself ready for the photography exhibition.

He didn’t particularly need to, because Zayn was there and taking charge of Harry’s dressing, but the sooner Louis ended the conversation the less likely it would be that she would ask more questions about their morning.

See, the psychologists hadn’t just wanted to discuss Harry’s ‘unveiling’.

They’d also wanted details about their sex life.

As soon as the head researcher had said “It’s come to our attention that you have begun a sexual relationship with Harry” Louis was about ready to run out of the room.

Instead, he managed to stutter out “He said that?”

“In more or less words, yes. We were initially concerned, of course. You already hold so much power over him, it was only natural for us to be worried.”

“What’s that meant to mean?” Louis growled through gritted teeth.

“We wanted to make sure you weren’t coercing him in any way.”

“Of course I fucking didn’t! I made sure of it, we talk about it!”

The researcher held up her hand and said “We know. We’ve spoken to Harry profusely about it this week to make sure he understands what is happening. If you have a lot more knowledge about sex than he does, then that could be terribly harmful. But, we are confident he knows what is happening between you. He knows that sex is for more than reproduction, despite the fact that we failed to tell him that during our sex education talk during the first week of his lessons. He’s picked up a lot more in the jungle than we originally thought. He continues to surprise us.” She beamed proudly, and Louis nodded shortly.

He was full of questions, but he didn’t want their conversation to go on longer than necessary. He still wasn’t sure why he found discussing sex with them so uncomfortable, but the fact was that it did and if an easy out presented itself to him then he sure as fuck was going to take it.

“It’s a bit small on him.” Louis remarked, after he’d ended the call with his manager and come back out into the sitting room to see what Harry and Zayn were up to.

Harry was wearing one of Louis’ suit jackets that he’d been given after a shoot, and it was hugging his shoulders tightly. The sleeves were a smidgen too short, but Louis figured that as long as Harry was wearing a button-up that at least covered his wrists he was fine.

“I want to wear this one.” Harry announced, holding up a scarf.

Louis had no idea where it had come from, and said just as much.
“I found it when I went back to your place for the jacket.” Zayn explained. “You’ve got loads of nice stuff shoved in your closet, Lou, you should go through it some time.”

“It got flowers on it, see?” Harry held it out, and Louis just nodded.

“Where are you going to put it though?”

“In my hair. It look nice, I saw lady on telly with it.”

Louis bit his lip but nodded nonetheless. If anyone could pull it off, it would be Harry. “What do you think of the jacket?”

“I don’t like it. Pulls on my back. I just wear none jackets.” He shrugged. “Just shirt and jeans and my nicest boots. And my scarf in my hair. It looks nice.”

Louis opened his mouth to say something, to tell Harry that people at these kinds of things usually wear something far less casual, but Zayn gave him a pointed look and he shut his mouth again.

“What are you going to wear, then?” Zayn asked him, and Louis shrugged.

“Maybe my grey suit. You?”

“I was hoping to wear that black one of yours that I always borrow.”

“You’ve still got it, yeah? I haven’t seen it at mine for a while.”

“Yeah, I had it. It’s spent the last month at the dry cleaners, but I picked it up just for tonight.”

Louis grinned and said “How kind of you.”

“Shut up.” Zayn snorted. “You better hop to it, then. Your hair’s looking awful.”

“Look who’s talking. You need to get it cut mate.”

“Twat.”

“What going on?” Harry interrupted their little play fight with a grunt. “You being mean.”

“We’re just messing.” Louis assured him.

Zayn nodded and said “Yeah, we love each other really.”

“Oh.” Harry said, mouth in a perfect circle. Until he smiled and said “You both squishy and smell like banana gone bad.”

“Fuck.” Zayn sniggered, and Louis just smiled fondly.

“Thanks babe. Nice try.”

Harry beamed back, and turned to the mirror to make another attempt at taming his hair.

“Harry’s got the right idea, maybe you should go find a mirror too.” Zayn ribbed.

Louis just rolled his eyes and gave his elbow a shove as he passed him to get to his bedroom.

---
The actor came down to their hotel suite when he was ready to leave, looking as dashing as ever.

He was wearing dark trousers and a fitted suit jacket, with a signature blue collared shirt underneath. Harry was the one who’d opened the door to him, and appraised him with a very obvious once-over.

“I like your scarf.” The actor said, pointing to the top of Harry’s head. “It’s very … interesting.”

“Thank you. You also look interesting.” Harry said with a small polite smile.

The actor frowned, and stepped into the room because Harry obviously wasn’t going to invite him in.

A smile cracked across the star’s face when he spotted Louis standing by the sofa where he’d been watching from a safe distance. “Hey Lou, you look gorgeous.”

“Cheers.” Louis replied, and left it at that because Harry’s glare looked lethal. “Zayn’s just on the 87th brush of his hair so he shouldn’t be long. Only thirteen to go.”

“Fuck off.” Zayn shouted from Louis’ room. “I’ll be a second, I’m just trying to find my socks.”

“Take some of mine!” Louis called back. “In the second draw by my bed!”

“There better not be fucking dildos and shit in there!”

“Can’t promise you that!” Louis laughed, and looked back to see the tilted head of the star, lips set in a hard line. “Umm. I was joking.”


“What did you just say?” the actor snapped, turning on Harry.

“He was kidding!” Louis rushed out. “Or trying to. He didn’t mean it.” And when Harry frowned and opened his mouth to deny that Louis quickly asked “Have you seen this guy’s work before? The photographer’s? Apart from my Hugo Boss advert, I mean.”

“Not that I’m aware of.” The star muttered.

Zayn finally came into the room, shoes in hand. “Mate, I’ve never seen anyone with more ridiculous socks. I had to dig right to the back of the draw to find some that didn’t have little clouds or rabbits or whatever on them.”

“Yeah, sorry.” Louis grinned, and Zayn nudged his calf with his black-socked toe as he went to sit on the sofa.

He pulled his shoes on, then stood back up and gave a small wave to the actor. “Hey, I’m Zayn.”

“Hi, I’m sure I don’t need to introduce myself.” The star smiled smugly as he looked Zayn up and down from head to toe, and made it obvious that he liked what he saw with a wink.

Zayn’s forehead crinkled up, and he looked to Louis with a frown that very much said is this wanker serious? “Right.”

It was a far cry from when Zayn had first seen the actor all those weeks ago at the cologne launch, when he’d been just as engrossed as everyone else. Louis cleared his throat and asked “We all ready to go?”
The actor simply pushed open the door and held out his hand as if pointing the way to the exit. “My driver is waiting for us in the lobby.”

“Better hop to it.” Louis said with fake enthusiasm, and felt Harry’s fingers wrap around his wrist. When Louis looked to him, Harry put his other hand along Louis’ jaw and kissed him.

He slid his tongue in when Louis’ lips parted with shock, and pressed harder against him until Louis kissed him back. It was far too dirty a kiss to be appropriate in front of others, but Louis loved it. He knew exactly what this was, Harry making a show of who the each of them belonged to, and Louis couldn’t stop smiling.

It made the kiss far more awkward than hot, so Harry pulled back with his own little grin. He then looked to the star and said “Now I am ready” but Louis was too busy staring at Harry’s red wet lips to take notice of the star’s reaction. By the smug expression on Harry’s face, he could imagine the actor was not at all pleased.

---

Louis knew he was being a horrible date, but he didn’t really care because the star wasn’t any better. He kept a hand on Louis’ lower back the entire evening, fingertips occasionally digging in too hard whenever Louis glanced over at Harry and Zayn.

Which was often, because the two of them were getting far too much attention.

Photographers that Louis recognised from past jobs, and other models he’d previously worked with, were crowding around them to get a word in.

One beautiful woman reached up to touch Harry’s scarf at one point, with words that had him smiling delightedly, and Louis was ready to snap.

He himself had received his own share of admirers, and had spoken to everyone in the room at least once – had listened to their praises and graciously accepted their offers to audition for them – so that wasn’t the issue.

It wasn’t like he was jealous over the way people were swooning over Zayn, for instance.

He simply hated that everyone in the room didn’t know that Harry was Louis’ and vice versa. They were together and Louis desperately wanted everyone to know but he couldn’t tell them because he was stuck on the arm of that wet fish of an actor. Whose arrogance was obviously not impressing anyone, not like the way Harry’s charm was.

After a particularly unbearable conversation with someone from Vogue magazine, Louis offered to get the star another champagne.

The man smiled and nodded and kissed his cheek, leaving his arm to linger on Louis’s bicep for a fraction too long, before Louis could escape.

He walked straight past the man who was holding a tray of wine and instead approached Zayn, who was next to Harry but obviously not in on the conversation that was going on between the jungle man and the pretty lady. He looked bored out of his mind.

Zayn grabbed Louis’ wrist and pulled him close to mutter into his ear “When is this thing actually finished?”

Louis laughed, loud and showy, until Zayn nudged him in the ribs. He was just trying to get
Harry’s attention, in all honesty, but Harry’s eyes were fixed on hers’.

“He looks at everyone like that, don’t be stupid.” Zayn said, and elbowed his ribs again just for good measure.

Louis knew that, but it was still frustrating. It was one of the things Louis liked about him, how when Harry’s attention was on him it felt like no one else existed, but he was like that with everyone. Even complete strangers would feel like Harry was utterly devoted to them for the moment or two that he looked their way.

Louis sighed and looked back to Zayn. “Whenever that thing behind the curtain is revealed, we’ll be able to leave shortly after. I’m sure there’s some kind of after party thing that we’ll be invited to but we won’t have to go.”

“Good.” Zayn grunted. Then he looked around himself and asked “Have you actually looked at any of the pictures?”

“I’ve seen a few that people have dragged me to, but I didn’t get a good look. It was more business stuff that they wanted to see me about.”

“There’s a few of you around.”

Louis’ eyebrows sky rocketed. “Really?”

“Yeah. There’s a good series of them, with you in that dumb Louisville cap and another with you in some fur. Is he allowed to just publish them without your consent?”

“I guess so. I don’t own the photos, so he must have been able to buy them back or been able to keep some for himself or something, I don’t know. He better not have some pictures of my cock in his private collection.”

Zayn laughed in his quiet way, chin against his chest in attempt to hide his smile.

Louis was just about to say something more when he felt a hand on his shoulder and the American-accented words “Babe, I was looking for you.”

Louis turned to the star and forced a grin. “I was on my way to get us something to drink when Zayn called me over. We’ve just been chatting.”

The star smiled politely at Zayn, still looking at him when he said to Louis “They’re going to reveal the hidden photo soon. We should probably get a good spot, somewhere that we can be seen.”

“Yeah, okay.” Louis sighed. Zayn rolled his eyes, and Louis poked out his tongue, and the actor gripped onto Louis’s hand and pulled him over to where the picture was.

It had been the first thing people saw when they walked in, huge and covered by a deep purple curtain. It was also brought up in every conversation Louis had with anyone, all asking what it could be, as if he had some kind of special insight just because he spent a day with the photographer once.

Zayn was close behind them, and Louis looked back to see Harry escape the girl to follow.

He shuffled closer to the actor so that Harry could stand in between him and Zayn.
“How’s your night?” Louis muttered into Harry’s ear.

He shrugged. “It okay. Boring but. I hungry and they have only little tiny foods. And when I take three they with the trays get mad. Can we get dinner when we go home? Ring the hotel for foods?”

“Yeah love.” Louis laughed.

The star hushed him, and Louis glared at the man but stayed quiet. There was quite a group around them, having made their way over as soon as the actor did.

The sounds of chatter slowly dissipated, and when the photographer pushed through to stand by his picture he was grinning wide. He winked at Harry, and Louis was just about ready to punch his shiny face in.

He made a little introductory speech, thanking everyone for coming and hoping they enjoyed his work. He spouted off some bullshit about his year and how hard he’d tried to make this show his most innovative yet. How he had to go through some changes, so that was why the show was called Change. Louis hadn’t even known that, and didn’t particularly care any more now that he knew. He just really fucking hated the guy.

“So this centrepiece,” the photographer said, smiling up at the covered picture behind him. “is groundbreaking, to put it bluntly. I took it on a rather recent trip I took to the Congo for a shoot that Louis Tomlinson, my newest friend and muse, featured in.”

Louis was hot with embarrassment, knowing that whatever picture it was behind the curtain would be of him, bare naked and in a compromising position.

“Will you take a look over there? Look at him, his beauty.” The photographer said, but it wasn’t right. He was pointing at Harry. “His clothing choices are exquisite, he looks as if he’s been ripped from the pages of a fashion magazine. But his slouch, his jutted chin, how his hands hang in front of him with knuckles forward, it does not look very…” he paused, and Louis’ heart beat faster. The wanker. What was he doing?

“human-like, does it? Take a look at this.” And at that, he pulled down the curtain, revealing a series of pictures to the sound of the crowd’s collective gasp, all of Harry in the jungle. Of him bare naked, covered in dirt with untamed hair, skin golden. One of him crouched down on his knuckles oooing with his gorilla family, lips pursed and forehead creased. Another of him smelling a makeup brush, eyes downcast and worried, with Louis beside him getting his makeup done for the shoot. There was even one taken of when they left him, the crew walking out of the clearing while Harry stood back with his gorilla family, face twisted with anguish.

It was utterly heart-wrenching.

Louis looked to the man beside him, who was staring at the pictures with an unreadable expression.

“Harry?” Louis asked, and the boy nodded but didn’t look at him. “We should get out of here, yeah? Do you want to leave?”

Harry shook his head, and stepped forward to stand in front of the photos.

The crowd was silent as they watched him examine the pictures, until one whispered “Is this real?” to whoever was beside them. But because of the quiet of the room, they may as well have shouted it; everyone still heard them.
“It is.” The photographer said proudly, and rested his palm on Harry’s shoulder. Harry brushed it off, and continued to look at the pictures. “I can’t tell you anymore, I can only show you through my art. Take a look at the pictures for yourself. You will see there’s nothing fabricated.”

“Louis, what do we do? We need to do something.” Zayn muttered under his breath, so quiet Louis could barely hear him. Especially with the way his head was pounding.

“I don’t know. Fuck. Harry!” Louis called, and all looked to him. All except Harry, still transfixed. So Louis stepped up to him, shrugging off the actor when he gripped his arm. Louis took Harry’s hand and squeezed it gently. “Harry, we need to leave. We need to talk to my boss, find out what the fuck is going on. He shouldn’t have been allowed to do this. Harry?”

Harry looked to him then, eyes wet around the rim. “It me, Lou. It my family. I want to take this. Can I take it, Lou? Take it home? Not home,” his voice cracked. “Jungle is home. I mean take it to hotel room. I want to keep it. It mine, yes? I in there, it mine.”

“Christ, Haz.” Louis choked. “I’m sorry, love. We can’t. It’s not ours. We need to go, though, yeah? We have to go.”

“But I want it.” Harry said, and reached up to take the picture.

Hands came from nowhere and pushed Harry’s aside. “You can’t. We need to go.” It was the star, face red with anger.


“It’s not fucking yours. Maybe you can buy it, but until then it’s not yours.” He spat. “We are leaving. All of us. Now.”

Harry shoved at him and went to grab the picture again. The voices behind them were growing louder, and Louis had forgotten that they had an audience. “Harry, don’t.” he said sternly. “We aren’t allowed to take it, okay. We need to leave now.”

Harry nudged him aside as he approached the photographer, whose smug smile dropped right off when he saw the anger in Harry’s face. “I take that!” he demanded, pointing at the picture behind him.

“No, you can’t. It’s mine. I’ll give you copies if you like but –“ Harry clenched the photographer’s shirt collar in his fists and released a throaty growl.

“It mine!”

The actor grabbed Harry’s shoulders and pulled him back, then pushed him towards the exit before Louis could handle the situation himself.

“Get off!” Harry shouted, trying to free himself from the star’s grasp.

“Get in the fucking car.” He demanded, pushing him towards the black limo that was waiting for them. Zayn rushed forward to open the door, and Louis could only watch as the actor forced Harry inside it.

He climbed in after Zayn, and shut the door behind him.

“Why can’t I?” Harry asked, tears now streaming down his face. “It me in there! Why not mine?”
Louis hurried to sit beside him, pushing the actor out of the way so he could pull Harry against him. “I’m sorry, okay? I’ll try to get it for you.”

“It shouldn’t be hard.” Zayn said. “He shouldn’t have been allowed to release those pictures. Or if he was, then he shouldn’t have been able to tell those people what he did.”

Louis felt his phone buzzing in his pocket, and ignored it. He just hugged Harry tighter.

“We wanted to tell world about me, now they know. I don’t care. I just want to go home.” Harry sobbed.

The star grunted something under his breath, and Louis glared at him because it sounded like fucking baby. “Harry, we’re going there now, okay?”

“That not home!” Harry grunted, shoving Louis away from him. “I want real home! I want my family!”

“Oh – okay.” Louis stuttered out, feeling his own eyes begin to well up. He wiped at them before the actor could notice. “We can talk about it tomorrow, yeah? After we sleep?”

“Fine.”

The car fell into silence again, except for the buzzing of Louis’ phone. He grabbed it from his pocket with the hand that wasn’t gripping onto Harry’s thigh and answered it with a stiff “What?”

“I heard.” Was how his manager greeted him. “Where are you?”

“We’re heading back to the hotel. How the fuck did this happen? How did you let this happen?”

“I didn’t know he bought the pictures! I spoke to our lawyers this morning about how Harry wants to reveal himself to find his parents, and how that would have to be done. They said they had to break this contract that demanded certain people to keep quiet, I thought it was just the psychologist’s contract they would break. They fucked up royally, I’m so sorry.”

“You fucked up. Call me when you fix this.” Louis growled, and hung up immediately. “For fuck’s sake!” he shouted, and felt Harry jump.

“What’s going on then?” the actor demanded. “Our lawyers are going to have to talk about this! This isn’t counting as one of our dates, mind you. You’ve created one big fucking shitstorm with your monkey man and I’m not going to fucking sit here and let this bring me down too. My name is going to be splattered amongst the headlines with yours, I hope you realise.”

“I do realise,” Louis said evenly, voice hard and cold. “but I don’t fucking care about that right now.”

“You really think any of us care about what this means for you?” Zayn spat out. “Harry’s the one who’s in the deepest shit. This is gonna be a blip on your career, your name will be in the headlines for about a day. Harry’s secret is out and they haven’t even got a fucking plan! He hasn’t been prepared!”

“It fine. It what I wanted now, remember?” Harry whispered. “I said we want to tell people to find human parents and now it done. We don’t need to think of how.”

“There’s so much more to it, though! We didn’t plan for what could happen after! We needed to warn you about reporters and – and how things are going to be now. Jesus, you have no idea!”
Louis rushed out, feeling himself begin to panic. He’d had time to grow accustomed to fame, and Harry was going to experience it at a whole new level.

It was happening too fast.

“We need – we need a plan.” Louis panicked. “We need to organise press releases. We need to get Harry a P.R. We need – is there someone who deals with this sort of thing professionally? Like, scientific – I dunno – breakthroughs? We’ll need to amp up the security. I think. Will we? People aren’t going to want to kill him are they?”

“Lou!” Harry barked. “Stop!”

“Wait until I’m out of the fucking car at least.” The star muttered. “I don’t need to be a part of this. This isn’t what I signed up for.”

“One more word out of you,” Zayn threatened through gritted teeth. “One. More. Word. And I’ll tell everyone you had to fucking pay to get a date with Louis.”

“Fine! Tell the world, I don’t give a fuck. Everyone will know Tomlinson here is a fucking whore and –“

There was a sharp crack, and the car went silent.

“Zayn!” Louis groaned. He hadn’t seen it, had been too distracted watching Harry’s quivering lip, but it was pretty obvious what had happened when the noise of breaking bone sounded and he turned in time to see the actor’s hands fly up to his face.

Zayn sat back into his seat, staring at his reddening knuckles. Then his eyes flickered up to see the actor, eyes clenched tightly shut, hand covering his nose, blood oozing out from between his fingers.

“If it’s broken I swear to fucking God I will ruin your life.” The actor got out, voice nasally and quivering. Then he pressed a button that made the glass divider separating the back and the front go down. “Driver! Stop the car.”

The man did so almost immediately, pulling up onto the curb and looking back at them through his rear-view mirror. “What is it, sir?”

“Remove these men from my car immediately.”

“Oh, come on! We’re going where you’re going!” Louis argued as the driver climbed out of the car.

“Get. The fuck. Out.”

“Fine.” Zayn grunted. “I’ll call us a cab, it’s fine.”

The driver opened the door closest to Louis, and said “If you don’t get out yourself I’m going to drag you out.”

“Fine, fine.” Louis muttered, and followed the driver’s command. Harry climbed out afterwards and Zayn took a few moments too long to climb out last. “What did you say?”

Zayn shrugged, pulling his phone from his pocket. “Told him that he’ll regret threatening me.”

“Why the fuck would you do that?” Louis snarled. “Thanks to you we’re without a ride!”
“He called you a whore, mate, I wasn’t going to just let him get away with that! Besides, this is London, there’s a cab around every corner.”

“Why we here?” Harry sniffled. “What is ‘whore’? Is it bad?”

“He meant it that way.” Zayn grunted. “He was insulting Louis is what you need to know. I punched him for it.”


Louis ignored them both, watching the road instead for an available Black Cab. He felt cold hands slide under his shirt and jumped.

“Sorry.” Harry grumbled.

“It’s fine.” Louis put his own hands under Harry’s beneath his shirt, resting on his stomach, leaning back into Harry until his back was flush against Harry’s front.

“I take it I’ll be doing the hailing.” Zayn snorted.

“I’m mad at you.”

Zayn rolled his eyes. “I know. Shouldn’t be, though, I was defending your honour.”

Louis didn’t say anything, just shut his eyes and let the cool of Harry’s hands seep into his stomach. It helped wake him up, keep him alert, make him think rather than relax into the heat of Harry’s body behind him and forget everything for a moment.

He needed to come up with a plan. He needed to talk to the University first, find out what they thought. Harry needed some coaching on how to deal with reporters. He needed his own P.R.

Really, though, Louis needed an idea of what the hell was going to happen over the following days because he didn’t know how people would react. Maybe he was blowing it out of proportion; maybe just a few science people would be interested in Harry. But then, the fact that he was linked to Louis, who was linked to a big Hollywood star, made it incredibly unlikely that they should be so lucky.

“Lads.” Zayn interrupted his thoughts with the word, and when Louis opened his eyes again he saw a cab pulled up on the curb in front of him and his mate opening the back door.

He climbed in after him, pulling Harry along behind.

“The Langham, thanks.” Louis said.

“You don’t want to just stay at mine? Might be best, no one will know where to find you in the morning. There might be paps waiting at the hotel, too.”

“We need to go there, they’ve got good security. Just come back with us so Harry’s not with just me if we get papped.”

“You can’t switch off your business brain for five seconds, can you?” Zayn snapped.

The cab driver cleared his throat. “So the Langham is it?”

“Yes.” Louis assented, quickly before Zayn could argue.
“We be back soon?” Harry asked, leaning into Louis’ side. “I just want to sleep.”

“We’re not far, boys. Only ten minutes at the most this time of night.” The driver answered for him.

It felt much longer, probably because nobody spoke a single word until they were pulling up outside the hotel, silence broken when Zayn muttered to the driver about paying with his card.

There wasn’t a hoard of photographers and reporters waiting for them outside the hotel when they arrived, which Louis had begun to expect when his panicking had reached its peak. There were a few paps littered on the pavement, but that was normal for the hotel. He and the actor most likely weren’t the only celebrities staying there.

“So am I going home or…?” Zayn trailed off, looking at Louis expectantly.

Who glared at him for a moment, until he rolled his eyes and said “Just stay here. There’s a second bedroom. We can get room service and some beer, it’s not even late.”

“I want to sleep though.” Harry pouted, and Louis squeezed his shoulder once they’d made it inside the foyer.

“You can. We should probably talk, anyway.”

“You fighting for real now? No joke?”

Louis could feel Zayn’s eyes on him, expecting him to answer, but instead he just pressed the button for the lift.

Harry wasn’t exactly one to pick up on social cues, so had no idea that what Louis really didn’t want him to do was ask again but he did anyway. “Are you mad for properly I said.”

“I – no. I don’t know. I’m just pissed off in general.”

“And he’s taking it out on me.” Zayn added, smiling when Louis shot him a warning glare.

“You aren’t off the hook just yet so calm it.”

The lift doors opened at their level, and when they walked into their room the first thing Harry did was collapse onto one of the sofas.

His long body took up the whole thing, so Louis and Zayn were forced to share the other one after they’d kicked off their shoes.

“You want me to order you anything, Haz?”

“Chips. Lots of them. And ketchup.” He replied, voice muffled by the cushion.

Louis turned to Zayn. “And you?”

“Whatever you’re getting.”

So Louis called room service and ordered a few pizzas and some servings of chips, and while he was up grabbed some beers from the fridge.

“This is such fucking bull shit.” Louis grunted as he sat. “I feel so sick with it. What the fuck are we gonna do?”
“Dunno.” Zayn simply said, and Louis hoped for something more than Zayn’s usual blatant honesty.

There was a sudden snort from Harry, and Louis looked to see that he was very much asleep. His mouth was hanging open, cheek smushed against a throw pillow. “He has no idea. This fame shit still gets to me, and I’ve grown up wanting it. Harry has no idea what he’s in for. He’s never read a bloody rag in his life, he’s never seen or heard the worst of what paps can be like. And he’s too gentle; too naïve. He sees the best in people. They’re gonna take advantage of that. Everyone is. I can’t – he can’t become like me, you know? I couldn’t stand it if he became like me.”

“There’s nothing wrong with being like you.”

Louis scoffed, pulled the beer bottle from his lips and said “I meant he can’t have my attitude. I’ve got a shitty one, I know, but I can’t help but think everyone wants something from me. Like tonight, every single person I spoke to, I could see them calculating whether I was worth their time. They were all trying to come up with a way I could benefit them, it was all business. But sometimes I wonder if they really are doing that, or if I’m just so jaded that that’s all I see. Harry talks to everyone, he finds out everything there is to know about someone with a few honest questions. And I worry about him because of that, how vulnerable that makes him. But I also want to be a bit more like him, too.” Louis paused then, listening out for Harry’s soft breaths. “I don’t think he can be happy with my life. In my life. Maybe I should let him go.”

“Don’t be daft, Louis. I know what you’re doing. You’re just scared, all right? You can handle this. Don’t abandon him. You can’t, because you’re the only thing that’s keeping him here. He’d be completely lost without you.”

“I know. Christ, I know. That’s the scariest thing, though. I worry all the time, for him and about him. I’ve never cared this much about anything or anyone and it’s terrifying. But I feel responsible for him too. This whole thing is so fucked up, I don’t know what I was thinking bringing him here. I never thought it would be this hard.”

Louis looked to Zayn expectantly, and his mate shrugged. “I don’t know what to say. I guess you couldn’t have known. But things would be a lot easier for the both of you if you hadn’t signed that contract with that fucking prick, yeah? Still doesn’t make any sense to me why you did that.”

“Because he offered to get me acting work! Or help me get it. I think he just said he’d do his best to get me some. I’m such a twat.” Louis sighed.

“You’re not. You were when you signed that thing, and I guess it didn’t surprise me so much then because I knew how desperate you were for fame. But now I just – can’t picture you doing it. You’re different now, I guess. It’s a good change though, yeah? I’m not trying to be a prick. Just think you’re a better person since you met Harry. Less self-obsessed.”

Louis laughed. “Thanks, I guess.” And when Zayn opened his mouth to say more Louis shut him down with “I get you, it’s fine. I know what you mean and you’re right. I regret signing that thing more than anything else.”

“You can break it easy enough, right?”

Louis frowned, eyes downcast when he replied with “I guess.”

Zayn obviously misread his hesitance and asked “You don’t want to?”
“Of course I do! I just don’t know what he’ll do if I tried. I think he knows more than he’s letting on about Harry. I can’t remember exactly what I’ve said around him. What if he gets mad and spills? I don’t want another thing to worry about.”

Zayn scrunched up his nose. “But this whole dating-the-actor thing is something else to worry about in itself, right? Organising the dates and pretending to like him in front of cameras? Wouldn’t it be less hassle to just end it? You can’t be sure he knows anything, so all you’re doing is putting yourself through this shit because of a what-if.”

“It’d be easier for me, yeah, but maybe not for Harry.”

“Bollocks.” Zayn snorted. “Harry loves you. He’d be ecstatic if the actor fucked off.”

Louis groaned. “Don’t say that. Love. He doesn’t even know what it is.”

“Stop fucking belittling him.” Zayn snapped, and Louis was stunned into silence. Whatever argument he was about to spout off completely dissipated. “You ignore what he says and decide how he feels and its bollocks.”

“I don’t –“

“You do! Think about it.” Zayn was stopped from saying anything more by a knock on the door. He gave Louis a pointed look, then stood to answer it.

When Louis saw that it was room service with their dinner, he gently nudged Harry awake.

Harry pushed himself up and rubbed at his eyes, and asked “How long was I sleep?”

“Not long, probably only ten minutes. You completely passed out, you must be knackered. You can go back to sleep if you like.”

“No, I hungry. Stupid little party foods, remember?” Louis laughed, and made to go help Zayn serve up but Harry stopped him. “You said we can talk after I sleep. I sleeped.”

“Talk about what, love?”

“Me going home.”

Louis’ stomach clenched at the very idea of it, and his tongue felt thick in his mouth.

“I want to go home, Lou. I want my family.”

“But we’re closer to finding your human parents. Don’t you want to see them?”

Harry frowned, and nodded shortly. Just a quick up-down of his head. “Yes. But I don’t want to stay them.”

Zayn appeared then, offering Louis and Harry plates of pizza and chips, and went back to the kitchen to get his own.

Louis watched Harry shove some food into his mouth before he said “You don’t have to stay with them. You don’t have to stay here, either. I don’t want you to go, though. I’d miss you.”

“So come with me.”

“I can’t.” Louis sighed. “I honestly don’t think I ever could.”
“Oh. Why?”

“Because this is all I’ve ever known! I couldn’t even imagine it! What would I even do every day? I can’t just sit around and eat bananas all day and be happy.”

“But you do it with me.”

“Let’s not talk about this right now, okay?” Zayn objected. “It’s been a long night, a lot of shit has happened, let’s just wait a bit.”

“Fine.” Harry grunted. He shovelled some more chips between his frowning lips, eyes down and staring hard at his plate.

It was silent between them as they ate, Harry twice as fast as the others. It meant he finished way before them, and when he came back from putting his plate in the kitchen he said “I going to bed now.”

“Okay.” Zayn nodded.

“But not in Lou’s bed. I want to sleep in my bed.”

“Oh.” Zayn said, just as Louis cried “But your bed is my bed! We share!”

“I don’t want to, so I not. Zayn can share with you. Good night.”

He left them to seep in awkward silence, until Zayn broke it with “Sorry mate. He seems well angry.”

“Fucking hell.” Louis groaned. “What did I even do?”

“You pretty much suggested that the only way you two can be together is if it’s on your grounds. Quite literally. That’s a bit shitty.”

“Well what else am I meant to do? I can’t live in the fucking jungle, I’d be killed in a second!”

“You’d have Harry, though. He’s survived there this long, I’m sure he’ll keep you alive.”

“That’s not the point. Be realistic for a second, could you ever see me living in the jungle? Running around naked and eating off whatever fruit I find? And liking it?”

“No, guess not. But I also can’t picture Harry being here forever. He’s dying to go back. I haven’t seen him happy since he first got here and everything was new and exciting. Now he’s just – he seems sick or something. Something’s gone.”

Louis went to bed with those words playing over and over in his mind.

He got the spare pillows and throw blankets from his room, disappointed that Harry wasn’t cuddled up under the duvet. He’d been hoping, and half-expecting, that Harry would be.

Then he’d given them to Zayn, along with some bed clothes, and helped him get settled on the sofa. Zayn was going to have a horrible sleep, the sofa was inches too short for him to be able to lie down comfortably, but he didn’t want to invite Zayn into his bed.

He knew Harry would be upset about it in the morning if he did.

So he changed into his sleeping bottoms and climbed into his cold bed, and twisted and turned with
thoughts of never seeing Harry again, until he finally drifted off. Only to vivid nightmares of a life in the city without Harry.

Maybe living in the jungle wouldn’t be so bad; not if he had Harry with him.

---

He woke when he felt hands pressed against his stomach, frowning before opening his eyes. All he could see was Harry; their noses were practically touching, that was how close Harry was. His lips were pursed, and there was a crease between his eyes that were staring straight back into Louis’.

“Is something wrong?” Louis asked, voice croaky.

He made to sit up, but Harry pressed him back down and rolled him from his side onto his back and climbed on top.

“I don’t want to not see you ever.” Harry whispered into Louis’ neck. “I can’t sleep not with you. I tried and tried for long times. Hours maybe. Is that bad?”

“No, it’s not bad. I don’t think.”

“But you could sleep without me. Why?”

Louis swallowed, and could feel his throat move against Harry’s cheek. Harry was tucked in against his chest, lying flat over Louis so his entire body was covering his, only one leg and an arm hanging off. “It took me a long time too, but eventually I did. I’m just exhausted I guess.”

“I can’t stop my thinking. I keep thinking of home and my family. I miss them lots and lots and I’m hurting. But if I go home I will feel that for you. And for Zayn too, I’ll miss him. I don’t like it here but I don’t want to leave. Maybe after I see my human parents I will.”

“Maybe.” Then Harry’s thigh fell between Louis’, and he shuffled until Louis’ cock was pressed against his hip. It was a terrible time for it to be stirring to life, but Harry was completely naked and his chest was sweaty and sticking to Louis’ bare skin. “Umm. Harry? Do you think you could get off me a bit? You’re heavy.”

“No. I like it. Want to fuck?”

“Harry!” Louis scolded, despite the fact that he very much did. Harry’s blatant honesty never ceased to amaze him.

“But I want to.” He whined, rolling his hips and showing Louis just how desperate he was.

“Not now, love, okay? We need to sleep. Tomorrow’s going to be – tough.”

“Fine.” Harry rolled off of him and dropped his head onto his pillow. “What if when we wake up, then can we?”

“If you’re still in the mood, sure.”

“I will be.” Harry said confidently. “Can you hug me please?”

That made Louis grin. “Course I can.”
Harry rolled onto his side, and Louis cuddled up against his back. He threw an arm over Harry’s side and Harry pulled his hand against his chest and laced their fingers together. “Good night, Lou. I do love you.”

“You – okay. Good night.”

---

Harry had been right. He was very much still in the mood when they woke.

Louis had been asleep up until he felt Harry’s hips rolling against his, bare arse pushing back against Louis’ cock.

“Harry.” Louis groaned, and Harry rolled over so they were facing and took their cocks in his hands.

He only very slowly stroked them, driving Louis crazy with his gentle teasing, as he asked “You going to fuck me? Please? We have the things now, lube what we didn’t have in the shower. Come on!”

“For fuck’s sake, Harry!” Louis laughed, and rolled his hips so he could control the pace of Harry’s slow hands a bit. “Do you ever not want it?”

Then Harry pulled his hand off Louis’ cock and smirked. “That mean you don’t want it? Okay, I just do it all for myself.”

“I didn’t say that!” Louis rushed out. “I never said I don’t want to fuck you!”

“That mean you will?”

“Yeah. Fuck, yeah, it does. Go get the stuff though.”

Harry let out a few excitable ooos as he rustled through the draws beside their bed, grunting when he couldn’t find anything and rushing to the ones at Louis’ side.

He whooped when he found the lube and jumped on top of Louis, making his breath coming out in an audible whoosh. “Come on! Up up!”

“Always so keen.” Louis grinned, taking the bottle from Harry’s hand.

Harry flopped down onto his stomach on the bed and arched his back so his arse was up in the air. As if he was presenting himself for Louis. “Put the fingers in there.” He instructed, and Louis grinned wide.

He spilled some lube onto his fingers, slicking them up before circling Harry’s rim with the pad of his index finger. “This is going to be different to the shower, yeah?”

“Yes.” Harry grunted into the pillow. “Less wet. Now go on!”

Louis pushed his finger inside, and stopped when his knuckle caught at Harry’s rim. “Okay?”

“You haven’t even done anything!” Harry groaned, turning his head to the side so his cheek pressed against the pillow instead of his nose. “Put it in more!”

So Louis did until his entire finger was inside Harry, then pulled it out and pushed in, repeating the movement until Harry groaned for more.
“I’m gonna – I’ll put another finger in now, okay?”

“Yes, it okay.” Harry growled, pushing his arse against Louis further. “Why you being so slow? Stop it and be normal.”

“I just – you want this, right? I’m not – you don’t feel coerced?”

Harry pushed himself up onto his elbows and grunted “What in fuck is that? Shut up and fuck me. I want it a lot.”

“But why?”

“Because I like how it feels and I want it! I know you don’t use me, I know we want it the same. Do you not want to fuck me?”

“Of course I do!”

“Good, because so I do. Put more fingers in me now.”

So Louis slid another finger into him beside the first and fucked Harry with them.

“Faster.” Harry demanded, so he did.

“You’re really not afraid of telling me what you want are you?” Louis laughed, scissoring his fingers as he spoke.

“No, but you afraid to do it what I want.”

That had Louis pausing. “What’s that meant to mean?”

“I mean I want it harder and faster your fingers inside me but you won’t. You a big scaredy.” He teased, and Louis knew exactly what Harry was doing but his words still got to him.

“Am not.” Louis grumbled, and scissored his fingers as wide as they possibly could go.

Harry groaned at the sensation, so Louis did it again, and slid in a third finger.

But they weren’t slippery enough, so he pulled the three out to coat them in more lube, and just as Harry was grunting for more Louis slid the three fingers in together.

“Oh!” Harry cried, and full-body-shivered. “That good. Do that again. I like the – the pull.”

“The stretch?” Louis asked as he pulled his fingers out and rammed them in again.

“Yes. That is what I like.”

“Want me to keep this up until you come or do you want my cock?”

“Cock!” Harry gasped out as Louis’ fingers entered him. “I want your cock!”

“Desperate, aren’t you?” Louis grinned, and Harry shamelessly nodded.

It made it so much better, Harry’s shamelessness. He asked for whatever he wanted, demanded it even, and Louis loved to give it to him. It was amazing knowing exactly what he could do to please him.

So he pulled out his fingers and slicked up his cock and nudged at Harry’s rim with the tip.
He heard Harry suck in a breath, watched how Harry fist ed the bedsheet and felt Harry’s arse press back into his cock until his tip breached him.

Then Louis rocked his hips all the way forward until only a mere inch of himself was visible. He dropped his chin against his chest and Harry clenched around him and groaned out *Fuck*.

“Oh Lou, Lou it’s so *good*. Move. Now! Come on, Lou, *move.*”

Louis could only roll his hips minutely with how hard Harry’s arse was gripping him. He pulled out slowly, and his arse just sucked him right back in, refusing to let go.

“Harry, you gotta relax a bit. You’re too –” Harry clenched around him harder, and Louis gasped out a “Tight!”

“No. You fuck me now.” Harry sulked. “In-out-in is how you do it.”


Harry’s grip on his cock lessened slightly, so Louis pulled back until only the head was inside, and pushed in quick and hard like how he knew Harry liked.

And before Harry’s arse could get another vice-like grip on him, he repeated it. “Out-in, was it?” Louis huffed, and Harry just moaned nonsense.


His hands found Harry’s hips, using them as leverage to fuck into him quicker and, as per Harry’s desperate request, harder.

Louis pressed his chest against Harry’s back, nipples sliding against his sweaty skin. With one of his hands he reached around to wrap lightly around Harry’s cock, making a loose ring with his fingers for him to fuck into.

Harry’s arse clenched around him at the first touch, and Louis jolted up, and suddenly Harry was shouting “There! It there, Lou, right there. Fuck there. That is the goodest. The very goodest. Nothing more good.”

“Christ, Harry. My back is fucking killing me at this angle.”

“Don’t care!” Harry groaned. “Fuck me there lots and lots and hards.”

Louis groaned with the effort, but kept his legs at the awkward angle they’d fallen into, and his back arched in that incredibly painful way so he could hit at Harry’s prostate on every thrust.

And it was killing him, but the way Harry was near-sobbing and fucking back onto his cock was incredible. He was barely doing anything any more; was just enjoying the way Harry used him from below.

He didn’t know how it crept up on him, but pleasure hit him white-hot and he came inside Harry, hips stilling and eyes clenching shut, cheek smushed against Harry’s back as his orgasm racked through his body. And all the while as it was happening, Harry was continuously rocking back against him, moaning his *ohs*, gasping out breaths, seeking his own release.

Louis felt it in his hand when Harry came, warm and smooth like syrup. Considering the amount of
fruit Harry ate, it was probably just as sweet.

He licked some off his hand to test his theory, but wasn’t exactly disappointed when he found that Harry didn’t taste like pure sugar.

Harry’s legs suddenly gave out beneath him, and he collapsed onto the bed, Louis crashing down on top of him.

“Holy shit, you’re exhausting. Next time you want to bottom you should just ride me.”

“What that?” Harry asked, voice muffled by the pillow. “Did you do it before on someone not me?”

“What?”

“Did you fuck other people?”

Louis blanked for a second, because he could honestly say that he’d never been asked during post-sex talk of his ex-partners. “Don’t ask that now.”

But Harry rolled over and sat up, frown etched onto his face. “Does that mean you did?”

“Harry.” Louis groaned. “Not now.”

“You did!” Harry growled, and climbed from the bed. “Why?”

“I didn’t know you, did I? You can’t be mad at me for what I did with other people before you!”

“People? There was lots?”

“Not – I don’t know how many, okay? I didn’t exactly count! Come on, Harry, climb back into bed.”

“I don’t want to.”

“Fine, don’t, just don’t be mad.”

“I can’t help it.” Harry shrugged, lips pouting. “I trying not to but I can’t. I don’t like it.”

Louis wiped his wet fingers onto the bed sheet and muttered “All right. Be mad. I’m going to have a shower.”

He stormed past Harry on weak legs, banging the door shut after him.

When he got out, Harry was sitting at the table with Zayn, eating beans on toast.

“Morning.” Louis grunted, and Zayn nodded his head and took a sip of coffee. “Shit sleep?”

“Yeah. Could have told me Harry got in with you, I would’ve took the guest bed. Might have got more than a few hours.”

“You look horrible.”

“Cheers.”

Louis sat at Zayn’s side, and allowed himself a quick glance at Harry.
Who was staring hard at him, silently glaring.

“I thought you two sorted things out. You two weren’t exactly quiet.” Zayn said with a raised eyebrow, and Louis sent him a look to shut him up.

“Louis fucked more people than me! I don’t like it.”

“Oh.” Zayn blinked, and took another gulp of coffee to avoid saying anything else.

But he wasn’t getting it out of it that easily, because Harry asked him “Did he ever fuck you?”

Zayn snorted, and coffee spilt out from his pursed lips. “What?” he squawked when his mouth was finally empty. “No!”

“Good.” Harry nodded. “How about Liam or Niall or stupid movie man?”

“No, Harry, Jesus Christ!” Louis interrupted.

“Who is Jesus Christ? Did you fu-“

“I think I’m gonna head off. This is just – weird.” Zayn excused himself from the table, and collected his things from the sofa. Louis made to stand up to see him out but Zayn waved a hand at him and told him to sit back down. “I know the way out myself, mate. I’ll talk to you later.”

Louis nodded, and Harry waved, and when Zayn was gone both boys looked back at each other.

“I don’t like it you with other people.” Harry croaked. “You said it bad, yes? For me to be jealous? But I trying really hard not to and still am.”

“That’s okay. You’re allowed to be. Just – don’t be mad at me for that. I don’t even see those people anymore, none of them were serious things. And yeah, you aren’t the only one I’ve ever had sex with, but you’re the best I’ve had.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. You’re – enthusiastic, is a way to put it. It’s always different between us. Always good fun. And I care about you a lot which makes it even better.”

Harry sighed and said “Okay.”

“So we’re okay now?”

“Maybe. You just can’t have any fucks with people not me, okay?”

Louis laughed at that and said “Yeah, ‘course. Same goes to you.”

“I don’t want to with anyone else.” He snorted. “Only Lou.”

Louis grinned back at Harry until he heard his phone ring from his bedroom, then he rushed to get it and answered it before he could see who it was that was ringing.

“Louis?” it was Zayn. “You might not want to leave the room today. There’s fucking paps everywhere. News reporters, even. Call your manager, yeah? Get her to sort this out.”

As soon as Zayn hung up, Louis was calling her.
“Hey.” She greeted him. “We need to talk. I’m going to come over to you, don’t answer the door to anyone else. Harry’s already on the news. I was hoping word wouldn’t spread so quickly, but that photographer is being a right prick.”

“Fuck. Okay, come over. Zayn said they’re in a frenzy outside. How much do people know?”

“Google yourself. I’m leaving now.”

Then she hung up without saying goodbye, leaving Louis blinking at his phone.

“For fuck’s sake.” Louis groaned, and fell back onto his bed.

Then he rolled off and looked out his window at the ground beneath. There was a huge crowd gathered out the front of the hotel, and Louis could see the cameras a lot of them were holding.

He heard the bedroom door open and turned to see Harry wander in. “What going on?”

“Not sure, but there’s something out about you.” Louis replied. Which reminded him; he pulled out his phone and typed Louis Tomlinson into google news.

All the top articles were about last night. All of them called Harry his Jungle Boy. None of them mentioned the actor.

Which was interesting; he thought they’d definitely use that connection in their story. Maybe the actor paid them all off to keep him out of it.

“People have started talking. They don’t know anything about you, just that we found you in the jungle during the photoshoot. That prick of a photographer has given someone an interview already.”

“Oh.” Harry nodded. “Should we have interview so they know things to find human parents? I think I should tell them.”

“Don’t talk to anyone until you’ve spoken to me first, yeah?” Louis begged. “They’re vultures. We need to find a good respectable reporter to do the story we want to put out. You can’t just tell anyone and everyone because you can’t trust how they’ll write it. Got it?”

“Yes, okay.”

“I think we should be quick about it. Tell them the facts before they can start making up their own. We need to go on the news or something, on a live broadcast so they can’t mess around with what we say. Could you do that? Go on the telly? Tonight, maybe?”

“I – “

“Maybe that’s too soon. You might not be ready then. We should talk to those researchers first, they’ll know what to do. Should I call them? I think I’ll call them.”

“Lou.” Louis had his phone in his hands, contacts list opened, when Harry had said it. So he looked up and raised an eyebrow, and Harry added “You need to settle. Be calm. We talk to your manager and she tell us what we do. It will be fine. You scared. Why?”

Louis bit into his lip, unsure of what he could and should say. “Because everything’s going to be different but I don’t know exactly how. I don’t know what’s going to change and what things will be like but I just know that they are going to and it’s shit. I liked things best when we stayed in my
flat and I taught you how to eat and dress yourself and brush your teeth. I don’t – I still don’t want to share you.”

“But you said that’s bad to think that. I don’t like sharing you but I do. I think it time I am shared. It time we find my parents and then you ask the questions about me and how they lost me and then we will know and the psychologists know and then they done with me. And you finish your contract with movie man and he go away to America and then it just be us again. And Zayn and Niall and Liam, too. It will be back to like then. That is what going to happen, okay? But the bad things need to happen first.”

“You’re right. Fuck, you’re right. That’s what we need to do. We need to wait out the storm.”

Louis nodded, and Harry smiled at him.

“I like storms.”

“You’re not going to like this one.”

Chapter End Notes

I know I'm awful with updates, but life has become way more busy!!! The next update wont be for another month at least because I'm going back to australia for christmas and won't be writing when I'm there. Sorry!

As always hoped you liked the update and leave me comments and things pleeeeeeese xoxoxoxo
They’d been lazing on the sofa, legs tangled together as they watched Friends reruns, when Louis’ phone rang.

He eyed it speculatively, well aware that it could be some reporter trying to get on to him, before huffing and rolling off the cushion to answer it.

It was his manager, telling him she was in the foyer struggling to get past security.

So he called the hotel concierge, told them to let her up, and soon enough there was a knock at the door.

As soon as Louis opened it, his manager was pushing past him into the room and rushing to Harry.

“I am so so sorry for this. I didn’t mean for any of this to happen.”

Harry crunched up his face and asked “Why you sorry? You not put the pictures out.”

“No, but I allowed it to happen.”

“You told him it okay?”

“No.” She shook her head, pushing her hair back behind her ears when it fell into her face. She was flustered, red spreading from her chest up to her neck. “But I made a mistake that meant he could publish the pictures without any kind of legal ramifications.”

Harry tilted his head to the side. “What?”

“I fucked up!” she cried. “Just forgive me, please?”

“But I don’t know what for! I don’t understand!”

“Look.” Louis interrupted before either of them could explode. He sat back on the sofa, patting the space between him and Harry for his manager to fill. “Let’s just move on and figure this out. What are we going to do?”

She gave him a look, obviously suspicious of Louis’ composure. Which was no surprise, because usually it was her doing the calming as he ranted and raved. She still sat down though, took her three deep breaths, and looked to Harry. “We’re going to need to school you on acceptable public behaviour. We’re going to have to release something to the public; feed them enough to satisfy their hunger.”

“The vultures.” Harry nodded.

“Exactly.” Louis grinned, reaching over his manager to tap Harry’s knee. “We need to give them
something to pick at while we figure shit out. Give us some time, yeah?”

“Yep.” She nodded. “But we need to do that on our terms.”

“How are we going to do that?”

“We’re going to make our own video, just the two of you. You’re going to tell them who Harry is, how you found him, why he’s here and what the nature of your relationship is. We’re not going to make this a game for them. They expect us to milk this for publicity, but we aren’t. Harry’s not my client, he’s not my business, so we’re going to cut straight to the point. You’re looking for your parents and would appreciate any information on them.”

“Right.” Louis nodded, peering behind his manager to gage Harry’s reaction. His lips were tightly pursed, eyebrows pinched together. “Maybe the reporters will be helpful and look for your parents rather than watch the two of us and what we do.”

It was silent for a moment, before Harry leant forward with elbows on his thighs. “So they not follow us? And we be still Harry and Louis?” He waited until Louis nodded before he asked “Then what?”

“Let’s not think about that just yet. Let’s just deal with the problem we’ve got waiting downstairs.”

---

The video was released the following morning, Louis begging for it to come out earlier because of the growing restlessness of the crowd outside.

Someone had discovered his room number and hadn’t stopped calling, and he’d had to give the hotel manager a list of people that were allowed to come up because people kept barraging the concierge with claims from reporters that they knew Louis.

So he’d added Niall and Liam and Zayn to the list that had only held his manager’s name before then, and invited his friends over for beer and pizza that evening to distract him from the wait he had before their press release.

At least it was something he and Harry didn’t have to do live.

They’d had to do at least seven takes of the video because Harry would forget his line or Louis would look at or touch him in a way that his manager deemed too affectionate. It was hard, though, to stand next to a distressed Harry and not be able to comfort him.

But they got through it, said exactly what needed to be said in a way that was suitable for the public. He trusted his manager but he was still worried about what she would do to the video before releasing it.

He knew she had his best interests at heart, but he wasn’t completely sure she had Harry’s too. She was concerned about how Harry’s story would affect Louis’ public image; they’d spoken about that on Louis’ first day back at work after the jungle shoot. She’d said she needed to be sure of Harry’s behaviour before sharing his existence with the world simply because it might reflect on Louis. What was stopping her from spinning this whole thing around to make Louis look good? Why would she pass up the opportunity to make her client look like some kind of hero?

He had to trust that she wouldn’t, she’d never screwed him over before, but it was hard to do that when the industry had done him in so many times.
Harry had been quiet since the manager left. He’d turned on the telly after shutting the door behind her, and was content on the sofa with a packet of crisps.

Louis had sat beside him for hardly any time at all before he got up to busy himself with lunch, eager for a distraction.

After he made the sandwiches and brought Harry’s to him, he picked up his phone to check his Twitter.

And turned his phone straight off after scrolling for a minute because he’d gained an incredible amount of followers and everyone tweeting him were asking intrusive questions about Harry and the star.

He needed one second of complete normalcy, which was why he invited Zayn’s friends over.

They were the most normal guys he’d ever met. They went to University and had proper jobs and were probably the only people he could trust. They’d kept quiet about Harry long enough, there was no reason they’d betray him now.

Liam had work so couldn’t be over until after six, but Niall’s lecture finished at two and he said he’d come over straight after that. Zayn had too much Uni work to do so couldn’t commit to anything, but said he’d try his hardest to come over later.

Which meant Louis only had a couple of hours more to stew in Harry’s silence and be berated by his own thoughts.

There was one that was particularly troublesome, something he’d never considered before, and once it popped up became incredibly niggling.

He wasn’t talking to Harry.

He wasn’t sharing his worries with Harry because he wouldn’t understand them.

How could he have a relationship with someone that he couldn’t talk to?

But then, had he even given Harry a chance to understand? That’s what Zayn kept saying, that Louis was underappreciating him. He wasn’t giving Harry a chance to show everything he was capable of.

He looked over at the man sitting on the sofa, whose lips were set in a small smile at whatever was going on in the program he was watching. Some episode of Little Britain, it looked like. Louis didn’t even know they still aired those.

“Babe?”

Harry looked up and over at him, smile growing wider at the sound of Louis’ voice but suddenly dropping. “What it? What is it wrong?”

“Nothing. Just – what are you thinking?”

“Something is wrong. What it?”

“I’m just worried.”

“About?”
“Everything.”

“About the vultures? About the video? About Harry? What one?”

“All of it. Mainly about you, I suppose.”

“What about me?”

“What’s going to happen to you because of me. What I’ve done to you.”

Harry sighed, and turned off the telly. The complete silence of the room was far more unnerving than it should have been. “You not done anything to me but good things. You take me with you and show me everything. Teach me what I am. I always knew I was different but didn’t know what. See that please? That you – fixed something. In my head. Made me know what I am. It big for me to see that. Very big. I don’t like that I have to also learn of bad people but I have to so I can know the good too. I am a person, not a monkey. Okay?”

“Okay.” Louis nodded. “I’m glad. That’s good. But – couldn’t anyone have done that for you? If someone else had found you and brought you back, don’t you think all this would be far less of a hassle? You wouldn’t be bothered by paparazzi for starters, just reporters. Would have been easier on you for sure.”

“Lou, don’t be silly. What if someone else found me that were worse? They could do mean things on me and teach me bad things to do. I am lucky you found me. I love you. I know I hard for you sometimes when I don’t know things people should know. You good person to care so much for me, even when you don’t know me for long. Stop being angry at yourself. Makes me sad.”

Then Harry pat his lap and Louis hurried to climb onto it, and snuggled against Harry’s chest because his skin was thrumming with the need to be as close to him as possible. “Thanks.” He murmured against his neck, and sighed into it when Harry’s palms flattened against his lower back. “I should have known you’d make me feel better. You do in every other way. Make me a better person too, probably.”

“No,” Harry laughed. “You make me good person. If not for you, I’d just be good ape.”

Louis grinned, and pressed his smiling lips to Harry’s jaw.

Which moved when the man said “Can I watch telly now?”

That had Louis laughing from low in his belly. “Yes you knob.”

“Hey!” Harry grinned, and pushed Louis off his lap so that he fell onto the sofa cushion beside him. He grabbed the remote from the armrest and turned it on.

“You watch a lot of telly. It’s not good for you.”

“Is so good for me. Teach me words and context, psychologists says.”

“Huh. Never thought of it like that. Little Britain’s probably not the best program to learn off, though.”

“I don’t know what they is saying a lots but it make me laugh.” Harry shrugged. “And then after is cooking show that I like. Come Dine With Me. It go for hours.” Then he added, as if it was an excuse, “They talk normal so I learn. You watch with me?”
“Sure, love. Sounds nice.”

Louis put his legs over Harry’s lap, and grabbed a cushion to stick behind his head, settling in for some telly.

Harry pinched his toe and grinned, and Louis realised it had been the first time in days he’d seen both dimples on his cheeks.

“You’re happy, yeah?”

“Right now, very.” Harry nodded. “I like having time with you. I want all my time to be with you. I would give it all to you if you’d take it from me.”

“I wish I could.” Louis sighed. “But for now we’ve got this.”

---

Niall came straight from Uni as promised, the foyer calling to warn Louis he was on his way up.

Harry squawked when he heard, and hurried to wait by the front door until he arrived.

Niall didn’t have to knock; Harry heard his footsteps and pulled him in before he could even register the door had opened for him.

“Good to see you too.” Niall laughed as Harry squeezed him into his chest.

“Been ages, feels like.” Harry grunted. “Missed you lots.”

“Hey,” Louis called from the sofa, arm thrown over the back. “Bring beer?”

“Yes! You owe me ten quid though.”

“Fuck off.” Louis grinned.

“What the fuck are you watching?” Niall asked, lifting Louis’ legs so he could sit down next to him. Harry followed him like a lap dog, smile still plastered over his face as he sat.

“Come Dine With Me! It the last one today, we find out the winner soon.” Harry explained. “We want the Northern lady to win, don’t we Lou?”

“Of course. The others are absolute twats.”

“And she got kids.” Harry added.

Niall shook his head, grinning all the while. “What the fuck have I just walked into? You gonna crack out the knitting next? Add some shit to your scrapbooks?”

Harry looked confused for a few seconds, but smiled when Louis laughed.

“I’m gonna grab us a drink.” Niall said, not even staying seated for a minute before he was jumping up. “I bought crisps, too. Doritos or Walkers?”

“Doritos.” Louis said, and when Niall opened his mouth up to say something he shushed him because the adverts were over and the show was back on.

Three months ago he’d laugh if someone asked him to watch two and a half hours of a cooking
program, but here he was. And actually enjoying it.

So he took the beer from Niall and made him sit in silence until the program had finished, sour that their favourite hadn’t won.

“Bullshit.” He snorted, and Harry grunted his agreement.

Then Niall asked “You gonna tell me what’s going on downstairs?”

“Oh.” Louis frowned. “I figured you’d have heard from the news or something.”

“Well I know about the photographer thing, Zayn told me that, but it hasn’t reached the papers. Saw a picture of the two of you on the front page of some rag though.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, you were just walking together in the picture. Think it was from outside the gallery. Headline was something about you cheating on that prat with Harry.”

Louis rolled his eyes. “That’s the answer to your question right there.”

“All those people are down there because they think you two are shagging? People don’t care that much about gossipy shit.”

Harry piped up then with “They know I from the jungle, too. Photographer, remember? Make them want to know about me.”

“Enough to camp outside the hotel?” Niall scoffed. “People are fucking insane.”

It was an incredible thing to hear, really; to know that he wasn’t the only one in the world thinking it. His manager had made out that it was completely normal, and maybe it was for proper famous people, but he wasn’t one. Not yet, anyway. Which made him wonder: was being an actor really worth giving up his privacy for?

He had dreamed about doing it professionally since he was a boy, but originally he’d only wanted to be one for the perks. He’d seen an article in a mag about some celebrity’s new house and wanted what they had; imagined buying his Mum and sisters a house with more than two bedrooms, with no leaky roof or broken showerhead or cheap carpet that made the youngest’s asthma flare up. He’d since done that from the money he made modelling, and he hadn’t even bloody done any acting since he was eighteen, so why did he still want that? He didn’t even know if he still enjoyed it.


“That’s a pretty fair assumption.” Niall laughed. “So are you two stuck in here for a while?”

“Think so. We’re leaking something about Harry tomorrow that they can pick at, but I don’t know how long it will be before they’re drilling us for more.”

“What are you gonna tell them?”

“That Harry is from the jungle and wants to find his parents.”

Niall gave a quick nod. “Suppose that’s smart. Maybe they’ll find them for you.”

“Wouldn’t put it past them.”
They spoke until Liam came, coming up with a million and one possibilities for who Harry’s parents could be, the ideas getting wilder the more they drank.

Liam’s presence supplied a few moments of sobriety, asking similar questions to Niall and suggesting they brainstorm ways to deal with the public, but Louis had too many drinks in him to want to do that. He knew it was what they needed, but it wasn’t what he invited his mates over for. He wanted to let loose for the evening, enjoy the little bit of freedom he had left.

Liam went silent after Louis told him that, remaining that way for a few moments before he broke it with “Maybe his parents run a circus.”

Niall and Louis cracked up and Harry asked “What that?”

Which prompted Niall explaining with Youtube, and Louis taking his phone to show Harry his favourite clips.

Eventually they put on Fifa, and Zayn showed up sometime during a heated match between Niall and Louis. Harry had been cheering Louis on with shouts of kick it! and get the ball! while Liam grabbed beers and topped up the crisp bowl.

Zayn was exhausted, yet took an offered beer and sat down on the floor by Niall, leaning back against the bit of sofa between Harry’s legs.

“Anything new?” he asked when the game was over.

“I just defeated the reigning champion.” Niall laughed, and Louis pushed at the back of his head.

“Only ‘cause I was being fucking easy on you.”

“As if.”


Louis frowned. “Not really. Me and Haz made a video that we’re releasing tomorrow morning. Kinda it.”

“What’s on it?”

“Just us explaining how I met Harry.”

“And me asking for where my parents are.” Harry added. “Now we don’t have to go on telly to say it, which mean I won’t mess up.” Then, after a pause, Harry said “I would like to go on telly. Can I on Come Dine With Me?”

Liam scrunched up his face and Niall fell into a fit of laughter. Zayn said “How about we get you cooking a full meal all by yourself before you go on any kind of cooking shows? No point in going on otherwise.”

Harry pursed his lips, deep in thought, before nodding and asking “Can you show me how now? I’m hungry so it dinner time. We make dinner!”

“Come into the kitchen with me then, and we’ll have a look at what you’ve got. All depends on whether we have any ingredients to make dinner.”

“Don’t think we have much more than cheese and pasta and some microwave things from M&S.” Louis said. “Think you can rustle something up with them?”
Zayn rolled his eyes and said “Probably not,” then hopped off the sofa, trailed by Harry as he approached the kitchenette.

Niall jumped up not long after to go watch them, and that just left Liam and Louis together in the lounge.

“So –“ Liam said, and Louis quickly held up a hand.

“Don’t start.”

Which made him frown. “Start what?”

“Telling me what I should do.”

“I wasn’t going to.” Liam assured him, then waved a hand to the Xbox controller that was sitting on the armrest. “I was going to ask if we could play. Pass me it, will you?”

So Louis did, and set up a game for them while Liam examined the gadget in his hands, clearly trying to recall which button did what.

Halfway through the game, when Louis was fully relaxed because of how much he was winning by, Liam asked “How’s Harry coping with all this?”

Louis lost the ball to one of Liam’s players, and groaned as he chased after it again. “Fine. Better than me, it seems like.”

“Sorry.” Liam said after scoring a goal.

“It’s the bloody game, Li, you don’t need to apologise when you score.”

“I meant I’m sorry about this whole thing. Not fair you two have to go through it.”

Louis shrugged, going silent after kicking off.

But Liam broke it by asking “Have you put much thought into what you’re going to do if Harry does find his parents?”

Louis grunted, but managed to keep hold of the ball. When he scored, he turned to Liam and said “No. I’ve thought about Harry finding his parents, but not about what I’ll do. I don’t know what’s going to happen, so if anything does come out of the press release and we do hear from Harry’s parents, we’ll worry about it then.”

“Do you reckon people are going to lie and say they’re his parents when they aren’t?”

“I don’t know!” Louis snapped. “We’ll make them do a DNA test or something. Fuck, can you just stop? I don’t want to think about this stuff right now.”

“But you should be so you aren’t caught off guard. I know you don’t want to think about it or talk about it but you need to!”

“Just give me this one night to not think about it, please? Just give me one night to pretend none of this is happening. That is what I need right now, more than anything.”

“But is it what’s best for Harry? Is that what he needs?”

“I don’t know! I don’t fucking know what I’m doing, I don’t know what he needs, but right now
he’s happy with you lot so I reckon that’s what’s for the best. I’ve got every day from now on to work out what to do with Harry so just give me tonight. We can both afford one night to ignore all that shit going on outside, yeah?”

Liam bowed his head and grumbled “Yeah, sorry.”

“It’s fine. You’re just a helpful type, I get it. Problem solver and all that. I’ll come to you when I need help, yeah? Just really don’t want it right now.”

Liam nodded, top lip caught between his teeth, and without any kind of warning restarted the game up so that Louis had to come chasing after his players for the ball. It made him grin, that cheeky move, and grunt out a goodhearted “Twat!” so that Liam smiled too.

So when Harry returned to the lounge a few moments later, the two of them were back to normal, stirring each other up over the game.

“Who winning?” Harry asked, plopping down on the sofa, pressing himself right against Louis’ side and resting a hand on Louis’ thigh.

“Me, of course. Liam’s awful.”

“That good.”

Harry’s fingers were drumming on his leg, a constant reminder that he was there, so Louis asked “What went on in the kitchen?”

“We got no foods for cooking.” He sighed. “Have to order dinner from the room service, if okay?”

“Yeah. Getting a bit old, isn’t it, room service? I’m dying for a proper homecooked meal, or even something from another restaurant. I’d kill for my Mum’s lasagne.” Harry gasped at that, and Louis rolled his eyes. “It’s a saying, babe, I wouldn’t actually kill someone. Just means I really really want it.”

“Oh. What lasa-na?”

Louis paused for a moment so he could concentrate on getting the ball off of Liam’s player, and groaned when Liam scored. “It’s this thing with layers of pasta and tomato sauce and cheese. And other stuff, I don’t really know, but it’s amazing.”

“Will I get to see your Mum and have some?”

“Yeah, I guess.” Louis shrugged, and settled back into the sofa when the timer on the screen ran out and the game had finished. “Good game, huh, Liam?”

“Fuck off.” He laughed, then his face brightened and he was saying “You should go back to Donny for a bit! Hang out with your family, it’d be perfect!”

“Christ, Liam.” Louis groaned, because Harry was suddenly grinning wide and clapping his hands together in excitement.

“Yes! Louis, let’s! Where Donny? I want to go!”

“I – look, I don’t know if we can!”

Harry’s face fell. “Why not?”
“Well… Mum might be too busy, she hasn’t had the babies long so they’d still be a lot of work.”

“Babies?” Harry shrieked. “Human babies? I want to see babies!”

Louis turned to Liam. “Now look what you’ve bloody done.”

Liam had the nerve to look sheepish, and muttered something about finding Zayn before he picked himself up off the floor and hurried off.

“Love, I have to talk to Mum okay? I don’t want to put all this shit on her, yeah? Might be too much of a hassle to have us over now we got reporters hounding us.”

“Ask her!” Harry demanded, and grabbed Louis’ phone from where it was on the armrest to push into his hands. “Now!”

“We need to talk to my manager first, okay? I don’t even know what’s going on with the movie guy, either. There’s a lot of stuff to think about.”

Harry crossed his arms and growled “Fine.”

“I’m sorry. I’d love to take you back home, but I just don’t know if I can. I’ve still got this contract with the movie guy to sort out, but I can’t do that until after we release that video to the press.”

Harry opened his mouth to say something, but shut it again almost immediately. He gave a quick nod, brows still furrowed, then out of nowhere knocked the Xbox controller from Louis’ hands with a slap.

Before Louis could say anything, Harry got up and stormed out of the room, arms still folded tight against his chest.

He didn’t see Harry again until their pizza arrived, when the boy from the jungle came out of their bedroom to grab a plate and a beer.

The table was silent when Harry sat down with them.

Zayn cleared his throat, and Liam coughed, and Niall just stared blatantly at Harry until the boy said something.

“Sorry Lou.” When Louis looked up at him he added “for hitting your hand.”

“That’s okay. Anything else you want to say, or-?” Louis trailed off, and Harry shrugged his shoulders. “Like, maybe, why you did that?”

“I didn’t know how to put my feeling in words. I trying not to be like that but it hard when – I can’t say what in my head some time. Don’t know what words are to say.”

Louis nodded. “Okay. I get you. But – you can’t just strop off if something’s bothering you. If you tell me your thoughts, or describe how you feel, I can help you find the right words.”

“But I don’t want to talk some time! I want to use my language, not yours, but you don’t understand so it make me - “ and then he growled, teeth bared, and the noise was absolutely terrifying. Louis flinched, and Harry threw up a hand and said “See! It scare, so I don’t say!”

“Must be frustrating.” Zayn said, and Louis had forgotten his mates were even there.

Then Harry asked “Did it break?” and it took a second for Louis to register what he was even
talking about.

“Takes more than a slap to break a hand.” Louis laughed. But Harry’s expression was still serious, so he said “The controller is fine. Nothing broke.”

“Good.” He nodded, then looked down at his plate and muttered “I don’t like that we can’t just do what we want here. So many things to do in London but I want to do things we can’t.”

Louis reached his hand across the table to grab Harry’s. “I’ll try my hardest to get us to Doncaster, okay? I just can’t promise you anything yet.”

“Okay.” Harry nodded, and looked up to give Louis a small smile. “Thank you. And I am sorry for being silly.”

“Doesn’t seem fair, though, does it? That Harry’s got to do all the learning?” Niall asked, pushing his empty plate away from him. “I wouldn’t mind giving monkey speak a go.”

Liam leaned forward, looking genuinely fascinated. “You reckon you could teach us some?”

Harry pouted, furrowing his brows as he said “I don’t know. It not – like words. A sound can mean a whole human sentence. But not just say with sound, need to have all of you in right way. Like standing on toes and leaning on here – “ he brushed his knuckles with a finger “and making certain noise mean go away. It different. It hard to teach because I not taught like how you learn, with books and cards. I learn by seeing and watching what happens between gorillas. Human speaking much harder, there is lots more things to think about. I still don’t know how to teach though, because I not learning your speak by knowing what it means in mine. I have to think of that myself.”

Liam looked confused, but Zayn nodded. “I get you. Usually when we learn other languages, we go off our own language first. Like this in English means that in French or whatever. You’re just learning from pictures and that. Would be incredibly hard.”

“Yes.” Harry nodded. “Very. And you have many words for same thing. All very strange and hard.”

“So that’s a no to teaching us gorilla then?” Niall said with a grin. “Shame. I know how much the ladies love a multilingual man. Was hoping to seduce them with some monkey noises.”

Harry grinned at that while the others laughed, and offered to show them the noises used to attract mates.

It was probably the funniest thing Louis had heard, Niall copying Harry’s growls and grunts, leaping about the room with a bottle of diminishing beer in his hand.

Harry was having the time of his life jumping with him, smile wide and face flushed from laughter and alcohol.

The other three just watched, occasionally trying out the noises for themselves through grinning lips, but Louis was more than happy to sit on the sofa as Harry bounced over him, arms waving about and hair flying behind him.

He looked ecstatic, the happiest Louis had seen him since maybe even the jungle, and it was seemingly because he was finally being allowed to act like how he’d always been.

Louis found himself frowning at the thought, at how much of a shame it was that Harry couldn’t be
like this all the time; that being himself was something their society didn’t approve of.

But that’s how it just had to be if Harry wanted to live in it, he had to obey those unsaid rules on how to behave.

Harry had said it himself, though – he didn’t want to be in London. Maybe it really would be for the best if they got away for a weekend, just the two of them, to visit his family. Maybe if Harry saw how their life together could be then he’d want to stay.

---

His manager wasn’t so keen on the idea, especially after how hectic things became when the video was released.

They’d simply put it on YouTube, sharing a link through Louis’ twitter, and stayed indoors to wait through the aftermath.

He was surprised it went viral within a few hours, despite his manager warning him that it would probably happen.

“People will be fascinated with Harry.” She had said. “A man raised by gorillas, found in the jungle by a celebrity. It’s an incredible story.”

“I’m not even a celebrity.” Louis muttered. “Noone outside the UK knows who I am, anyway.”

“They do now.” She sing-songed, and at the drop of Louis’ face she added “We had this talk months ago, we knew this was going to happen. This is what you wanted.”

“Exactly! Want-ed. Past tense.”

“Just because you changed your mind, doesn’t mean the outcome was going to change with it.”

Her phone rang again, and just as she had every other time, she looked at the Caller ID. Though previously she’d just ignored them, this one she actually answered.

She walked into another room to talk, leaving Harry and Louis alone.

Harry was glued to Louis’ phone.

After Louis had showed Harry the video on YouTube, he’d become fascinated with the rising viewcount, so Louis taught him how to refresh the page and he’d been doing it nonstop ever since.

Louis knocked Harry’s knee with his own and asked “How is it doing?”

“Good!” he chirped. “So many people watching!”

“Good.” Louis repeated monotonously, and when Harry looked up at him with a frown he tried his best to fake a smile.

“What it wrong?”

“Dunno. Just feel sick about all this. Wish we could just – have each other, I guess. Kinda fucked with how many other people are involved.”

Harry nodded. “Did you ask about going to your Mum?”
Louis’ manager walked back into the room at that moment, just as Louis was about to reply, and she asked “What’s this about your Mum?”

“We want to see her.” Harry replied. “I like it want to go back to Louis’ Mum’s house please.”

Her face softened. “I don’t see how that’s possible. I was just on the phone to the actor’s manager, he’s called a meeting. They’re coming down now from his hotel room.”

“Fuck. What does he want?”

She frowned. “Not sure, exactly. His manager didn’t say.”

So they waited until the two men showed up at the room, Louis’ manager answering the door when they knocked because he and Harry refused to.

She welcomed them in politely, the star grinning wide when he saw Louis, making the model’s skin crawl.

“What do you want?” he growled through gritted teeth, and the star had the nerve to look shocked.

“To see you, of course! It’s been far too long.”

“It’s been, like, a day.”

“That’s too long in my books.” The star smiled with all his bright white teeth showing. He looked ridiculous. After silence, the man added “I just thought I’d drop down to see how you were.” Then his grin dropped. “And Harry, too, I suppose.”

“We’re fine.” Louis snapped. “Anything else?”

The man sighed, and waved to the sofa with eyebrows raised. Louis answered the silent may I? with a quick nod.

So the man sat, and Louis joined him. Harry plopped down beside Louis a second later, pressed against his side, a possessive hand on his thigh.

“So.” The actor started. “As I said, that photography exhibition was a disaster of a date, so doesn’t count as one of our agreed-upon public outings. We need to do something else, and quickly, because people are already beginning to assume you are with Harry. That just won’t do.”

“And what if I was to just call this whole thing off? Call off the contract?” Louis questioned, trying his hardest to keep any annoyance out of his voice.

“I thought you were going to say that.” The star grinned. “I would like to ask you this – how much would it take for you to keep this charade up for two more dates?”

“Like – money?”

“Yes. Or perhaps there is something I can do for Harry, to make things easier on him.”

Louis pursed his lips in thought. “There’s nothing you can do for us.”

“Wait!” Harry cried, and both Louis and the other man looked to him. Louis with surprise, the actor with a sly grin. “I want to find my parents.”

“Harry,” Louis groaned. “We don’t need him for that! We can do it ourselves!”
“Then – I want you to be happy, Lou. I want you to have what you want. I don’t want you to stop because of me. You want to do acting, yes? Be famous? I can’t get that for you. He can.”

“But I don’t know if I want that anymore!”

“But what if you do! I don’t want you mad for me one day because you stop this all just for me. I think you should finish it. But get more things for it.”

“What kind of things?” The actor asked, before Louis could object.

“Put Louis on TV. Give more money. Get security for us to live in his flat. Get us to his Mum’s house without people knowing where to find. Let us hide there for small times.”

Louis could only stare at Harry in silence, refusing to meet the star’s demanding gaze.

“Well?” the man asked. “Is this what you want? Because I can get it for you. Just two more dates, and I’ll get you all this.”

“I – is that what you want Haz? Really? Because if you’d rather I say no than I will.”

Harry nodded, expression stern. “I want it. I don’t want you ever angry at me for this. I don’t want you to change everything just for me. This what you wanted before me, you should just try so you can know if you don’t like it.”

“You’re worried that if I choose you over this then I’ll regret it.”

“Yes, because why only have me when you can have both? I will still be here if you say yes. It only for two times. Say yes, I want you to.”

“Well?” the star prompted again, and Louis finally looked to him.

“Tell me what our dates will be first.”

“Fine. The first will just be another dinner, and the second will be an awards ceremony.”

Louis thought for a moment, studying Harry’s expression to see if he was serious. If that’s what he really wanted. Harry’s face was still set, brows furrowed and lips a hard line, eyes unwavering when Louis met them with his own. “You sure?” he asked, and Harry simply nodded. Then Louis looked back to the actor and sighed “Fine. But one more arsehole remark about Harry and I’m out.”

The man was grinning from ear to ear as he pushed himself up from the sofa. He held out his hand for Louis to shake, and then offered it to Harry.

“Why Lou?” Harry asked the actor. “Why, when it so hard for you because of me, is you still trying for him? He will not love you, ever, so why?”

The man just shrugged, dropping his hand, realising Harry had no plans to shake it. “I started this because he was pretty, and I could see the potential in him. You are right, you do make things incredibly difficult, but if I end this now then they will know that the dates between me and Louis were faked. I can’t have the public thinking that, so I plan on seeing this all through.”

“That stupid.” Harry huffed. “Make no senses.”

“Sense.” The star corrected, arrogant little smile playing on his lips. “It does make plenty of sense, you just don’t have the – intelligence, I suppose – to work it out.” And before Louis could say
something, the man was heading for the door, shouting his goodbye over his shoulder.

“Such a twat.” Louis near-shouted before the man could close the door behind him. “And you’re not stupid, I don’t get it either why he wants me so much.”

“I know why he wants you.” Harry said. “I just don’t know why he is trying to have you even when he knows you mine and I am yours.”

---

Louis had the dinner date with the star before they left for Doncaster.

The actor figured it would be best for them to be seen together after the news about Harry broke but before he disappeared for a few days.

They’d just gone out for dinner, like the star had promised, but it was nothing like the first time they went to the restaurant.

Paparazzi and reporters were lined up outside, the star’s bodyguards having to push them off because they were running up as soon as Louis stepped out of the car.

Questions were thrown at him, like “Is it true you are dating a wild man?”, “Where are you hiding Harry?”, “Why are you hiding him? Is he dangerous?”. The last one almost had him stopping to give them a piece of his mind, but the actor was there with a hand on his lower back, pushing him along.

He knew one of the photographers had to have snapped his sour expression though, and he was dreading what he would read in the rags the next day.

The dinner itself was spare of conversation, Louis refusing the wine he was offered because he remembered what it did to him last time: made him giggly and red and too bloody nice to the guy in front of him. He simply ate, replied to the actor’s questions with as few words as possible, and tried his hardest to look like he wouldn’t rather be anywhere else.

The other patrons were watching them like hawks, desperate to pick up something of interest so that they could be quoted as a source or witness in an article.

There was a particular group of people Louis was trying to keep an eye on, a table with two couples seated at it. They were whispering excitedly between each other, not even attempting to be secretive about how they were watching them.

It wasn’t until dessert was being served that someone from the group summoned up the courage to approach their table.

Louis had a spoon in his mouth, glaring as the stranger said “Excuse me, can I bother you for a moment?”

“No.” he grumbled, though the star’s response was much louder.

“You wouldn’t be a bother at all. What can we do for you?”

The man smiled, and pulled out his phone from his pocket as he asked “Would you mind if I take a picture of you with my wife and friends? Both of you. We are just such big fans of your work.”

“Really, sir?” Louis interrupted. “Which of my works is your favourite? The underwear
advertisements I did in my early years, perhaps?”

The man’s jaw dropped, and the actor laughed his horribly fake laugh. “Louis is quite the joker, you must excuse him. But I am very sorry, we would rather enjoy our meal together in peace.”

The stranger’s face fell. “But you’re finished eating.”

“We are.” The actor answered, far too nicely considering the behaviour of the other man. “But we would still like to spend some time together uninterrupted.”

“Oh. Well, I’ll leave you to it.” he said haughtily, and turned back to his table.

“The nerve of some people.” The actor muttered under his breath, and Louis glared at him.

He wanted to mock the actor and how slick he was behaving towards the stranger, but he kept up his mask of indifference and remained silent. He simply rolled his eyes and went back to eating his chocolate cake.

---

The star got what he wanted, articles printed in papers and magazines the next day about their *relationship*. There was also mentions of Harry in every one, journalists making assumptions about who he was and what he was doing with Louis.

Articles about Harry’s parents had also begun to surface, people coming forward to claim him as their son. But so far, all had been discounted.

The researchers Harry worked with were running DNA tests on anyone that asserted they were Harry’s parents, and the psychologists were looking into any information they were given by members of the public.

So far, it has all been fruitless. They were yet to receive anything helpful.

Louis’ manager gave them permission, then, to go to Doncaster for the following weekend.

The actor organised them a private car for the four hour drive there and back, and Louis was almost as excited about it as Harry was.

He hadn’t been home for over a year, he hadn’t even met his new siblings yet, and he was ecstatic.

But Harry – he was the definition of the word.

He couldn’t sit still in the car, he kept asking questions about babies. Louis’ Mum and sisters too – but mainly babies. He’d occasionally slip back into *ooo ooo*, and after an hour of Harry’s excitable chirping Louis was slightly worried for him.

So Louis put on some music, and watched as Harry slowly settled back into his seat, turning his head to look out the window. He would occasionally ask another question when it came to him, but he was no longer constantly spilling out words and gorilla noises.

When Louis announced that they were a few minutes away, though, Harry flew into a panic.

“What if she don’t like me? What if I scare them? I don’t sometimes know to stop my gorilla speaking, what if they don’t like it?”

“They’ll love you babe, don’t worry about it!”
“But the babies might be scare!”

“They won’t be scared, love, they’ll love you. I’m the one that should be worried, I haven’t even met them! My Mum must be so pissed about that.”

“No, Lou, she won’t be!” Harry assured him quickly, snapping out of his hysterical state surprisingly quickly. “Mums love, yes? No matter what? She will only be happy to see you.”

He said it with such conviction that Louis could only assume he’d heard that before. Someone had to have told him that very same thing, and it was heart-wrenching because up until then Louis had no inkling of how Harry was feeling about meeting his human parents.

Louis’ worries about seeing his own mother were forgotten, and he pushed open the car door, encouraging Harry to do the same with a pointed look and a nod.

With their bags on their backs and hands clasped together they approached Louis’ Mum’s front door.

And she opened it before they even knocked, pulling Louis into a hug with a teary “Took you long enough!” Then she threw an arm around Harry’s shoulder and tugged him close as well. “I can’t believe this. Louis bringing someone home. You must be very special, love.” Her voice cracked. “Well, obviously. I have been watching the news!”

She hurried them inside and into the kitchen, immediately making Louis a tea as she asked Harry “How do you like it, love?”

Harry’s eyes opened wide, and he blushed bright pink before he replied “I – I don’t know. I sorry. I don’t speak very good.”

Louis could see it on his Mum’s face how her heart broke. “Oh, don’t worry, love! No need to be embarrassed! I was just asking whether you liked your tea with milk or sugar, and how much?”

“I –” Harry looked to Louis and bit his lip. “I have how Lou does, please.”

“He doesn’t drink tea, Mum. He mainly just has water. Sometimes milk or juice if you have it.”

Her face brightened. “I have all of those! What will it be?”

“Water. Thank you.” Harry muttered.

“You’re welcome, love.”

As Louis’ Mum was grabbing a glass out of the cupboard, Harry said “You speak how Lou does. He call me love, too.”

“It’s a Northern thing.” She replied. “Almost everyone says it around here.”

“Oh. Like how Niall says things different, because he from Ireland? Same here?”

“Yeah, exactly.” Louis answered, saving his Mum from admitting that she didn’t know who Niall was. “People from different areas have different ways of speaking.”

“So… I not speak so strange, because I from different place.” Harry pondered, and Louis grinned. “Everyone speak a bit strange and different.”

“Exactly!” Louis said, feeling a little bubble of pride in his chest. “Don’t be ashamed of how you
speak. There’s nothing wrong with it.” Then Louis looked to his Mum and his smile brightened further.

She was looking at him with so much love his heart ached with it. Her eyes were watering as she choked out “You’ve grown so much, love. I can’t believe it’s really you standing here, and looking so happy and healthy.”

“Yeah.” Louis rubbed at the back of his neck, feeling it burn hot. “I was pretty – odd, when I came here last.”

“Odd!” she laughed. “You were a right little shit!” She turned to Harry with a watery smile. “He was rude and bratty when he was here last, a proper little prince! I was worried London had changed him permanently. You have no idea how happy I am to see the real Louis back. I’ll always be grateful that you found him again.”

Harry tilted his head, eyebrows furrowed. “I didn’t find him, though. He found me.”

Louis cleared his throat and grinned to the ground. “You found me, though, remember? When I was passed out on the floor of the jungle, you were the one who helped me find my way back. Guess it turns out in more ways than one, huh?”

---

It wasn’t until Louis had drunk his entire mug of tea that he asked about his siblings, and his Mum had said his sisters were at their father’s and the babies were about to be woken from their midday nap.

“They won’t sleep tonight otherwise.” She laughed, and added after seeing how Harry’s eyes brightened at their mention “You can hold them when they’re up.”

“I can?” Harry asked reverently. “I won’t scare? I promise I be quiet, but I don’t want for them to cry at me. I see it in the TV, I don’t like to hear it babies crying. Very sad.”

“They’re happy little things, love, you’ll be fine. I have to warn you, they do love to grab hair.”

Harry nodded sincerely. “That okay! Baby gorillas like hair too. Like to cling to fur, so when Harry hold they grab head hair.”

“Really?” Louis’ Mum asked with fascination. “That would just be lovely to see. I can imagine you had your arms full of little baby gorillas.”

Harry grinned. “Yes. I miss them a lot. Can I see your babies now?”

It made her laugh, his forwardness, and she got up from the sofa to fetch her children, throwing over her shoulder the question “Darling, Louis, can you help me?”

Harry’s face fell, but he said “I just wait in here” when Louis looked to him. “You go meet your family first.”

So Louis caught up with his mother and followed her into her bedroom. He spotted the cot in the corner, and approached it hesitantly.

“No need to be so careful, we are in here to wake them.”

“Then why are you whispering?” Louis asked, and she let out a loud laugh.
It was that which woke the babies, and Louis instinctively hurried over to hush them when one cried out.

There was one in a pink blanket, and one in a blue, and Louis couldn’t decide which one to hold first.

His Mum decided for him in the end, picking up the crying girl, leaving the silent little boy for Louis.

He was adorable, just blinking up at him, and Louis smiled as he reached down to huddle the baby to his chest.

“Come on,” Louis’ Mum said from behind him, patting the little’s girls back as she bounced her up and down. “Don’t want to leave Harry waiting.”

His Mum held back, letting Louis pass her on their way to the lounge.

As soon as Louis walked into the room, Harry was jumping off the sofa, huge grin splitting his face.

“I see!” He barked, and the boy in Louis’ arms immediately turned his head to look. When Harry spotted the little face, his dimples popped out onto his cheeks. “It so funny! Can I touch?”

“Course you can.” Louis’ mum assured him, and Harry approached tentatively, hands outstretched in front of him. It reminded Louis of when he himself had been in the jungle and was made to get close to a gorilla; how he’d stuck a hand out in front of him for the creature to smell as if it were a dog.

Though Harry didn’t stick his hand in the boy’s face, instead laying it over the top of the baby’s head. “It very small.” Harry remarked. “Soft. Smell nice.”

“Would you like to hold her?” Louis’ Mum offered, holding out the little girl for Harry to take.

So he moved towards them, and when he got close the little girl reached out for him, coming into his arms easily. Harry remained motionless as her eyes appraised him, still as a statue until her little hand came up to tangle itself in his hair and tug. “Ouch!” he cried, and the girl giggled and pulled again.

“I told you!” Louis’ Mum laughed. “They pinch, too.”

It was how they spent their first day in Doncaster, on the sofa or on the rug playing with the two babies as Louis’ Mum watched with an ever-present grin.

She served lasagne for dinner at Louis’ request, and Harry ate quickly so he could help spoon-feed the twins. It was beautiful to watch; his whole face would light up every time of the babies opened their mouths.

“How old they?” Harry asked, scooping another bit of pureed carrot from the bowl.

“Eight months.” She replied.

Louis flinched. He hadn’t realised it had been that long since he’d been home. The last time he was there his Mum had just announced her pregnancy.

“Where their dad?”
“He’s in Edinburgh for work until Monday. You might be able to meet him before you leave.”

“We’ve got to go Sunday afternoon at the latest, Mum.” Louis said, knowing it wasn’t going to be the last time she tried to stretch out their stay.

She scowled. “You’ll at least wait until the girls come home from their father’s, surely.”

“If they can be back before four, then yeah. Why aren’t they here, anyway? Figured they’d skip Dad’s just for one weekend to see me.”

“You know what they’re like.” His Mum rolled her eyes. “They’re mad at you for some such thing. Besides, they came to London to see you not long ago.”

“Six months is a pretty long time.” He argued, and his stomach rolled, waiting for the fourteen months is longer she was sure to spit out in retaliation.

“I’ll call them tomorrow, then.” She sighed, obviously too tired to fight. “You might have to convince them, love. “ Then she added with a sly grin “Just send them a picture of Harry, they’ll come running.”

“Mum.” Louis groaned, and Harry just tilted his head in confusion, obviously waiting for an explanation as to why his name was said.

When none was given, he went back to feeding the twins, pulling little faces every now and then to make them smile.

After the table was cleared and the dishes clean, Louis showed Harry his old bedroom where they would be sleeping. It was a guest room now, all of Louis’ old Football posters long gone from the walls, a floral-print duvet over the queen-bed rather than his navy one.

The first thing Louis did was walk over to the window to close the curtains, but he got caught looking at the sky. “I forgot about them.”

“What?” Harry asked, hurrying over to see for himself.

“Stars.” Louis muttered. “Hard to spot any where I am in London. The lights are too bright.”

“Oh. I didn’t notice that about London. I see stars all the time back in my home. Used for light at night, but you already gets that from the electics.”

“Electricity.” Louis corrected gently. He always felt like a twat doing it, but it was the only way Harry could learn how to speak. “I suppose we don’t need them so much, but they’re always nice to look at.”

Harry nodded, and put down his bag on the oak dresser, sticking his arms in the air to stretch his back.

“You sore, love?” Louis asked, unzipping his own duffel to find his trackies.

“Shoulders.” Harry grunted. “Started hurting in car.”

Louis plopped onto the bed and spread his legs. “Sit down here on the floor and I’ll give it a rub.” Harry did just that, pulling his shirt off first, and groaned as soon as Louis’ fingers were on him. “Nice.”
“So what do you think?” he asked, squeezing Harry’s shoulders. “Of here, and Mum?

“She very nice.” Harry tipped his head forward, eyes closed, resting his chin against his sternum. “Make yummy food. I like her. I like babies more.”

Louis laughed. “’course you do.”

“It strange, but.”

“What is?”

Harry looked up again, turning his head as far back as he could to look at Louis. “I miss my home more than ever, here. I miss my family in the jungle. In London, it felt like just us two family, with Zayn too. Here, you are with yours. Make me want mine.”

Louis swallowed thickly, and Harry faced forward again, jumping his shoulders up to remind Louis what he’d been doing. “You – you can be in this family, too, if you want. My little sisters and brother can be yours too, and my Mum. She’d like that if it made me happy. It would make me happy.”

Harry fell silent, and Louis didn’t push.

He’d thought it would help Harry see a future for himself here, see what they could one day live like together.

That being in the limelight of London wasn’t their only option.

Perhaps this had all been a mistake.

---

Harry was much quieter the following day, waking up much later than usual and politely refusing his breakfast.

He sat on the rug in the lounge with the twins while Louis and his Mum ate and shared concerned glances over the table.

“He misses home.” Louis whispered, and his Mum frowned.

“You’re going back tomorrow afternoon, it can’t be that bad for him here.”

“His jungle home.” Louis corrected her.

“Oh. Does he have plans to go back?”

Louis looked down to his plate. “I doubt it. None that I know about, anyway.”

“You can’t expect him to follow you around all his life. He needs to be where he’s happiest.”

“But he said he’s happiest with me.”

“And you think that’s right? That’s what’s best for him?”

“It’s not safe where he’s from.” Louis snapped.

His Mum went quiet, and frowned in thought for a moment. Then she sighed and said “I suppose
you are right. But you have to remember, he has survived for however many years out there. We might think it’s impossible because this is all we have ever known. What we consider necessities are luxuries to him.”

“Are you seriously suggesting I move to the middle of the Congo for him?”

“Not at all! I much prefer you alive, thankyou. I just think that – is it really for the best, you two together?” Before Louis could protest, she quickly added “I know he’s done incredible things for you, and you’ve done so much for him too. You’ve made a lot of sacrifices for him, I know that, but I just worry that this is all too much for him. Are you looking at the bigger picture? Can you see yourself with him in ten years?”

“Yes.”

“And how about during those ten years? Have you thought about the commitments you will have to make to get the two of you there together, and the sacrifices? I know what you’re like, love. You like to worry about problems when they show up rather than try to prevent them. You don’t like to plan, but you’re going to have to if you want this to work.”

Louis’ head ached with it all. He knew his Mum was right, she always was, but he didn’t want her to be. He didn’t want to have to think about all this, and what it meant, and how he had to change. He’d grown plenty in the last couple of months - didn’t that count for anything?

“Just think on it.” she said gently, laying a hand over his. “I know you’ve got a lot more on your plate at the moment, with this horrid American and all those reporters after Harry, but don’t forget about the future. Plan for it before it all comes crashing into the present.”

His Mum hadn’t pulled any more wise words on him for the rest of their stay, instead passing her car keys to Louis and suggesting he show Harry around town that afternoon.

Harry was sad to leave the twins, but excited to get out of the house.

It was the most freedom he’d had in a while.

Louis drove them to one of the old estates, and they hopped out of the car to roam the gardens.

Harry plopped down onto a patch of dry grass, falling back to lie down when Louis joined him.

He clenched his eyes shut to protect them from the bright sun, sunglasses not quite enough.

“So what do you think of this place? Mum brought us here all the time when we were kids. Don’t know why, it’s a bit boring.”

“I like it.” Harry chirped. “Very pretty. Whose house is that?”

“I dunno. Some old guy’s, probably. We can go look inside it, they’ve kept it looking old. They have these houses all over England, they’re called Heritage buildings. I remember this one is nearly one hundred and fifty years old. I’ve done the tour, like, a billion times.”

“So people come to look in the house?”

“Yeah, kind of get a feel for what it was like back in the day.”

“People care a lot about history here.”

Louis shrugged. “People just like to know where they’ve come from, I guess.”
Harry wordlessly nodded, then pushed himself up to be seated again. “I like it out here. Very pretty gardens, and sun feel nice. I want to see in the house though.”

So Louis gave him a tour of the place, and Harry didn’t look at all impressed. When Louis asked him why, he just said “More interested in people and alive things, and knowing what things are right now. This old things not very helpful for me.”

“Learning doesn’t always have to be useful, babe. Sometimes people are just interested in something and want to know more about it without needing to, you know?”

Harry nodded. “I think so.”

The explanation didn’t increase Harry’s interest in the place at all, so they made their stay inside short. They grabbed a to-go coffee from the little café that was set up on the bottom level, and drank it in the car.

Louis pointed out the football stadium where he had his first job, and told Harry a little bit about the team he supported. He pointed out where he went to school and the church they used to go to on Easter Sunday, and Harry looked fascinated despite having no idea what Louis was talking about.

They drove through McDonalds for a late lunch, and got home exhausted.

Harry looked completely drained, but still went straight to give the babies a hold before anything else.

Louis’ Mum was sat on the sofa, folding up washing while an Eastenders rerun played on the telly. As soon as Louis came in to the lounge room she asked “How was it?”

“Good. So weird being back. I forgot how – slow things are here. In a good way!” he hurried out when his Mum frowned.

“So strange.” Harry added. “We saw things like Lou’s school. Reminds me of things all the humans do, but not me.”

“Not all humans, love, just in this country. There are people all around the world that do things differently, you aren’t the only person not to have had these experiences.”

Harry forced his eyes away from the little fingers he had clasped around his pinkie to look to her with an inquisitive stare. “Really?”

“Of course! There’s even other people living in jungles all around the world. Communities of them! I’m not sure if there are others that lived exactly like you did, alone with gorillas, but there might be!”

“Oh.” Harry said, and when he looked back to the twins he had a small smile playing on his lips. The little girl reached up to put a hand on his chin, and Harry muttered, just loud enough for Louis to hear, “It not just me in the world. I not so alone.”

---

Louis’ sisters came back late Sunday morning, looking pretty pissed off at first.

When Louis asked why, and they complained that he hadn’t been back in far too long, he got it. He’d abandoned them, is how they saw it, and he apologised profusely.
They were quick to forgive him, and it may have been because Harry had been standing with him the entire time, looking nothing short of perfect.

He had his hair up in a little bun in an effort to protect it from the twins’ hair pulls, dressed in a loose white shirt and black trackies that were too short at the ankle. His sisters couldn’t stop staring.

After Louis had poured his heart out into his apology, the oldest simply said “So, he was really raised by apes?”

He was glad to see them, though. They drank tea and some scones their Mum had baked during the week, and spoke over the table at what they’d been up to for the last year.

Harry sat and listened quietly, but when it was time for the twins to go for their nap Harry was quick to offer his help.

“You were a real prick when we came to see you in London, Lou.”

Louis looked to his fourteen year old sister. “How?”

“You hardly spoke to us, and when you did you were just horrible. You were so bloody bitchy, and kept talking about the places you’d rather have been. Made us feel like a real nuisance.”

“Sorry,” Louis quickly said. “I know I was a prick. I just – cared so much about what people thought about me. I got carried away with all that model shit. I was starving for fame, you know? I’m not like that anymore, though, I promise!”

The four girls were silent until one said over the rim of her tea “We know. You’re actually nice now.”

So Louis left them all on a good note, terribly sad though that they had to head back to London when their driver showed up.

Harry was even teary when they climbed into the car, having got emotional as he kissed the twins’ foreheads goodbye. In his hands was a picture book, and when Louis asked about it Harry said it was given to him because he liked the story.

The car pulled out of the driveway, and Louis didn’t think anything more of it.

Harry waved to his family until the house was well out of sight, and snuggled into Louis’ side. “I really like it there. It nice. No worries. I like your Mum. She say lots of nice things. Make me feel good.”

Louis smiled, take Harry’s hand in his own. “She does that. She’s lovely.”

“I hope my human Mum is the same.” Harry murmured.

“I hope so too. I’m sure we’ll find out soon enough.”

---

They hadn’t been back in London long at all, maybe only a few days, before they heard news of Harry’s mother.

Louis and Harry had been sitting in the lounge of their flat, curtains drawn because of the many people hoping to get an eyeful of them outside on the streets, when they got the call.
“We’ve found them!” his manager said in response to his hello.

Louis sat forward on the sofa. “Who?”

“Harry’s parents! Well, his mother. We’re still not sure of where his father is. But she came to us when you were away, and she’s passed all of the psychologists’ tests. Her DNA matches, Lou, we’ve found her!”

“Shit.” Louis breathed out, which made Harry turn to him, eyes wide.

“What it?” he whispered, pausing the telly.

“They’ve found your Mum.”

“Where she?”

Louis repeated the question into the handset.

“She’s currently at work. She’s a zoologist at London Zoo. She’s been in London this whole time, Lou, can you believe it?”

“I’m struggling to.” Louis snorted. Then he pulled his phone from his ear and said to Harry “She’s working at London Zoo.”

“Can we see her?”

“What, now?”

Harry shrugged. “We doing nothing else. Come Dine with Me going to finish soon, we go after that.”

“Are you serious?”

“Yes.”

Louis blinked at Harry, and pressed the phone back to his ear. “Harry wants to meet her today. Can that happen?”

There was a pause on the other end of the line. “I’ll have to make a few calls to find out.” She replied. “I doubt it though, it is really short notice.”

“Yeah, I know. Harry just wants to know if it’s possible. No worries if it can’t be done today though, he’ll understand.”

“I didn’t say it couldn’t be done.” His manager assured him. “Just let me work something out and I’ll call back.”

Harry was looking to him when he put his phone back in his pocket. He raised an eyebrow and asked “What she say?”

“She’s going to find out if your Mum is free today. Fuck, feels weird saying that.”

Harry grinned. “It will be even more weird seeing that. Will be odd. Wonder what she looks like.”

Louis pursed his lips and said “Well, we can always look her up. The London Zoo might have something up on their website about all the people that work for them.”
Harry shook his head. “No, I can wait a bit longer.”

“You nervous?”

Harry thought for a moment. “What one is that?”

“Like, where your tummy feels squirmy and you’re a little bit scared of something you have to do.”

“I’m not scared at meeting her. I just – feel excited. I want to see how she and me the same. I want to ask her what happened when I was a baby, too. I guess I nervous about that though. I don’t know what she will say.”

“But you’ve been told everything from the diary, yeah?”

Harry shrugged, and pressed play on the remote. “Humans lie, though. I shouldn’t believe it all true just because it in the book.”

“I suppose.” Louis replied, feeling a twinge of guilt at Harry’s statement. Which was strange, because as far as he could recall he’d never lied to Harry, but the words still felt like an accusation. He cleared his throat. “You hungry?”

Harry pouted in thought. “What we have?”

“Pasta and sauce?”

“Oh!” he shrugged. “But I make it. It an easy thing, and I want to practice cooking for Come Dine with Me.”

Louis grinned as Harry stood, and nudged his bum with his socked foot before he could get too far. Harry spun around and stuck his tongue out through his smiling lips, then continued on to make them lunch.

Louis heard clanging from the kitchen as Harry searched for the right saucepan, and was about to shout out to see if Harry needed help when he felt his phone buzz.

He pulled it out of his pocket, cringing when he saw it was his manager again, and answered it with a “That was quick.”

“She’s fine to meet Harry today. I told her you’d probably come with him and she was okay with that. She wants you both to go to the zoo and see her, when can you be ready to go? I’ll send the car.”

“Oh! Wow. Fuck, okay.” Louis stuttered out, pushing himself up from the sofa to tell Harry. He was boiling the water and sprinkling in salt.

“What it, Lou? I’m cooking.”

“You mum can see us today. She wants us to come in to her work.”

Harry spun around, dangerously close to knocking the saucepan handle with his torso. “What?”

“You Mum says we can come into the zoo today to see her.”

“When?”
“Whenever we’re free. The car can pick us up as soon as we’re ready.”

“Now?”

“You don’t want to eat first? And maybe have a shower?”

“Oh! Yes, okay.”

Louis put his phone back to his ear. “You there?”

“Yep.” His manager replied.

“Send a car for us in an hour. We’ll be ready.”

---

They were both silent for the journey, right up until the moment they were standing at the gates of London Zoo.

There wasn’t much of a queue, what with it being mid-afternoon on a weekday, and they lost any of the reporters and paps that had been on their trail, but they were still let in through a side entrance by a staff member.

He spoke excitedly to Harry, about how he’d known his Mum for years and how he’d love to get to know him a bit more, one-on-one, because his story was just so fascinating.

Harry was quiet yet polite, and the man just prattled on until they reached the Gorilla Kingdom.

“This is where she works.” The man explained. “I’ll just go in and find her.”

When he disappeared, Louis turned to Harry. “You okay?”

“Yes. Feel sicky. Nervous. What – what if she don’t like me? What if she mean?”

“She’ll love you, and if she’s mean we can leave. You don’t need her, Haz, you have me and my Mum for family.”

“But what if –“ he stopped short when the gate to the enclosure swung open, and blinked when a woman walked out through it.

She was medium height, with dark hair like Harry’s own. The resemblance was uncanny.

She burst into tears, and reached out her arms to bring Harry to her, but he stepped back.

He looked to Louis guiltily, and muttered “I – I sorry” before opening his arms to let her hug him.

His face was pinched up, he looked so utterly uncomfortable, and Louis just wanted to pull him out of there.

“I can’t believe it.” she sobbed. “I thought you were dead. He – your father told me you had to be dead.”

“I not.” Harry said, and attempted a smile. “Where he?”

“I don’t know.” She said, wiping at her eyes. “We broke apart not long after we came back here. It was too hard for us when we lost you. When you were taken.”
Harry frowned. “They good to me, though. My mother love me.”

“Of course I d-“

“Not you mother. Gorilla mother. She teach me things, and care and make me happy. I okay.”

Her jaw clicked and her eyes hardened, but she simply nodded and said “I’m glad you were cared for. All this time I’ve – you can imagine what I thought.” She looked to Louis. “Surely you can imagine how hard it’s been for me, trying to live my life not knowing what happened to my son.”

Louis nodded, not knowing how else he could possibly reply without sounding accusatory.

“I here now and I fine.” Harry huffed.

“Are you upset with me, dear? You can’t blame me for any of this.”

“I not! I just – don’t like this. I want to leave now.”

“But you only just got here! Let me show you around. I work with gorillas, Western lowland gorillas. The same type as the ones that to– that cared for you. Don’t you want to see some?”

Harry stared at her for a moment, then sighed and nodded his head. “Okay. I want to see.”

“Great!” she grinned, far too wide and forced. She looked slightly manic. “Follow me.”

She led them into the enclosure, first showing them her small office where she spent a lot of time.

“My job is to study them.” She explained. “I have to watch their behaviour and take note of how it differs from wild gorillas. We aim to provide them an enriching environment, but also one that makes them comfortable.”

There was nothing particularly interesting about the room, so Harry was quick to leave it.

“There are four females and one male.” She told them as they wandered through the tall grass, and pointed out the small group of gorillas that were lazing about. “No babies yet, but we’re hoping! That’s my current focus, actually, their breeding.”

“Not enough trees.” Harry remarked. “This not what they like.”

“Well, we’re trying to grow some but they just keep pulling them out.” She laughed, getting closer and closer to the apes.

Louis’ heart began to race, but he tried to ignore it.

She must have noticed because she suddenly said “This type of gorilla isn’t territorial. They don’t attack unless they feel threatened.”

“Okay.” Louis grunted, but stopped walking when they were a few metres from the animals. She held back with him while Harry wandered closer.

They just blinked at him, one chewing with a lettuce clasped in its hand, relaxing in the sun.

“They bored.” Harry said, and sat down in front of one of the females. He oooed at her, and that made the male of the group stand up and come closer. Harry crouched, knuckles on the ground and head bowed when he spoke to it.
“This is incredible.” Louis heard his mother say. “He’s communicating with them verbally!” Then she turned to him. “You found him, yes? What was that like?”

Louis grimaced. “Definitely weird. There were loads of them, way more than this. There was a big angry one that wasn’t happy to see me –“

“Did you threaten it in any way?” she interrupted, eyes gleaming.

“No! I just – I mean I bolted when I saw him which might have freaked it out.”

“And there was a large group, you said. How many?”

“I don’t know, I didn’t exactly count! There was that big one, some smaller ones, and I guess a few young ones. I can’t really remember, it feels more like a dream than a memory.”

“What were they doing?”

“Just eating. Picking out each other’s bugs. You know, monkey stuff.”

“Did it look like where they lived or –“

“I don’t know! Seriously, I was much more concerned that I found a man who lived with them rather than what the gorillas were up to.”

“Right.” She said, and looked back to Harry. Who was still talking to them, it seemed.

Well, he was oooing while the gorillas just stared at him.

Louis stood in silence, refusing to acknowledge the woman’s presence.

He didn’t have many expectations of what Harry’s mother would be like, but the ones he did have painted her as a much kinder person. He thought she’d be actually talking to Harry, for one, rather than just watching him.

Harry stood back up and approached the two humans. “They don’t want me here. Male think I want his females.”

“It’s fascinating that he sees you as a threat to their group dynamic. Apes may fear humans, but never for that reason.” His mum said excitedly. “I’d love to have you here again, to see your interactions.”

Harry cocked his head. “I not coming back here, they don’t want me. It not my family.”

“But for research purposes, we could –“

“I already being researched. I don’t like it here.” he turned to Louis. “I want to go now.”

“All right love, of course!” Louis said quickly, just as Harry’s mother began to protest.

“But it hasn’t been long enough! You only just got here. There’s so much to see! Let me take you around the Zoo, give you a private tour.”

“No.” Harry said sharply. “I going now.”

“Okay. Okay, I understand.” She said, suddenly calm. “There’s a lot for you to take in. I know that, believe me! Seeing your mother for the first time in twenty-odd years would be exhausting –“
“No.” he stopped her. “I just don’t like it here. I don’t like you. I want to go.”

Then Harry gripped Louis by the bicep and dragged him the way they had come, his mother hurrying after them, begging them to stay.

Louis couldn’t help but feel sorry for her. She obviously had a lot of issues; she had thought she’d lost her son in the jungle only to see him again years later, that was bound to leave some psychological scars. So he couldn’t blame her for her desperation, and for handling the entire situation in a way he considered unreasonable, because who was he to judge when he hadn’t gone through her experiences?

Harry was huffing as they made their way to the exit, uttering angry noises Louis couldn’t understand.

And when they left the gate, Louis’ worst nightmare was waiting for them.

They were blinded by the flashes of cameras, stuck covering their eyes when the first reporter shoved a mic against their mouths.

“Who is Harry? What are you doing here at London Zoo?” the man demanded.

Then another was on Harry. “What is your relationship with Louis?”

“How did you get to be stuck in the jungle?”

“How did you survive it?”

“Where are your parents?”

Louis felt a hand squeeze his and knew instantly that it was Harry’s.

With him pressed close against his side, Louis pushed back at the reporters, forcing them out of the way so they could move forward.

Their driver appeared then, pulling them through the shouting crowd and towards the car.

He drove as soon as he could, obviously used to dealing with these kinds of people because he had no qualms about nudging the car forward despite the people in front of them. The fright of it got them out of the way, and before anyone else decided to get in their way he sped off.

Louis’ heart was pounding against his chest, Harry’s palm covering it as he cuddled to his side.

“What happened?”

“Reporters. That just there was the situation we’ve been trying to avoid.”

“Why they do that?”

“Because they’re fucking twats.” Louis spat.

“Really are vultures.” Harry murmured, and somehow managed to squeeze himself in closer. “That was scary. So so scary. I know they couldn’t hurt us like leopards could but they much scarier.”

“Because they can hurt you in other ways.”

Harry nodded. “I think it because – I don’t know what they want. I know leopards want to eat me,
but I don’t know what those people do to me.”

“They want to know everything about you. It’s a thing people say, that knowledge is power. That’s all people are after. Everyone wants it, over each other and themselves. It’s fucked.”

Harry fell silent, and Louis could see it when he began turning in on himself.

He’d learnt that about Harry, that he was introspective, so nothing made Louis angrier then when people questioned his intelligence because he wasn’t stupid. He was probably the smartest person Louis had ever known.

Harry had gained all this new information so bloody quickly, and what’s more he retained it and questioned it and used it to discover new things. He was always looking to add to it.

“What are you thinking?” Louis asked.

And Harry replied “How much I don’t want to be human.”

---

They had to shove their way through more reporters to get into Louis’ flat, the driver bringing up the rear while the security the actor had employed for the flat helped clear the path in front of them.

As soon as they got in, Louis plugged his phone into the charger and turned it on.

He had a few missed calls from his manager, so he called her back.

“How much I don’t want to be human.”
“America? He wants me to travel all the way to America just for one of his stupid contracted dates? Tell him to fuck off.”

“But that second contract you signed didn’t have the leniencies your first one did. You are actually obligated to go with him.”

“Fuck.” Louis snapped. “There’s no way out of it?”

“I’ll try to talk him into changing his mind, but you’ve met the guy - he’s a prick.”

“Christ, what the fuck would Harry do? He couldn’t come with us. Did he say on the phone how long I’ve got to stay?”

“No, but it’s just an awards show. You could probably fly in and out on the same day if you wanted to.”

“Yeah, that’s what I’d definitely do. I’m not staying any longer than I have to.”

“I know you probably don’t want to hear this, but it will be a pretty big step forward for your international career. If you want to do acting, America is obviously where you need to break into.”

“Obviously.” Louis snorted. A bang sounded from his bedroom, so Louis added “I’ve got to go, I’ll talk to you later about this. Let me know if you find a way to get me out of it.”

Louis was quick to get to his room, eager to find out what had made the noise. Turned out it was a drawer that had fallen onto the ground when Harry tugged it open too hard.

“Sorry.” He muttered sheepishly, and Louis just smiled and went to fix it.

“What are you doing?”

“Packing.” Harry said, and Louis frowned before looking about his room. Where clothes were piled on the bed.

“Where are you going?”

“Home.”

Louis flinched. “But you – we are home.”

Harry gave him a pointed look, then walked into their closet to search through the hanging clothes. “You know I mean the jungle. It my home. This is your home. I can’t stay.”

Louis shook his head. “Is this about today? About the paps?”

“No. I want to go home.”

“But – but Haz, you can’t go, okay? I need you here!” he choked on his words, heavy with truth and too hard to swallow.

“But I can’t be here. It not for me. I need my family, I need to be home.”

“I’ll come with you then.”

“You won’t be happy there.”
“But – I’m not happy here either, not unless you’re with me. Fuck it, Harry, I’ll come with you. We’ll go together.”

“But you going to America with the movie man. I heard you say it on the phone.”

Louis shook his head, hurriedly wiping the tears on his cheeks with the back of his hand. “I won’t. I don’t want to go, especially if I’ll have nothing to come back to.”

“I don’t want you to come to jungle just for me.”

“It’s – it’s for both of us, yeah? For me too. I’ll give it a go. It’s only fair.” Louis rushed out, trying to convince himself as well as Harry.

But it must have been obvious, his distaste at the idea, because Harry smiled grimly and said “You don’t want to do that. You scared.”

“You can teach me not to be scared. You can teach me to survive just like how I taught you to here. I want to, Haz. I need to.”

Harry bowed his head and bit at his lip. “I want you to be saying truths. But I don’t know. You didn’t like it when we there last.”

“I didn’t know you, or where I was, I was scared! But I want to go now, Harry, let me come with you.” Louis was begging desperately. “Give me a chance, please?”

Harry frowned and looked up at him. “I want you to come, you can have all the chances. I just don’t want to make you sad.”

“I will be if you go without me.” Louis quickly replied.

“You just saying this now because you are scared of here without me. But you will be okay, you lived happy before me here.”

“But – but I love you, Haz. I really do.”

Harry shook his head. “I know that, but you still don’t. You just scared, that why you saying it. But that okay, because I still love you even when I go. In the book got from your Mum, it says love is like stars. Even though they far away, we still get their light. Love like that too, it says that. Even if I far away I still love you.”

Louis could feel his eyes well up. He was desperate to make Harry believe him, but it was hard when he didn’t completely believe himself. The more he said he’d go to the jungle, the more he saw the idea as implausible. He just didn’t want Harry to leave. “Please.” He sobbed, tears spilling over. “Just stay.”

Harry shook his head, mouth set. “I been staying just for you but I can’t anymore. It not just the two of us here, it too many other people. I don’t like the other people, only some, but I need to go home. You need to be happy too and go home, where people love you. There no stars in London. You need to go to Doncaster, where you happy and where there stars so you can feel my love.”

“We can go there together. If you want to move to Doncaster we can, yeah? I’ll quit and we can move there.”

“I need my family, not yours. I going back Lou, no matter what you say I going back.”
ITS GOT A HAPPY ENDING DONT WORRY! also don't forget to comment!!!! but like please don't comment telling me to update it's not very motivating for me. Feel free to if i still havent updated in like a month but not straight away please!!! also i finally made a twitter!!!! its just embrofic like my tumblr so follow me if you want!!!!!!
xoxoxoxo
Louis had convinced Harry to stay for another week, but that time didn’t change his opinion at all.

The researchers were running out of reasons for him to visit them at Uni, which made Harry feel rather useless. He’d said it to Louis, in his own special way, that them not needing him made him realise he had nothing to do after it all; no job to go to when Louis was working, no hobby other than watching TV. They were still stalked by reporters whenever they left the house, which sent Harry into a panic because of what happened outside the zoo. The only thing tempting him to stay was Louis but Harry was convinced the two of them would still be together despite the physical separation.

“We still living, just in different places, but we still Harry and Lou.” He’d said when Louis asked for an explanation. And Louis just nodded as if he understood, which he sure as hell didn’t.

When he’d spoken with Zayn about it one evening, his mate said “Just think of it as a long distance thing.”

“But for people in them the distance is only temporary. And they can talk on the phone and Skype and that! Harry leaving will literally be the end of us and he doesn’t even know that. He thinks we’ll just be carrying on with our lives, and just knowing the other is living in a place they’re happiest will keep us going. That’s not how relationships are!”

“Well tell him that.”

Louis sighed, putting his palm to his forehead and rubbing his temples with his thumb and forefinger. “I’ve tried. He doesn’t get it.”

Zayn paused for a moment, then asked “Do you ever think that we’re the ones not getting it?”

“What?” was all Louis needed to ask before Zayn’s face lit up, words spilling from his lips like he’d been desperate to say them for ages.

“I reckon our thinking has been warped by hundreds of years’ worth of human fuckups so we’ve learnt how to distance ourselves from instinct. I mean, Harry doesn’t get embarrassed, yeah? And we do, because it was a part of our socialisation. It’s ingrained in us to avoid doing things that will embarrass us and make other people laugh at us because it’s instinct to fit in. Harry just – hasn’t seemed to learn that. He’s learnt how to conform to his gorilla gang or whatever it is.”

“But he’s been wanting to learn how to fit in here –“

“No,” Zayn interrupted. “he learns things not to fit in here, but to live. Like he learnt how to dress himself and to use cutlery when he eats and to have showers and all that because we told him they were necessary. We’ve told him he has to do them. He wasn’t conforming because he felt like he had to fit in socially, he was doing them because we told him he had to.”

Louis scrunched up his face in confusion and asked “What is the point to all this – psychology shit?”

“I just think that maybe Harry feels some kind of deep connection to you that we don’t understand because we’ve lost the ability somewhere along the way.”

“You’ve been reading too many of those weird New Age-y books, mate.” Louis scoffed.
“I haven’t read a single one! I’ve just been thinking about it a lot, ever since you made a big fuss when Harry said he loved you. He told me a few things when we went out that time, ages ago.”

“When you went to Starbucks and told him about rimming?”

Zayn smirked. “Yeah, then. He tried to tell me how he felt for you, back when he wasn’t nearly as good at speaking as he is now, and it just sounded like he was so sure that it was love.”

“What did he say?”

“He said that the very first time he saw you in the jungle he knew you had all the answers to every question he’d ever asked. Not just about what he was and why he was different to his family, but also about the reason for his existence.”

It was silent for a moment, until Louis realised that Zayn had no intention of elaborating. So he spat out “What does that mean?”

“He didn’t say! He couldn’t, back then, so I’ve been thinking a lot about it and I reckon its like – how people here believe in soulmates and that. Which you know I think is total bullshit, I’ve seen enough people fall in and out of love to know there’s not just one person out there for everyone. But I think that’s what he might have been getting at, you know?”

“No I don’t know! Zayn, this makes absolutely no sense.”

“Maybe not to you! Why don’t you ask him why he thinks he loves you?”

“It’s – I don’t know. Because he doesn’t?”

“Bull.”

“Fine!” Louis snapped. “Because what if he doesn’t? What if he tells me why and it’s something like because you’re the only one I’ve had sex with or because you’re the first human I ever saw or some other reason that’s got nothing to do with me. Anyone could have found him, and anyone could have fucked him, and that’s not what love is. I’m scared that what he’s been calling love is not what I’d consider love and I’m too weak to find out what it means to him because it’ll hurt.”

Louis’ gaze had somehow found his toes during his rant, and he didn’t realise it until he felt a hand on his shoulder and had to look up to see it. It was Zayn, of course it was bloody Zayn, with lips pursed into a sullen frown. Louis felt pitiful with the way he was being looked at, so brushed Zayn’s hand off his shoulder and stormed off to his bedroom. He was collapsing against the door as soon as he had it shut behind him.

He didn’t pick himself up until Zayn gave up trying to console him through the door and finally left the flat.

Louis had put his face in his hands to calm himself down, just like how he’d been taught when he was little and couldn’t control his temper tantrums. Only this time it wasn’t rage he was trying to quell, but panic.

He hadn’t even known he’d felt that way until he’d said it out loud, but that’s how it had always been for him. As his Mum had said, it was his nature to ignore things until they blew up in his face and he was forced to confront them.
When he heard the front door slam shut he looked up, and caught sight of the time flashing red on his alarm clock on the bedside table.

He had twenty minutes to get to Harry’s Uni to pick him up, so he grabbed his keys and coat and hurried out the door.

The driver sped the whole way to Uni yet still arrived ten minutes after Harry’s session ended.

Harry waited in with the psychologists, too many reporters at the entrance to the campus for him. They didn’t make much of a fuss when Louis arrived, just took a few snaps but didn’t hassle him with questions, obviously saving the dramatics for when Harry exited.

They’d somehow found out about Harry’s visits to the university, which was no surprise considering the amount of students that went there and so could have easily recognised him, but no information about why he was there had leaked. The university was remaining tight-lipped and professional, which Louis was more than grateful for. The last thing he needed was for them to start talking.

The researchers were waiting for Louis when he arrived, and eerily stood when he walked into the room.

The head one grinned and held out her hand. “I believe this is the last time we’ll see each other.”

“What?” Louis blinked, but shook her hand despite his confusion.

“We’ve finished our studies. We would happily continue to educate him, but we know there’s no point in that because he’s going back to the Congo in a few days.”

“He said that?”

She frowned. “He told us you spoke about it.”

“We did! Just – didn’t know there was a date set.” Louis said, looking to Harry only to find he was looking down at his entwined fingers. With a frown he looked back to the woman and asked “Can I talk to you privately for a second?”

Before Louis could back out, the lady was heading into her office, nodding for him to follow.

“Sit.” She said as she closed the door behind him, so he did. When she was seated at her desk she asked “What do you want to know?”

“What you’ve been doing with him this whole time, mainly.”

She nodded once, then said “Studying him.”

“I know that! I mean, can you give me some more details?”

“We’ve been trying to get a read on his mental health while teaching him how to assimilate into our culture. We first taught him to speak so that we could communicate with him. It took an incredibly short amount of time, especially when you look at other cases of infant neglect. Then after that we focused on finding out as much as possible about his life in the jungle. His routine, his interactions, his diet, everything. We ran him through intelligence tests and personality tests, and even physical tests. We’ve observed him extensively, and we feel like there is nothing more we can learn from him and he from us. I’m sure there’ll come a day where we think of something new we could have asked of him, but by then he’ll be long gone.”
“Yeah.”

Her face remained neutral as she said “We did, actually, ask him a lot about his relationship with you.”

Louis shifted in his seat and muttered “I thought as much.”

“That is one of the most fascinating things about him, that he grew attached to you so quickly despite his traumatic past. We were worried about it, of course. He trusted you implicitly, and we were wary that you would abuse that trust, whether you meant to or not. Lucky for all of us, you didn’t. You care for him a lot.”

“I do, yes.”

“How do you feel about him leaving?”

“Scared.”

“Why?”

“Because he could get hurt.”

“He survived the jungle as a child, he will be able to as an adult. What else has you scared?”

“That – that I won’t see him again.”

She nodded her head once, and Louis looked down to his fingers that were entwined and resting on his lap. “Have you considered going with him?”

“Really?” he snorted. “I’ve thought about it, but not as a realistic option. I can’t live out in the jungle, I’d die in a second!”

“Is fear of death the only thing keeping you from moving there?”

Louis stopped for a moment, because it hadn’t exactly occurred to him before that question that he was talking to a psychologist. “I – no. There’s loads of other stuff, like work. And my family and friends. I can’t just up and leave it all.”

“Mmm.” She said with a nod, and Louis decided then that it was time for him to go before she started a full-on psycho-analysis.

“Thanks for the talk.” He said shortly, pushing himself out of his chair. “And thanks for the help you’ve given Harry.”

“Thankyou for choosing us to help.” She smiled, stopping him before he left the office to give the journals back.

Harry was up as soon as Louis spotted him, approaching with a grin. “You done now? We go?”

“Yeah love.” Louis nodded.

Harry went around the room giving each of the researchers a hug or a handshake, and Louis just watched with a small smile turning his lips up. Some of them looked a little teary as he said goodbye, and one researcher outright burst into tears. Harry was quick to comfort her, and it was nice to see just how much he cared for them and vice versa.
Harry and Louis had university security chaperone them to the waiting car, which had moved to a different entrance to lose some of the reporters that had doubled since Louis arrived.

When they were in, Harry said “What you talk about?”

“Just what they’ve been doing with you.” Louis replied. Harry nodded, and Louis took his hand. “She – the psychologist – she said you’re leaving in a few days.”

“Yes. I need to. I hurting with want to go home.”

“Have you got flights? Like, a plane ticket?”

“No.” he said, tilting his head. “How?”

“I – we’ll do it tonight. Fuck, it’ll be like a kick to the gut but I’ll help you.”

“Thankyou. Have you to America plane?”

“No yet. I’m leaving my manager to sort that out. I should probably ask her actually about yours too. I don’t know if she ever got you a passport.”

Harry nodded. “Okay.” Then he looked out the window, pulling Louis’ hand into his lap to hold against his thigh. “I excited going home. I want to see my mother.”

Louis didn’t say anything in fear of choking up. He just lent into Harry’s side while he still could.

---

Louis hadn’t given his manager enough credit.

Somehow, sometime, she’d organised Harry a Democratic Republic of Congo passport, as well as an English one. She said the English one was easy enough because of his mum, but the Congo one took a bit of work.”

“Hard to prove he lived there all his life.” She explained when she brought them over that evening. “But it’s done.”

So the three of them booked Harry’s flight, Louis’ stomach rolling at the date he was leaving.

Two days away. Louis only had two more days to spend with Harry and the thought was sickening.

He didn’t have time to think much about it, though, because as soon as the flight was booked his manager began telling him all about his L.A. trip.

“The awards show is Saturday evening, so like the premiere you’ve got to spend a few hours beforehand being made presentable. Unlike the last time, people are going to be much more interested in you. The red carpet is going to be hard work.”

“Okay.” Louis muttered.

“Once the awards have actually started it will be much more relaxing, but I expect you to schmooze a bit. You’ll be seated at a table with some pretty major celebrities, so you may as well take advantage of that.”

“Got it.”
“Then there’s an after party that you have to attend. There, you’ll be able to talk to anyone and everyone. Cameras aren’t allowed in there so you won’t have to spend the whole evening with the arsehole. Find some interesting people to hang out with, relax a bit. But not too much, you’ve got to impress.”

“All right.”

“Really?” she asked, and Louis frowned at her. “I mean, usually you’d be kicking up a big fuss by now. Making demands and the like.”

Louis shrugged. “Easier just to do what I’m told, I guess. I got myself into this mess, may as well make the most of it while I’m in it. Get me some contacts or whatever, if this is what I’ll be doing with my life from now on.”

“Yeah.” She said, slow and unsure. “Right. I’m going to go now, we’ll talk about it once Harry’s left. Spend as much time as you can together and all of that.”

“Thanks.” Harry chirped, seemingly unphased by the conversation they’d just had. Which stung a bit, that he couldn’t tell how Louis really felt. He figured it was obvious how defeated he was.

When she finally left, and the flat was only theirs again, Harry plonked down onto the sofa and grabbed at the telly remote.

“Is that really what you want to do right now?” Louis grunted.

Harry looked up guiltily. “I – no?”

“I thought you’d want to just sit with each other and – I dunno – talk? We’ve only got two more days together. Less than forty eight hours, really. Kind of thought you’d want us to spend it completely devoted to each other but I guess not.”

He felt like a complete twat for it, but he stormed out of the room to collapse onto their bed. Which was soon going to be just his bed.

This whole place was going to be just his again and it wasn’t right. Harry belonged here with him, not out in the middle of the fucking jungle.

Louis was just pulling a pillow to his chest when Harry pushed the door open softly, peeking his head through the gap.

“Can I come on?”

“ Fuck.” Louis choked out, and immediately put a hand to his eyes before any tears could come spilling out. He nodded though, and when Harry was climbing onto the bed he asked “Remember that first day you came here? How you would keep saying come on instead of follow?”

“Yes. Why you crying? I thought it funny.”

“It was funny. That’s why I’m – I might cry. Because it was so stressful having to teach you everything back then, but it was fun. Everything in this house reminds me of that day now, because you examined every little detail and touched everything and I remember it all. When I look at my closet I’m going to remember trying to find clothes that would fit you, and when I watch anything on that telly I’m going to remember it’s there because you broke my old one. Then there’s the shower and all those bloody memories that created.”
“I sorry.” Harry sniffled, placing one of his ridiculously large hands over Louis’ knee. “I sorry I can’t stay.”

Louis pushed Harry’s hand off him and snapped “You can though! You can but you won’t. There’s a difference.”

“I know there a difference. Won’t is choosing, can’t is impossible. It impossible for me to stay and be happy too. It scare me here, I hate it. Only good things is you and friends in this house, but we can’t be in here forever. That impossible, so staying is impossible.”

Louis knocked the pillow off his lap and pulled his knees up to his chest and hugged them close. “I know. I’m just feeling sorry for myself. I don’t know how I can be here without you.”

“Move back to Doncaster to be with your family.” Harry suggested, crawling further onto the bed to sit next to Louis against the headboard.

His fingers were thrumming against his own knee, so Louis took hold of his hand to still them. “I don’t think I could be there either. I’d get bored. I suppose I’ll just see what happens after this L.A. trip. Who knows, maybe I’ll actually start liking all that shit again. Might be blinded by the big lights and shiny stars.”

“That good! When there stars, there my love, remember?”

“Not the kind of stars they have in L.A.” Louis grunted. Then he pulled Harry’s hand into his lap to hold between his palms and looked up to ask “What makes you so sure you love me?”

“Because in all the things on the telly they say love is not something you can explain, and I can’t explain all my feelings for you.”

“Is that it?”

“I try to say.” Harry grinned, wide and sudden. “When I first saw you I so in shock. I didn’t know what you was. I didn’t know what I was but I knew then I like you. I was following you in the trees, watching how you tripping on the branches and making funny noises from your mouth. I did not know of words but I wish I did because then I could remember what were you saying.”

Louis’ lips pulled up into a smile. “I was whining, probably would have made you not like me if you understood.”

“I don’t think so. You sat down and pulled bottle with water from your bag, and I surprised because I found one of them in my house in the trees but I not know what it did. So I climbed down some branches to see better what you doing, but then you see me too and get scared at me! I wanted to tell you I not scary but you fell and went to sleep, and I so scared you wouldn’t wake up. I never been so scared about anything before then, not even when I chased by two cheetahs together I not this scared. I never care for anything like I did for you since then. I thought you never waking would be like me never waking. And I think that is what love is, when you and someone is one.”

No words came to Louis, all he wanted to do was kiss Harry so hard they’d never be able to part, so he rolled onto his side and threw his arms around Harry’s neck, choking out a sob when Harry returned the hug.

He kissed Harry’s neck, breathing in the scent of him, before Harry shuffled down the bed and pulled Louis on top.
Louis hovered over Harry, letting a small sad smile fall over his lips that Harry tried to kiss away with quick pecks.

It worked, Louis was soon grinning wide, and a laugh burst from his chest when Harry kissed his nose.

“I do love you, Lou.”

Louis lowered himself down onto Harry, folding his arms over Harry’s chest and resting his chin on his forearms. “I know. I just don’t think you will forever.”

“It won’t go away, I promise.” Harry said, pushing a strand of hair from Louis’ eyes. “It can’t when there no one else for me to love in the jungle.”

Louis frowned. “Not like I’ve got here. Aren’t you worried about me forgetting about you and falling for someone else?”

“No.” Harry said, surprising Louis with how sure he sounded. “There no one else like me, you said so. You love me because I know you really, not what other people see, and because I make you feel like that again. You feel like the person you want to be when you with me.”

“Yeah.” Louis smiled. “I do. I’ve become that person since I met you. I feel like a big part of who I am now has been made by you, so I don’t think I’ll be able to remove you even if I wanted to.”

“You see!”

“See what?”

“That what I mean when I say I never really gone! My body might be away but I still in you somewhere. I always with you that way. I won’t be all gone.”

“But love, I won’t be able to see you when you’re gone. I won’t be able to touch you and smell you and taste you and it’s going to be awful. I need to be able to do all those things.”

“Before I go, you can touch me and taste me. Starting now, we will.” Harry put his hand along Louis’ jaw and leaned down so their lips were inches apart. It meant Louis could feel the words against him when Harry muttered “I love you forever” before closing the gap.

They kissed slowly and gently, just lips moving together, until Louis felt Harry’s tentative tongue.

Louis pushed his hands through Harry’s hair, grabbing fistfuls and tugging hard enough to make Harry moan into his mouth. After that, their kiss grew quick and desperate. Louis’ jaw ached with how hard he was trying to keep up with Harry’s lips’ constant movement. His breathing grew loud and ragged, little grunts slipping from his throat.

Harry put his hands over Louis’ arse cheeks and pressed him down at the same time he canted his own hips up, rubbing his clothed cock against Louis’.

“Fuck.” Louis groaned shakily, throwing his head back. Harry was quick to nip at his exposed throat. “Gonna come in my pants if we don’t slow down a bit. Need to make it last.”

Harry answered with another roll of his hips and a whiny “Don’t want to wait.”

Louis looked back down, laughing when Harry lunged up in an attempt to kiss him again. “Hang on, you have to wait. How you gonna come in the jungle, babe, without me there? Gotta make our
“I at least have bananas for sucking. I can pretend it you.” Harry said with a cheeky grin, and Louis’ jaw dropped when Harry added “For inside me too.”

“That can’t be healthy.”

“Yes. Dirty.” He winked.

“Not in a sexy way!” Louis laughed. “More in an unhygienic kind of way. I’m a bit worried about the things you’ll get up to when I’m not there to watch.” His own words had his smile dropping, but before the sadness could really hit him Harry distracted him with a kiss.

It reminded him where he was, lying on top of Harry with his arse held captive by those big hands, cock fattening up between them, so he let himself get distracted.

Harry kept up the slow steady rock of his hips, concentrating on grinding their cocks together while Louis took charge of their kiss.

He plunged his tongue into Harry’s mouth, coaxing out moans and making his rutting grow frantic.

“Jeans off.” Harry begged with a whisper, and Louis indulged him.

He rolled off Harry’s body to pull off his own trousers while Harry fought with his.

Then, just as Louis’ jeans landed on the floor, Harry climbed on top and latched their mouths together once more.

He spread Louis’ thighs apart with his knees and pressed their cocks together, this time the only thing separating skin-on-skin contact was Louis’ pants.

But Harry didn’t let that deter him, grinding down as he put his lips against Louis’ throat and sucked.

“Fuck, Haz. I need to take my pants off. You didn’t give me ti-uh fuck.” He was interrupted by a particularly direct thrust from Harry, an overwhelming spark of pleasure as their balls rolled together.

Louis wrapped his legs around the back of Harry’s thighs, using the grip as leverage to rut up into Harry from where he was wedged below.

It made it so much better, both boys grinding into each other at the same time. Louis’ eyes were rolling back into his head, he felt like he was going to come any second just from some dry humping, so he grabbed Harry by the hair and pulled him down so they could latch lips again, concentrating on making the kiss good to distract himself from the pressure against his cock.

But all it did was work Harry up.

Harry’s hips increased in pace, going from slow direct rolls to quick messy thrusts.

Louis groaned loud, and Harry dropped his head to lick at his neck.

And with quick hands Harry pulled Louis’ pants down to just below his arse, freeing his cock to lie against his stomach.

It was amazing, the slide of Harry’s sweaty abs underneath his cock, feeling Harry’s own occasionally graze the side. When Harry wrapped his large hand around them both and tugged them off together, Louis growled and came between them.

Harry continued to stroke him through it and then some, trying to get himself off with a fast hand.

Louis gritted his teeth and dug his fingers into Harry’s shoulders, unsure if it was pain or pleasure that he was experiencing.

When Harry’s thumb swiped at his cock head he jolted back, fingernails digging into Harry’s skin because *fuck it was definitely pain.*

But Harry came before Louis needed to tell him to stop, dropping his hand from their cocks and riding out his orgasm against Louis’ thigh.


“Was.” Louis grinned as he gulped in air. His heavy breathing had his chest heaving, so he out a hand on Harry’s bicep and gently pushed him off. Harry rolled off easily, flopping down onto the mattress beside him.

“I got come on me and you.” Harry whined. “Feel yucky.”

Louis lay still until he had the energy to get up, then climbed off the bed and hobbled to the bathroom, legs shaking and feeling terribly weak all over. But he couldn’t wipe the smile from his face. He caught the sight in the mirror and laughed, he looked like an absolute mess. He wet a flannel and climbed back into bed.

“Not really what I thought we’d be doing tonight, rutting against each other like teenagers.” Louis joked, wiping over Harry’s stomach and cock before he cleaned himself.

“Not only thing we be doing.” Harry smirked. “Got lots of memories to make before I go.”

Louis tried not to change his expression at all, tried to stave off the sudden sadness by keeping his smile fixed, but Harry still was somehow able to see it.

He pulled Louis close against his chest, hugging him tight as he cooed reassurances into his ear. That he loved him, that he’d never really be gone, but the truth coaxed Louis’ tears out anyway.

---

Louis pressed his forehead against the small oval window, resisting the urge to pull back and bump it again ten times harder.

The actor decided they should fly together on his private plane, and Louis went along with it to avoid the argument that would be caused if he’d said no.

He strongly regretted that decision after a mere half hour of listening to the star’s constant speaking.

The man was so full of himself it made Louis physically ill. He name dropped incessantly, seemingly unfazed by Louis’ obvious boredom with the conversation.
So Louis stared out the window while the man spoke, using the clouds as an aid to tune him out. But when he did that, his thoughts immediately turned to Harry.

Who’d seen off at the airport the evening before, holding him close until he absolutely had to go. It was awful, and gut wrenching, and Louis wept the entire car ride back to his flat.

His eyes still felt puffy from it, but if it was noticeable the actor hadn’t said anything about it when he’d picked him up that morning. In fact, he didn’t say anything at all to Louis until they were on the plane.

Louis figured he was pissed off, but it became apparent quite quickly that he was nervous about the award ceremony.

Their flight would arrive the evening before, then they’d be picked up and taken straight to a hotel. Louis insisted they have separate rooms, which the actor was obviously disappointed about but made happen anyway. Louis had to go to dinner with him that night, but that wouldn’t be so bad. He’d done it twice now, he knew what he could and couldn’t get away with. He felt numb to it all, anyway.

The actor’s sudden loud, obnoxious laugh sounded from beside him, snapping him from his thoughts. He pulled back from the window to look at the man.

Who asked, out of nowhere, “Are you tired?”

“Yeah. Couldn’t sleep last night.”

“Because your jungle man left? Sorry to hear about that. Couldn’t take the city life, I suppose?”

“Couldn’t take humankind. Too many wankers.” Louis grunted. “Have they got tellies on this plane? If they don’t I’m fucked. Don’t know what else I’m going to do for the next nine hours.”

“Yes, they do.” The star laughed condescendingly. Like Louis was so inferior because he’d never flown on a private plane before. The arsehole.

He pressed the button that called for the hostess, and he asked her for the entertainment system. Which was a handheld screen akin to an IPad. How la-di-dah.

Louis plugged in the offered headphones and flicked about until he found a movie, putting an end to the star’s one-sided conversation.

The man looked slightly annoyed, but only said “Try to get some sleep on the flight. Don’t need you looking like this tomorrow night” before shutting up completely.

---

The short walk from LAX to the waiting car took triple the time it should have because of the paps that had swarmed on them. There were loads of them, more than what Louis was used to in London, so when they first rushed over Louis jumped and clenched onto the star’s bicep. He immediately let go of it when he realised what he was doing, but the actor seemed to take that as an invitation to touch him.

The man put his hand on Louis’ lower back and gently pushed him forward, muttering in his ear that it would all be fine. All Louis could think about was what would surely end up in the rags, stories of young-and-naïve-Louis being handheld through his rise to fame by none other than Hollywood’s biggest star. It would all be so believable considering the pictures accompanying it,
photos of Louis with scared wide eyes being led by the actor’s firm hand and whispered encouragements.

His initial reaction was to lash out and create a scene, make a desperate grab for control and have them write the story he wanted, but he tamped it down. That wasn’t who he was anymore, it wasn’t going to get him anywhere in the industry, so he looked down at his toes and let the star lead him onwards.

The car ride to the hotel was hell, the actor taking the opportunity to speak more rubbish in an attempt to impress.

He left him alone when they got to his room, saying there were tailored suits awaiting him in his wardrobe.

“I’ll collect you at seven thirty to take you to dinner, wear the suit hanging in your wardrobe.” He said as a farewell.

Louis left his case by the door and collapsed onto his bed. He pulled out his phone to check how much time he had, and figured he had enough for a quick nap before he needed to get ready.

The plane had made him drowsy so it was easy enough to fall asleep, but when he woke he somehow felt even worse. His body desperately wanted him to sleep more, his eyelids felt heavy and his head swam, but he forced himself up nonetheless.

He jumped through the shower, washing his hair and scrubbing his face, hoping it would liven him up a bit.

He towel-dried his hair, noticing for the first time just how long it was getting. He hadn’t worried about styling it for ages, and he had no idea what to do with it. After a few moments just staring at his reflection, he ruffled his fingers through his fringe and pushed it to the side, deciding that would have to do.

He dressed himself in the suit, refusing to read the tags because he didn’t need to be reminded just how much money the star was spending on him. Between the flights and accommodation it would be thousands of dollars, and with the ridiculous suits it would be upwards of ten grand. He knew it probably made no sense, but the more money spent on him the cheaper he felt.

At exactly seven twenty eight there was a knock at the door, and Louis opened it to the appraising eyes of the actor.

His lips were pursed as he looked him down head to toe. Then he sighed. “It’ll have to do. We’ll get your haircut tomorrow. It looks ridiculous.”

The actor’s mood didn’t change until they were stepping out of the car at the restaurant, a smile suddenly breaking out over his face. When Louis climbed out next he saw why.

There was a small group of paps waiting for them, snapping pictures as the actor took Louis’ hand and tugged him into the restaurant.

“Smile. You look like a corpse.” The actor growled through his teeth into Louis’ ear.

So Louis forced out a smile and followed the man inside, not surprised in the slightest that the best table in the place was laid out for them.

Before they even sat down, a waiter was pouring champagne into their glasses.
“You want to get me pissed?” Louis snorted, but took a sip anyway.

“Mind your language. It was cute before, now it’s grating.”

“What got up your arse?”

The actor glared at him a moment, then picked up his menu and opened it up.

“You realise we’re being watched, yeah?” Louis asked. “We’re supposed to look like we’re into each other, but you’re making it incredibly obvious you loathe me. I’m not going on another one of these staged dates after tomorrow night so you better make the most of this one.”

“I don’t loathe you.” The actor grunted.

“Fine. Then quit acting like you do.” Then Louis grinned. “I can’t believe I’m the one saying that.”

“Why are you? I know you don’t want to be here.”

“Because this is work, and I’ve decided I want to be good at my job.”

The actor smirked. “You’ve decided, have you?”

“Yeah. I’ve got to at least try if I’m going to do this as a living. Acting, I mean. Not dating you.”

The star actually laughed at that, but stopped so abruptly it was obvious he hadn’t wanted to.

But Louis smiled anyway and picked up his own menu, vowing to make things at least pleasant between them for the next twenty-four hours. He’d come to the conclusion that it was much easier when the actor was on his good side, and it would all go a lot quicker if he kept him there.

---

Of course Louis got pissed on the champagne. It was that giddy kind of drunk, too; he felt as light and airy as the bubbles he’d just swallowed down, that tickled at his insides and made him laugh for no apparent reason.

He refused to think about anything that made him sad, ignored the little bit of Harry stuck inside him that served as an ever-present reminder of how alone he was, and drank more and more.

When they left, Louis was a mess.

He could barely walk, was actually thankful for the actor’s arm wrapped around his middle that dragged him by the flashing lights of cameras and into the car.

As soon as they were seated Louis fell against the actor’s side, using the man to hold him upright because there was no way he could have done it himself.

“Did you enjoy yourself?” the star asked, cheeks a bright pink from his own drinking.

“Yeah. It was funny. Fun.” Louis slurred.

“Good, I had a nice time too.”

Louis pouted. “Just nice?”

And then the actor’s lips were on his. Only for a second, because Louis was pulling back and
pushing him away. “What the fuck?”

“I thought –“


“I know that he’s in the middle of fucking nowhere right now.” He snapped. “You’ve been flirting with me all night, what else was I supposed to think?”

“I was doing my job!”

“Getting drunk isn’t work. That’s enjoying yourself. You were having fun on our date, you weren’t doing your job!”

“You’re such a twat.” Louis snapped, forcing himself to sit up and hold his own weight. It was hard, his head was still spinning, but he was sober enough to know what was going on. “You’re making it so fucking hard to be nice to you.”

The actor scoffed. “You’re fucking tragic, Louis Tomlinson. You’re a no one, I’m a some one, when will you fucking realise how lucky you are that I took interest in you? People throw themselves at me all the time, but here you are grieving over some jungle boy too dim-witted to see how good he had it with you. I can give you everything –“

“If I let you fuck me, yeah?”

“Yes.” The actor said, and Louis sat back in shock.

He’d known that was what the actor was after, he’d made it obvious from the start, but to hear it said by the man himself was completely unexpected. “We’re not fucking. You’re a horrible person, there’s no fucking way I’d let you touch me.”

The driver cleared his throat then, announcing they’d arrived at their hotel.

The star grunted out a thankyou and got out of the car. He didn’t even wait for Louis, obviously no longer concerned about keeping up their happy-couple appearance.

Louis got out of the car, thankful that there was a bodyguard to walk him through the paps and up to his room.

He filled up a bottle of water from the tap in the kitchenette, and drank down at least half of it before pulling his suit off.

Lethargy hit him hard, but he was kept up by worrying thoughts about the following day and the retribution the actor was surely planning for him.

It was the worst sleep of his life, both the champagne and jetlag making him restless.

Louis didn’t have to be at the star’s room until two, but his body and mind jumpstarted awake hours before that.

He switched on the telly for background noise as he located the room service menu. He ordered a big breakfast despite his uneasy stomach, knowing it’d be the only way to ensure his hangover would be gone before the ceremony.

It, as well as the nap he’d had afterwards, meant he was feeling pretty decent when he got a text telling him someone was on their way to his room to help get him ready.
He didn’t bother replying. He was desperate to know why the plans had changed, but was just thankful he didn’t have to see the actor for a little while longer.

The same man that had dressed him for the premiere arrived with the same two ladies, the three of them wasting no time making him look presentable.

The stylist brought Louis’ perfectly tailored suit and a brand new pair of brogues, but before he had to put them on one of the women sat him down in a chair in the bathroom to deal with his hair.

“Do you want to keep it long?” she asked while dampening it with a spray bottle of water.

Louis look at himself in the mirror and pursed his lips. “Yeah, I do.”

She smiled. “I’ll just neaten it then.”

When she was done cutting bits off she combed it back into a high rockstar-esque quiff. “They wanted to make you look like the boy-next-door type but I can tell that just isn’t you.”

Louis liked it, but he asked “Shouldn’t you do what you’ve been told though? I’m just his accessory tonight, I don’t think you’re meant to make me stand out on my own.”

“Fuck ‘em.” She shrugged. “We’re gonna make you look amazing, don’t worry about it. You need to grab their attention if you want to make contacts. Just a tip, the bathrooms are a wonderful place for it.”

Louis scrunched up his nose. “Is that some kind of American innuendo?”

“No,” she laughed. “It’s honestly just a bit of advice. If you leave the schmoozing to the after-party then anyone you talk to will most likely have already been drinking. There’s a big chance they would have forgotten any conversations they had with you at the party by the next day.”

“Oh. Cheers.”

The other lady came in to brighten his face up with makeup. When she pulled out some eyeliner Louis frowned but before he could protest she said “It’s just for inside your top eyelid. It’ll make your eyes pop, and spread your eyelashes a smidgen.”

So he sat back in his chair and let her do her job, praying that they hadn’t been told by the actor to make him look as ridiculous as possible.

When she pulled back and stepped aside to let Louis look at himself in the mirror, he decided that he did look pretty good.

As Louis left the bathroom, the hair stylist said “You’re a lot quieter then I remember.”

He shrugged and muttered “Got a hangover”.

She frowned but didn’t say anything in reply, just carried on packing up her things.

The actor’s personal stylist put Louis in his suit, pinching the shoulders of his jacket and pulling the creases of his trousers so it would all sit right.

“Try not to sit down.” The man said with a smirk. “Don’t want to get it creased.”

“Fine.” Louis grunted. “When are we going?”
The stylist completely ignored him, instead demanding that Louis follow them up to the star’s room.

So Louis did, refraining from biting back when the stylist said something about him being so much more likeable when he did what he was told.

Louis was made to stand for the next couple of hours while the team worked on the actor. He hadn’t said anything to the man, hadn’t even seen him yet. Louis just had to watch TV and snack on carrot sticks until he was called in to the actor’s bedroom.

The man did look striking, but all Louis felt when he saw him was disgust.

“You look good.” The actor said, and Louis muttered his thanks. “You aren’t to say anything on the red carpet this evening. You are to stay by my side at all times unless told otherwise, you are not to wonder off. I know your manager told you to make contacts, but this is my night and you are paid to accompany me. You aren’t to talk to anyone unless I give you permission. Got it?”

“Yes, I get it.” Louis replied monotonously.

The actor appraised him for a moment, and when Louis just raised a questioning eyebrow the man said “I like you compliant. Suits you.”

Louis’ had to literally bite his tongue to stop himself from spitting out what he wanted to say. He couldn’t get himself in any more trouble with the actor, he knew the man would make his night hell if he did.

---

The ceremony was flashier than anything Louis had ever experienced before.

His vision felt fuzzy as he walked down the red carpet, his ears were ringing with the noise from the crowd. There was so much going on around him he couldn’t concentrate on a single thing, so he let himself be pulled along by the actor.

Louis quickly realised how much he’d underestimated the star. The guy was a big deal, Louis knew that, but before this he’d only seen the man at events that were about him in some way. He was a key figure at the cologne launch and the leading man at the film premiere, but at the awards ceremony he should have been just another actor among many.

Only he wasn’t. He was seemingly the one everybody there wanted to see and speak to. They were approached by countless reporters who all asked the exact same questions but for different networks. Other guests of the ceremony also came over to the star for a chat, and even though Louis didn’t recognise well over half of them he could tell they were important people. They all looked incredible, the women in gorgeous floor length gowns and the men in tailor-made suits, hair and makeup exceptional. Louis didn’t think he’d ever seen so many glitzy people in the same place before.

A few of the celebrities greeted Louis, too, but most of them ignored him completely. Because he hadn’t been dismissed by the star, he had to hover around at his side, listening into conversations that he wasn’t allowed to participate in and being side-eyed by famous people. It was so incredibly embarrassing, Louis wanted to get away from them and their judgemental glances, but the star’s hand on his waist and the warning he’d given earlier kept him in place. He decided then that he hated them all. He hated their pinched up expressions and fake niceties, how they demanded attention and oozed desperation. Their better-than-thou attitude was killing him.
“Fuck it.” Louis snapped, interrupting whatever the actor had been saying to some director he’d worked with once, or who he wanted to work with, Louis hadn’t been listening.

Both turned to Louis, the director with raised eyebrows and the actor with pursed lips and a quickly-reddening face.

“This isn’t worth it. I’m going.” Louis pushed the actor’s hand from his waist and made to turn around, but the actor gripped his bicep hard.

A slow smile crept over the man’s face. “You can’t just go.” He said, voice artificially sweet. The director was still watching them, lips curving downwards when her eyes landed on the actor’s tight grip.

“I can go, so I’m going to.” Louis tried wrenching his arm free but couldn’t. No matter how hard he pulled the actor wasn’t letting him go.

“Is everything okay here?” the director asked. “What’s going on?”

“This arsehole is hurting me!”

“Don’t speak to me like that.” The actor snapped. “My date here has just forgotten his manners. Excuse us for a second so we can sort this out.”

The actor’s eyes weren’t leaving Louis, so he didn’t see how the director was looking around them worriedly.

She wasn’t going anywhere, which had Louis smirking. He flinched when the actor’s grip tightened, and said “You realise there’s cameras everywhere, yeah? You can’t do anything to me without it getting caught on camera so let me go.”

“I’m not planning on doing anything to you.” The actor spat. “But I’m not letting you go until you tell me what the fuck is going on with you right now.”

“What’s going on is that I’m **going. Leaving. Getting the next plane back to London. Get it yet?”**

“You can’t, you’ve signed a contract.”

“Then sue me. I don’t give a fuck.”

“Fine.” The actor snapped, finally letting go of his arm. It ached where his fingers had been, Louis was desperate to check if the grip had bruised him. “But just know I can and will ruin any chances you’ve ever had at becoming an actor. I could have made you the next big thing.”

Louis couldn’t help but roll his eyes, shouting “Get over yourself, you twat!” over his shoulder as he walked away, heading in the direction of where they’d arrived at.

Someone’s hand shot out from nowhere to land on his chest, and Louis turned to see that it was a reporter who’d stopped him, not the actor he’d assumed it was. “Just a few questions. You’re the one who found the jungle boy, right?”

“Yes.” Louis sighed. “Can you tell me how to get out of this place?”

“Why do you want to leave? Where is Harry, is it true he’s returned to the jungle? What was your relationship with him?”

“You realise you’re not giving me any time to answer, right? Not that I’m going to. Just a bit of
And Louis began walking again, ignoring the reporter who was now following him, throwing questions at the back of his head as he hurried off.

He jumped into a limo just after two celebrities got out of it, telling the driver to carry on doing whatever it was he had to do, that he’d jump out at the other end and call a cab to get himself home.

When the car had stopped in a parking lot filled with other limos, Louis immediately called his manager.

“So I guess you’ve made up your mind then.” She said after Louis told her where he was and what had happened mere minutes before.

“About what?”

“About whether or not you want to act.”

“Yeah, well, kind of an easy decision to make in the end. A bit of time spent with all those wankers was all I needed to figure it out. Christ, I never want to be like that again. They’re like those creepy antique dolls my auntie has. Done up all pretty to admire from a distance, but locked away in glass cabinets so you can’t get close enough to see all the cracks and faded paint.”

“What are you talking about Louis?” she sighed.

“You’re not meant to get close to celebrities because you realise there’s nothing about them that should be admired. I can’t surround myself with people like that, and I sure as fuck don’t want to be one of them. I’m not cut out for that shit.”

“What happened to the Louis of a few months ago? Who signed away his soul for a chance to be famous?”

“Guess I found some dignity since then. Realised I’m a person and not a personality. I got to see what’s good about humanity, and now I want to be someone he’d be proud of. I’d be proud of. Fuck, I don’t know. I just want to be with Ha– him – but that’s not going to happen. Just get me back to London as soon as you can, I feel like I’m going mental. Please?”

“Of course.” She said quickly. “And for what it’s worth, I think you’re doing the right thing. You’re too good for all that. You care about others. And I know you don’t think so, but you are a good person. Show business is for greedy people, and you aren’t one of them.”

---

Louis spent his first four days back in London in bed. Sometimes he’d leave it to get some bread to eat from the kitchen or sit on the sofa to watch TV with his duvet wrapped around his shoulders, and obviously he needed the occasional piss, but mostly he just stayed in his bedroom sifting through his thoughts.

He knew he missed Harry, and over time he’d be able to get over him, but the problem was that Louis really didn’t want to. Even though Harry was miles away and unable to be contacted, Louis didn’t want to give up on them. He wanted it to be just as Harry said, with the physical separation not keeping them apart.

But he’d taken to sleeping during the day and spending all night by his window, looking out at the
sky in search of stars. Only he never saw them, not even a single one, and he decided it was high time he got over himself and gave Harry’s lifestyle a shot.

Harry had left his home and loved ones to be with someone he’d known for a few hours, all because of a hunch, and Louis was over waiting for his problems to fix themselves.

He’d never been happier since he met Harry, and he’d never been sadder than when he lost him again.

And now he was going to go get him back.

But then, as quickly as those thoughts came, they’d be replaced with ones telling him the total opposite.

That, realistically, there was no way he could live in a treehouse in the middle of fucking nowhere, scrummaging for food and the like. He’d never gone a day in his life without some sort of electrical item. Like lights. How the fuck was he going to see in the dark without lights? What would he do without his phone? And a telly? How was he going to entertain himself? There really was no chance in hell he’d get by out there. If he didn’t get eaten by some kind of wild animal, he’d definitely die of boredom.

His thoughts were at constant war, flicking from extreme to extreme, and he was getting sick of it.

He needed to get out of the house, so he called his mates and invited them out for a few drinks at his local pub.

He had to bring a bodyguard because the reporters had become even more insistent since Harry’s disappearance, and despite the pub being just at the end of his street he had to be driven around the block a few times to lose them.

When he finally got there, Zayn and Niall were already waiting for him, pints half empty.

There was a full glass waiting for him, and Louis took a long gulp of it before sitting down on the available stool. “Where’s Li?”

“On his way, I think. Messaged me ten or so minutes ago to say he was at his Tube station.” Zayn replied. “Should be here soon.”

“Right.” Louis nodded.

“How are you feeling?” Niall asked sincerely.

Louis sighed and said “Shit.”

“How was the States? Haven’t seen you since before you left.”

“It was shit too.” Louis said, and at Niall’s encouragement told them everything that had happened, from their dinner date to the moment he’d ditched the actor at the awards ceremony.

“He couldn’t have been happy about that.” Zayn said softly. “What are you going to do now?”


“You said that about models once, remember? Before you started? And look what happened after that.”
“But that was when I was eighteen and desperate! I’m older now. More mature. I can think clearly about what I want.” Which was a total lie, considering the state of his head the past few days.

But Zayn believed him, replying with “I suppose. Just, ever since I’ve known you you’ve always talked about wanting more. I can’t really imagine you just… quitting it.”

“Well I am.” Louis grunted.

Then Niall piped up with “You going to quit modelling too?” and Louis replied with a shrug and another long drink.

It was silent until Liam showed up, Louis refusing to say anything more and neither of the others attempting to coax more from him.

But Liam most certainly had no qualms about getting right to the painful stuff. The first thing he asked, after greeting them all and complaining about the Tube, was “How are you coping without Harry?”

Louis glared, and replied with “Not well.” And then, despite his initial decision to not mention him at all that evening, he was spilling out everything that had been going through his head since Harry had left. How he’d never felt more alone, how every single thing he looked at reminded him of Harry, how he was desperate to get him out of his head and heart. But how much he’d hate it if that happened, because then Harry would truly be gone and with it a big chunk of himself. He wanted to regret ever meeting Harry, but he couldn’t do that. Harry had changed him for the better and he never even thanked him properly for that. He never even told him he loved him.

“Well maybe you should.” Zayn said. “Maybe you should go and tell him.”

“I’m not moving to the fucking Congo, Zayn.” Louis snorted.

“I never said you had to move there. You realise return plane tickets exist, yeah? Just go to him, try it out for a bit, and see what you prefer. Life there with him, or life here without.”

“But – I don’t even know where he is. I mean, I know he’d probably be where that treehouse is, but the Congo is massive. How would I even find it? Plus, there’s work. I can’t just up and leave it.”

Liam gave him his most condescending look and said “When was the last time you had a modelling job? I doubt your manager will mind. She seems nice enough, and she obviously cares about you.”

“Fine. I could skip work. But how would I find Harry, Mr Optimist?” Louis snapped.

Liam frowned, opening his mouth to say something before closing it again, obviously coming up speechless.

“Did anything you took from the treehouse have coordinates or something?” Zayn asked.

Louis pursed his lips in thought. “Not that I can remember. I suppose I could look.” Then his friends all grinned wide, so he was quick to add “It doesn’t mean I’m going to definitely go! I just – will look into the possibility. No point considering going if I can’t even track him down.”

“Fair point.” Niall nodded.

And Liam added “We just want you to be happy.”
The four of them all went back to Louis’ after a few more beers, making the mistake of walking home rather than getting a lift with the driver.

They were spotted by reporters one hundred or so feet from his building, and had to fend them off for the rest of the walk. The camera flashes were stinging his eyes, the shrill voices asking intrusive questions had his ears ringing and fists clenching, but he managed to get into his building without uttering a single word. Niall, however hadn’t stopped talking. Well, singing more like. He shouted out lyrics over their voices, making the rest of the boys laugh. It made it much easier to ignore the reporters, and was probably the reason Louis hadn’t snapped.

The first thing Louis did when he got up to the flat was grab the satchel of papers and journals taken from Harry’s treehouse.

He dumped them on the table and the other boys sat down after grabbing more beers and locating some crisps.

There were muttered complaints of how bare Louis’ fridge and pantry were, but Louis didn’t dignify those with a response. He was too busy splitting up the papers for him and his mates to look through.

But they all came up short. There was no mention of the location their studies took place. Nothing about the treehouse.

Louis’ heart sank. It wasn’t until the chance to go find Harry had been taken away, leaving staying in the city and getting over him his only option, that he realised how much he wanted to go to the jungle.

His friends were silent, noticing his defeat and having no idea how to comfort him.

“Now what the fuck am I going to do?” Louis groaned, putting the balls of his palms to his eyes and pressing in until light fizzled beneath his lids.

“I have an idea.” Zayn suddenly said. “But you might not like it.”

Louis took his hands from his face and sighed “Go on.”

“You could ask Harry’s Mum.” He suggested, but before Louis could do anything more than frown he said “Just hear me out! She’d have to know the exact location, she’s pretty much your only way of finding him. And yeah, she may not be the best person, but I doubt she’d be hard to convince to help.”

“Not the best person? She treated her own son, one she hadn’t seen for eighteen years, like some kind of potential research project!”

“Yeah, okay. But she is your only option.”

“I could try the Uni. They might have found stuff out. Or my manager.”

“I suppose.” Zayn shrugged. “Unlikely though, but go ahead and ask them.”

---
Zayn had been right, of course. His manager knew nothing more than he did, and the researchers hadn’t exactly put any effort into discovering the location of the tree house.

Which was good, he supposed, because it meant they couldn’t track him down later for further research.

But it did mean he had to contact Harry’s mother.

Who at some point recently had changed her phone number, meaning Louis had to go to see her at the zoo.

She was feeding the gorillas bananas when Louis got there, and after some vigorous waving she came over to the fence to suss him out.

“Oh,” she frowned when she was close enough to realise who he was. “It’s you.”

“Yeah. I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t important, so can we talk for a sec?”

“You know, it would have been good to see him before he left. You could have told me he was going so I could say goodbye.” She replied, eyes hard.

Louis clenched his jaw tight, wanting nothing more than to defend his actions and put the blame on her but knowing that wasn’t going to get him anywhere. So instead, he apologised. “I know, I’m sorry, but it was his own choice. He missed the jungle too much, and once he made up his mind to go back it all happened terribly quickly.”

She hummed, lips pursed in obvious disbelief. But still, she said “Fine, we can talk. What do you want to know?”

“I want to know where the tree house is, where you and Harry’s dad raised him.”

“Why?”

“I need to find him.”

That had her expression changing to something far more sympathetic than suspicious. “Is something wrong? Is he okay?”

“He’s fine, it’s me. I just really need to see him.”

And just like that, she was back to cold. “Oh. Well, I’m afraid I can’t help you then.”

“Please!” he begged. “I’m desperate. I want to be with him.”

“How do I know he didn’t go back there to get away from you?” she asked, which had Louis stopping short.

Maybe she cared a lot more than Louis had assumed. “I suppose you don’t. You could ask the Uni researchers though. They knew him well, he trusted them. And they trusted me, they’ll tell you as much. Please, I’m desperate, I need to be with him.”

She was silent for a moment, eyes fixed to his, gaze unwavering as she contemplated giving him the information he wanted. Finally, when Louis was at the very end of his tether, she replied with “Fine, I’ll tell you.”

“Thankyou!” Louis sighed out in disbelief. “Just give me the coordinates or something and I’ll
figure it out from there.”

“I’m not going to do that.” She frowned. “I’m going to take you myself. We’re going to go there together.”
Louis knew it wasn’t a good idea.

He knew that Harry’s Mum couldn’t be trusted, that she was unstable and her actions unpredictable.

But, he also knew that there was nothing stopping her going to find Harry by herself. He’d tried to assure her that going would be a bad idea, that Harry wouldn’t want to see her, but she didn’t accept that information. She was convinced her going would be the best thing for him.

So, if Louis rejected her offer on some kind of moral ground the only one losing out would be him, and if she was to go Louis would much rather be there to monitor her actions.

He agreed to her offer when it became obvious that her mind was made up and arguing the information out of her was futile. Having her company on the journey was far from ideal, but it was Louis’ only option to see Harry again.

He called his manager under the watchful eye of Harry’s mum, and she agreed that it would be for the best and set about booking them tickets.

“It’s done.” Louis said as he pocketed his phone. “Flights are booked for two days’ time.”

“That’s too soon. I have to give work notice.”

Louis frowned and said “I’m sure you can figure something out. I’m not waiting to see Harry any longer then I have to.”

When he got home, the first thing he did was pull a suitcase out from the top of his wardrobe and put it on his bed. He stared at it for a moment, wracking his brain for items he should pack. What does someone moving to the jungle bring with them? Electronics were obviously out of the question, as were any kind of fancy clothes and shoes. He needed to get some proper hiking boots because his trainers would surely fall apart after some trekking through the wilderness. He’d only ever bought things that looked good, nothing that was built to last. He was going to have to get practical if he wanted to survive out in the wild.

He sighed and flopped down on the bed beside his case. Why wasn’t he one of those types that enjoyed wildlife and the like? Fishing and mountain climbing and bush-walking? Trying to pack would be a whole lot easier if he’d done anything remotely similar before. When he went to the jungle for the shoot he was told to bring comfortable clothes, but he was only going for a couple of days.

He remembered how Liam once told him he’d done a lot of hiking with his dad when he was younger, so he sent him a quick message to ask for some ideas.

Liam couldn’t come because he was working, so Louis tried Zayn instead.

Who came over to help, but he was just as unsure as Louis with where to start.

“You can’t exactly pull a case through the jungle, can you? You need to get a proper backpack.”
Zayn said, already proving himself useful.

“Yeah, good point.” Louis nodded as he pushed the case off of his bed. “Now what?”

“Maybe pack pants?” he suggested with a shrug

Louis went to his pants draw and grabbed a handful of them. Then decided better of it and emptied the whole draw onto his bed. “I won’t exactly be wearing much else will I?” he asked. “Harry runs around naked.”

“Maybe you need more like, stuff you can’t get in the jungle. Like laundry powder and shit. Toilet paper.”

“Christ.” Louis winced. “What the fuck am I doing?”

“Moving countries for the person you love. Now get on with it.” Zayn added, nodding to the case.

“I need to make a shopping list for things I need.” Louis suggested, pulling out his phone and opening the shopping list app. Fuck, he’d have to say goodbye to his phone too. It held his whole life for so long.

“So you need toilet paper, washing powder.” Zayn prompted, and Louis typed them out. “Shampoo and soap and toothpaste.”

“How much of this though? A life-time’s supply? There’ll have to be a time where I stop using this stuff. I wonder how long it’ll take ‘til I adapt.”

“You’re not going forever, are you?” Zayn asked, concern spreading quick across his face. “I thought you were just going to give it a go.”

“Yeah, but – I dunno. Depends on how well I can live without all this stuff. Whether my idea of what’s necessary changes or not.”

“Right.” Zayn nodded.

“Hey, could you house-sit for me when I’m gone? Your sister’s due to move in soon, saves you finding a new place for a bit.”

“Yeah, of course.” Zayn replied without hesitation. “I can do that.”

“Sick.” Louis grinned, and turned back to his phone. “How essential is shaving cream, do you think?”

---

Louis ended up bringing three large bags to the airport with him, only one of which had clothes. It’d been a tricky thing categorising all of his belongings into Yes or Nos, and he was surprised at how easy it became as he went; how much of what he owned he didn’t really need.

He was also surprised at how many cool gadgets that were available, and stocked up on anything solar-powered he could get his hands on. He bought torches and a GPS navigator and even a satellite phone.

He almost bought the solar-powered hair dryer but thought that might be a bit excessive.

Harry’s mum only had a large backpack with her, and rolled her eyes when she saw all of Louis’.
“Are you going to carry the lot of those yourself through the jungle? It’s a good day’s walk where we’re going. And that’s without stops.”

“I can manage.” He replied, voice just as stilted as hers. “If the only words you’re planning on saying to me are condescending then we may as well not talk at all.”

“I just want to get you there in one piece.” She sighed. “But fine, I’ll try to be nicer. We’ve got a long way to go.”

Louis’ manager booked him in Business class and Harry’s Mum in economy, which was a pretty harsh move but he was grateful for it. A few less hours of having to talk to her would probably do the world of good, plus the comfortable seat and fancier food would be the last bit of luxury he’d have for a while.

The flight was only seven hours but it felt far longer; one minute Louis was desperate for the plane to land so he could be in the same country as Harry and so that much closer to him, and the next he was nervous as all hell about what he was doing and wanted to stay on his comfortable seat being served by air-hosts forever. It was all very confusing. Louis was inside his head for the entire flight, weighing up the positives and negatives, reconsidering whether this was really the best idea for him or Harry, so he was completely surprised when a voice sounded over the intercom to tell them the plane was descending. It felt like he’d only just got on.

But with the voice came a clear moment of sanity.

His stomach filled with butterflies as he put his seatbelt back on. He was so close to Harry, so close to seeing him again, and a smile spread wide over his face without him even realising it.

---

Louis realised after two hours of walking that he really should have listened to Harry’s Mum when she questioned the number of bags he had. Not that he would ever admit it.

He had one bag on his front, one on his back and the other in his arms. He could barely see where he was going, continuously tripping over the branches under his feet until Harry’s Mum took pity on him and wordlessly took a bag off of him.

“Thanks.” Louis sighed in relief.

“I’m not going to carry this the whole way, mind.” She said with a raised eyebrow. “We just need to speed up the pace if we want to reach Harry before it gets dark. Or the treehouse, at least. We can’t be sure that’s even where he is.”

“That’s where he and his gorilla mates were when he found me, though.”

“Yes, but gorillas aren’t exactly homebodies.”

“What do you mean?”

“They don’t stay in the same place for long. It actually astounds me that they’re still there considering how long it’s been since we originally found the group.”

“That’s odd?”

“Yes, very. It would be especially unusual if they’ve stayed in that spot for the entire time since we left. When my ex-husband and I conducted research there for those years the group didn’t just stay
in that one place. They would move, and we would follow them to observe. When Harry was born they
stopped their movement and actually set up a home for themselves around the base of the tree
where we lived. It was very intriguing, and I knew then that they were far too interested in Harry
for my liking.”

Louis stumbled, causing her to stop talking and look to him. “Sorry. Please continue, it’s
interesting.”

She simply nodded to him and carried on walking. “They heard Harry’s cries when he was first
born, and came up to investigate. I’d just been through labour, without any kind of drugs mind you,
so I was too out of it to shoo them away, though I don’t know what my ex’s excuse was. He just let
them come in through the windows to have a look at little baby Harry. Of course, he wasn’t called
that. We never gave him a name, you know? I think that’s why – I was never very attached to
him.”

Louis stayed silent, despite the screaming that was going on his head. How could she not name her
baby? What did she call Harry for the first two years of his life?

“I know what you’re thinking.” She said with a cold voice. “And it was awful of me, I know that.
For a long time I thought that’s why he got taken from me, because I didn’t love him like I should
have. I just never imagined that my first baby would be born like that, far away from any of my
family and friends. My husband at the time was more interested in the apes than in me and our son,
and I just felt disconnected and lonely. I believe people would call it postnatal depression, but I
didn’t realise that then. I just thought that I was a horrible person who deserved to have my baby
taken from me. Even seeing him recently, I didn’t feel anything for him that a mother should feel.”

“I’m sorry.” Louis said, because he truly was. For what had happened to her, for how she felt, for
how he’d judged her.

“I am too. I should have handled seeing Harry differently. I understand why he was upset. It would
have been confusing for him. I can’t help but think that I’m the reason he came back here.”

“You know he never really wanted to find you.” Louis admitted, and she looked back to frown at
him. “I just mean – I don’t think he left the city because he was disappointed in you or whatever.
Me and the LSE researchers were far more interested in finding you than he ever was. He was
happy having gorillas for family, but we searched you out and encouraged him to meet you. The
whole thing might have scared him, but it wasn’t the reason he left. It had been coming for a long
time, him leaving. London was just too much for him, he missed here and his gorillas too much.”

“Okay. Thankyou.” She replied shortly.

Those stilted words were the last spoken between them for a while.

It was getting darker the deeper into the jungle they went. They had a lot of stops, Louis huffing
with exhaustion with all the weight he was carrying.

On the third stop Louis downed half of his water bottle, and on the fifth they ate the sandwiches
they’d bought from the airport. Louis got a stitch after that, and their pace slowed down immensely
because of it.

He collapsed against a tree when the pain got to be too much, and Harry’s Mum sat down on a
fallen log next to him.

“We do need to hurry, it will be dark soon and we aren’t safe here.”
Louis blinked his eyes open, hand on his chest as he sucked in deep breaths. “Fuck this is hard. I’m just happy I got the shoes for it.”

That made her smile. “They are nice shoes.”

“You should have seen me the last time I was here.” he paused to suck in a breath. “Only had trainers. Could barely walk.”

“You sound like you’re dying.” She sighed. “I can’t carry any more of your bags for you, I don’t have the hands.”

“I know.”

She let him catch his breath before she demanded they carry on, pushing him on occasionally with a gentle hand to his lower back.

“We haven’t got much longer, only a couple of hours I’d say.”

“Good.”

“We should stop talking, it’ll make things easier on your lungs.”

“Thanks.” He nodded, barely managing those single-word sentences.

It was terribly embarrassing how much he was struggling. He wouldn’t call himself unfit, he’d had to keep his body toned for his career, but fuck was the journey pushes him to his limits. Harry’s Mum, on the other hand, was easily managing the rough terrain, climbing over logs and pushing aside branches like it was something she did daily.

After only a small bit of time, Louis collapsed onto the ground and couldn’t get up.

It wasn’t that he didn’t want to; his legs just refused to move. He was shaking like jelly with exhaustion.

He weakly stretched out his hand to take the water bottle he was offered, drinking the liquid down in huge gulps.

“Take it easy. You don’t want to get a stitch again.”

“How much longer?” he puffed. Even talking hurt; his lungs were screaming at him to just focus on breathing.

“Maybe a couple of hours.”

“You said that.” He winced and put a hand to his ribs. “Before.”

“I thought we’d be moving quicker.”

“Are we lost?”

“No,” she said, but she sounded unsure. “Things just look a lot different now than they did. I know if we keep heading in this direction we’ll get there, but I just don’t know how much longer it’ll take. Does anything look familiar to you?”

“Just looks like trees.” Louis snorted. “All the same to me.”
Just as Harry’s mum was opening her mouth to say something, there was a loud shriek not too far from where they were.

“Christ.” Louis groaned, forcing himself up and off the ground. “We need to keep going. Need to get to Harry before something else finds us.”

“That was just a monkey, we’ll be fine.” She said, but again she wasn’t very convincing. “We do need to keep going though. It’s getting harder and harder to see. If we’re still out here when it’s completely dark then we’ll be easy prey.”

“Easy prey?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if we’re being followed by something right now, waiting for the right time to strike.”

Louis had his bags on his shoulders again before she’d even finished her sentence, the danger of being eaten alive become all too real for him. He’d known what kind of animals were in the jungle, he’d heard Harry’s stories of panther-wrestling, but he still didn’t think it would be likely for him to see anything scarier than a few snakes.

“Christ, let’s hurry the fuck up then.” He demanded. He had no idea where he found the strength to push on, but he wasn’t going to question it.

Louis had only taken a few steps before something dropped down from above his head and landed right in front of him.

He let out a squeal, and before being able to comprehend what it was before him, he was being pulled into a hug.

“Lou!” Harry cried, and continued to chant his name as he pressed wet kisses all over Louis’ dirty face. Then Harry pulled back, hands cupping Louis’ chin, and grinned incredibly wide. “I so happy you here. So so happy Lou.”

“Fuck.” Louis choked out, then pulled Harry in for a proper kiss.

There was the clearing of a throat behind him, and Louis broke the kiss to glare at Harry’s mum.


“I needed her to help me find you.”

Harry eyed her with uncertainty, and she just stood back and let him. “What you want?” He grunted out, and she dropped her gaze to the ground.

“I wanted to see you again. You left before I could make things right.”

Harry didn’t say anything, just knelt down to pick Louis’ bags up off the floor. He pulled them over his shoulders, barely breaking a sweat despite the weight of them.

“Thanks babe.” Louis sighed.

Harry pressed his lips quick to Louis’ forehead and said “We go home now. Not far away. You come too.” He added with a nod in his mum’s direction. “Not safe at night alone. Leopards might come get you.”

“Thankyou.” She replied, picking up her own bag and leaving Louis to collect his third from her.
Which Harry immediately took off him as well, adding it to the collection of bags hanging from his shoulders.

Louis gave Harry a pointed look, and the jungle man rolled his eyes and said “You very too tired right now for bags. Just be happy I not carrying you, too.”

Louis grinned at that; it was just so bloody Harry of him to say that. “Fuck am I glad to see you.”

---

The tree house was nothing like Louis remembered it, and not just because this time round he was seeing it at dusk, the place bathed in a pinkie-golden glow.

Harry had done some sprucing since he’d been back.

He’d swept the floor of dirt and the ceiling of cobwebs, fixed the furniture that had been broken, washed the rugs and bedding; it all looked amazing.

“I can definitely see myself living here.” Louis grinned.

“The crib is gone.” Harry’s mum said as she approached the bed. “Everything else looks just how it was eighteen years ago, but I remember the crib.”

“It gone.” Harry replied, shrugging half-heartedly. “I smashed it to use the wood and nails in it for fixing table and chairs.”

She nodded, and sat down on the bed. “Am I okay to stay here tonight? It is your house now, I know that.”

“Of course.” Harry huffed, and slid his hand through Louis’. “I sleep outside with mother, you and Louis stay in here for tonight.”

“But Harry –” Louis squeaked. “I want to stay with you!”

Harry shook his head. “I can’t. My mother sick. She needs me with her.”

“What do you mean, sick?”

“She’d be old now.” Harry’s human Mum cut in. “At least thirty five years old. Gorillas don’t live much longer than that.

“She’s dying?” Louis asked, turning from Harry’s mum to the man himself. “Is that what you mean by sick?”

Harry nodded silently, and Louis was quick to wrap his arms around his neck.

“Oh love, I’m so sorry.”

“It okay. I here with her to help make live a little longer. She not eating so I find her food and make her, and getting her water.”

“Gorillas don’t drink water.” His mum shook her head. “They get the required amount from the food they eat.”

“But she not eating the food so she thirsty.” Harry snapped. “I care for her, it okay. I here with her for the last of her times. That why I staying with her, not in here. I will Lou, when she goes I will.”
Harry assured him with wide, worried eyes and a rapid nod.

“Don’t worry about that, love, I’m not going anywhere. You stay with your mum and I’ll be up here with – your other mum.” He added with a crooked smile, and Harry kissed him hard as thanks before hurrying out the door.

“Not quite the reunion you were expecting, was it?”

Louis turned to find Harry’s mum sifting through the items on the table. There were oddly shaped rocks and some incredibly large leaves along the middle; Harry’s attempt at decorating. “I didn’t have any expectations.”

“You thought he’d be out of your sight again within an hour of seeing him?”

Louis frowned. “No.” Then he sighed and got down on his knees in front of his bags, opening one up so he could start finding places for his things.

“May I help?” she asked gently, and Louis shrugged. “I just need something to do. It’s strange being back here.”

“Yeah.” He sighed. “Got practically a whole bag of toilet paper and toothpaste here to empty.”

“I’d keep all that in there if I was you.” She said, suddenly grinning wide. The resemblance Harry had to her was uncanny when she smiled. “Baby gorillas are very mischievous, as are chimps. If they find something they’ve never seen before, chances are they’ll pull it all apart until they’ve explored every inch. I’m sure you’d rather your toilet paper to remain on the rolls and the toothpaste to stay inside the tubes.”

Louis groaned and pushed that bag away; he was way too out of his depth for this. “I’ll hang up my clothes then.”

All of Harry’s dad’s old shirts had been taken from the closet, and in their place was the few items of clothing Harry brought with him.

And, surprisingly, one of Louis’ suit jackets. He hadn’t even noticed it was missing, hadn’t realised it was something that held enough meaning for Harry to just take, but it made him smile.

He pushed it aside though, searching for some more hangers but coming up empty. He’d never have expected that his first problem adapting to this new life in the jungle would be where to put his clothes.

“There’s a few chests under the bed.” Harry’s mum said, as if she could read his mind. She crouched down on the ground and pulled them out. “Harry was thorough with his cleaning. Not a speck of dust on them.” She opened them up and smiled. “Or in them. Completely empty. They’re all yours.”

“Thankyou.” Louis murmured, and dragged his bag over to where she was. They were just plain wooden boxes, probably from Ikea. The thought had him asking “How did you get all this stuff here?”

She twisted her mouth to the side and furrowed her brow, obviously contemplating how much exactly she could tell him.

Louis looked away from her, making a show of unpacking his clothes from his case to give her time to think.
It took her a while to make up her mind, not uttering a thing until Louis’ bag was almost empty. She broke the silence with “It wasn’t just me and my ex husband here at first. We had a research team.”

Louis paused for a moment, then simply nodded his head and carried on with his unpacking, unsure of how he was supposed to react. Would she prefer it if he gave her his full attention, or would that make her close up again?

Obviously his downturned eyes helped her speak, because soon she added “I met him in Uni. He was a professor, actually. Not where I studied, though he did come in to teach two lessons as a guest lecturer. He was a researcher at the University of Manchester, and I was studying Zoology at Salford. I formed a bit of a crush on him, obviously, but I never thought he’d be interested in me too. He was quite a few years older, but he was so incredibly intelligent and passionate and I admired him for that. I thought I loved him, of course. I was young and naïve, and he was very charismatic and persuasive. I don’t know how it happened exactly, I can’t recall my train of thought at the time, but I found myself on a plane to the Congo with his research team, moving out to the middle of nowhere to study apes. There were five of us all up, and another twenty locals were hired to help carry all of our belongings. Half of them had to have made at least thirty trips back and forth from the main town to this very spot, carrying all of the equipment we needed for construction. The other half cut down trees for wood and helped build this place.”

Louis looked up at that. A bunch of people who, presumably, knew nothing of construction built a house in the trees? One that lasted over twenty years? “I’m surprised it’s still standing.” He muttered under his breath.

And before he could even regret his words, she was grinning. “I am too. Every night for the first few months I was terrified the house was just going to drop, but here it still is.”

“So what happened to everyone?”

“They all went home after seven or eight months. Got bored, I suppose. I wanted to go with them, but of course I was convinced to stay. Not long after I realised I was pregnant, and a few months after that I was giving birth.”

“So how come you didn’t go home then? When you realised you were pregnant?”

“He wanted to stay and I was still very much under his thumb. Once the baby was born, and the gorillas began to latch on to him, I knew we should go home but still my ex refused. It wasn’t until Harry disappeared that he actually listened to me.”

Louis stood up, eyes fixed to hers. She broke their gaze, though, and walked over to the other side of the room. She opened up some cabinets, and Louis saw a few mismatched mugs and plastic cups before she shut it again to look inside the next one. “Something doesn’t make sense to me. Why would you leave without knowing where he was?”

“He told me Harry was dead.”

“Why did he think that?”

“He told me he found Harry’s body. He said I wouldn’t be able to handle the sight so he buried it before I could see.”

“He lied.”

“Obviously.” She sighed. “I don’t know why, and I’ve regretted not demanding he show me the
“body ever since I found out Harry was alive.”

“Why would he lie?”

“I don’t know.”

“Sounds like a real fucking prick.”

“He was much worse than that.” She grumbled under her breath. “Did you pack any tea bags?”

Louis snorted. Of course he fucking did.

She pulled out two mugs and a pot from the cupboards, and Louis tried not to grimace at the state of them. The pot was pure-red with rust.

“It’s fine in the inside.” She said. It was creepy how well she could read him. She picked up a straw-basket that had been sitting beside the front door and put the pot inside it, along with a thermos. “I’m going to climb down and build a fire to boil some water.”

“I’ve got a solar-powered cooker!” Louis offered up, and leant down to search through the two bags that remained unpacked.

“I’m assuming you need to charge it before you use it.” she smiled small. “Besides, I still need to get some fresh water. There’s a rain water tank that can be reached by climbing out of one of the windows, but I’d have to clean it out before it can be used again. There’s a lake nearby, I can go to that.”

Louis simply nodded, and watched as she began her descent down the ladder.

When she was out of sight, he flopped back onto the bed and clenched his eyes shut, pushing the balls of his palms into his eye sockets.

It felt like he’d just stepped into some fucked up episode of Jeremy Kyle.

He pitied her, he really did, but he still couldn’t completely understand how she could have just left the jungle like that, so sure Harry was dead without seeing the evidence.

Though she’d said it herself: she never really loved Harry.

Then there was what Harry had said all that time ago, how his gorilla mother said she’d taken Harry because he was ill and wasn’t being cared for by his parents. Which could have been a lie, he supposed. Thing was, he’d never really thought it was possible for animals to lie.

It was all doing his head in. Things weren’t adding up. The more he found out the more confused he felt.

Perhaps Harry had been right not to want to know anything. Sometimes ignorance really was bliss.

It wasn’t even his business to sort through, was the thing. It was between Harry and his human mum and for some reason Louis had wormed his way into the middle of it.

It was high time he stepped back and let the two of them talk it out. If Harry wanted explanations then he could ask for them, and if she wanted forgiveness then that was only something Harry could give her. If they wanted a mediator, then they’d have to ask him to be because, as of now, Louis was done looking for answers.
He considered sitting up again once his thoughts were compartmentalised, but decided a few more minutes just lying down couldn’t hurt. Not like how his body was, anyway.

His legs throbbed as blood rushed back into them, reminding him just how much walking he’d done that day. His shoulders and neck were tightly knotted from carrying the heavy bags and his knees were scraped up from all the falls he’d taken.

So, really, a few minutes’ nap would be for the best.

Except, of course, a few minutes rolled into a few hours, and he didn’t wake until the morning sun crept through the window.

He blinked his eyes awake, and it took a good minute for it to hit him where he was.

He sat up carefully, and spotted Harry’s human mum curled up on an armchair in a corner of the room, sleeping with her head resting on a propped up cushion. He gently woke her and offered her the bed, and she groggily accepted, climbing in without uttering a word and falling asleep immediately.

Louis took the chair she’d just been occupying, and looked about the room, properly taking it in.

He hadn’t the evening before, too tired to notice anything but how clean and ordered it looked. He’d seen the cabinets that held the kitchen utensils, but not the counters below them. The dining table was just in front, two chairs tucked under it. Then there was the chair he was sitting on with a rug underneath it, and the bed and wardrobe on the opposite side of the room.

He wondered not for the first time how more than two people could possibly live in this place. She’d said the night before there were more researchers than just her and her husband, so where did they live? Surely not in the house too.

He stopped himself before he could dwell on it further, remembering his promise to quit asking questions so he wouldn’t have to find answers. It wasn’t worth the worry, he could live without the information.

A yawn ripped itself from his throat, so wide his eyes watered.

Before he considered going back to sleep, Harry climbed through the door.

“Morning, Lou.” He said cheerily, and planted himself on top of Louis’ lap.

“Hey love.” Louis grinned and wrapped his arms around Harry’s waist. “What are we going to do today?”

“I show you to find food today. Remember when I comes to live in London first and you taught me? Now I teach you things for living. It fun, yes?”

“I guess.” Louis sighed, and Harry pinched his thigh hard.

“Don’t whinge! It be fun I promise.”

“Okay! That hurt, you know? My legs are very sensitive at the moment. Had to walk all day yesterday.”

“Baby.” Harry laughed. “Whingey sooky baby! Now come on, we go get breakfast.”

Louis climbed down the ladder after Harry, groaning when Harry grabbed his waist a few rungs
from the bottom and pulled him down the rest of the way.

“I can do things myself you know!”

Harry smiled. “I know, I just wanted to hold you a little bit.”

“Oh.” Louis said, and found himself blushing. Which was embarrassing, and something Harry took way too much joy in.

He poked Louis’ warm pink cheeks with his fingers, then kissed each one quick before planting his lips on Louis’.

“You’re very affectionate today.” Louis said, pulling back from the kiss. “Not that I’m complaining.”

“Just missed you lots. Want to kiss you all the time right now but first you need food.”

“I do.”

“I first show you where the banana trees are! Then what the good berries and yummy bugs.”

“Bugs?” Louis cried. “I’m not eating bugs!”

“We have to! For the meats!”

“No fucking way.” He snapped. “I’ll catch fish or something.”

Harry snorted at that, but didn’t say anything further; just took Louis’ hand and began to walk.

Louis’ wilderness-trekking had definitely improved, he decided. He still tripped up a bit, and was nowhere near as light on his feet as Harry was, but he was getting there. He didn’t catch his feet on every single root, and could handle low-hanging branches with ease, but he wasn’t quite able to predict which sticks would fly up and scratch at his legs if he stood on them, or which rocks would wobble under his feet. But he remained optimistic; he’d learn those things eventually. It was just nice being able to walk beside Harry again, fingers entwined, sharing little glances and grins.

Suddenly Harry stopped and pointed upwards with the hand that wasn’t holding Louis’. “Bananas up there. You climb the tree and get them.”

Louis looked up, frowning when he realised just how high they were. “Okay, but how do I chop them off the branch?”

Harry shrugged. “You don’t need to chop. Just pull bunch very hard.”

It wasn’t nearly as easy as Harry made it out to be.

Louis couldn’t even get up the trunk.

“Take off your shoes.” Harry suggested, watching with lips quirked upwards at the corners. “Grip with your toes.”

Louis pulled his hiking boots off, and stuffed his socks inside them. He then wrapped his arms around the tree and put his feet up on the bark, attempting to shimmy his way up.

He did get higher, but not by much.
Louis almost slipped when he felt Harry’s hands cupping his arse cheeks, letting out a high pitched “What are you doing?”

“Helping you up.” Harry grunted, then added as he pushed “You heavy.”

Louis got as high as he could with the leverage, but once Harry could no longer reach him Louis got stuck. Each time he tried to step up his feet slipped and he dropped a few inches down.

“This isn’t working!” he groaned. “I can’t do this! Can you go get a ladder or something?”

Harry was silent for a moment, so Louis looked down to make sure he was still there. Luckily he still was, had just been quietly thinking, because Louis lost his grip when he turned and fell, crashing down on top of Harry.

“Fuck, sorry.” Louis groaned, rolling off of Harry’s body.

“It okay.” He sighed. “I not hurt, you not get high enough to hurt me.”

“Good, I suppose.” Louis said with a pout, miserable that he was failing his very first lesson in the jungle.

“It fine Lou.” Harry assured him. “I can just do the tree climbing! You can do the berry picking, yes? That on the ground.”

“Yeah, all right.”

“Don’t be sad!” Harry whined, and pulled Louis into his chest. “You be good at different things. I not so good at things in the city remember? And I learning things that little childrens learn. Now your turn to learn things I learned when I a little boy.”

“You learnt to climb trees as high as that when you were a kid?”

“Yes, of course! Even higher! I not so good at climbing for long time because I not made like gorilla babies. It make me sad, but now I good! You need practicing.” Harry added with a sure nod, and Louis couldn’t help but smile. Just imagining Harry as a child, running about with baby gorillas and being taught how to climb trees, had him cheering right up.

“You reckon you could show me how you do it?” Louis asked, and Harry grinned impossibly wide.

Then he leapt up the tree, wrapping his arms and legs around the trunk, pressing his feet against the sides and using his hands to pull himself up. In only a few short seconds he was up the top, reaching out to grab at the bunch of bananas. With a hard wrench they came off the branch and fell to the forest floor, Harry sliding down the trunk shortly afterwards. To Louis’ astonishment, it was all done in less than a minute.

Then Harry picked the bananas up and held them out for Louis to take. When Louis’ arms were outstretched, Harry dropped the bunch into them.

Fuck, but they were heavy.

Harry made it look so easy, but after only a few short seconds of holding the things his back and shoulders were aching.

“Come on,” Harry grinned. “we go now to find the good berries and the bad berries.”
Louis simply nodded, knowing that if he was to talk he’d show how much he was struggling.

He wobbled after Harry, who was bopping as he walked, arms swinging joyously beside him.

“You’re happy.” Louis managed to get out, hiding the strain from his voice.

“I am!” He turned around to give a beaming toothy smile. “I like having you here, Lou. It where I like to be and you who I like to be with. It all perfect.”

Louis had forgotten how beautiful he was here, felt the reverence he initially had for Harry when they first met come rushing back to him. “I’m glad.”

Harry turned back then to frown. “You okay? It heavy?”

Fuck, the way his voice cracked must have betrayed him. But annoyingly enough, it had only broken because of how Harry’s tanned bare arse was wiggling along in front of him. “I can manage, really. Don’t baby me, yeah?”

“Yeah.” Harry nodded, but still eyed him warily.

“Keep going, I want some of these berries I keep hearing about.”

The first berry bush they came across grew poisonous fruit, and so did the next two. The fourth one Harry declared safe, but the berries that grew on it were unlike anything Louis had ever seen before.

The fruit was small, orange and pyramidal, and when Louis picked one off the bush it felt tough.

“You eat this?”

Harry nodded, and bit one in half. He showed Louis the little black seeds on the inside, as if it would encourage him.

Louis shrugged and bit into the fruit, and gagged at the taste. “Jesus, this is sweet! It’s like eating sugar!”

Harry grinned and sucked one of the seeds into his mouth. “If you eat banana after this it taste even better!”

“This is rank, Harry. No way I’m eating this.”

Harry frowned, but collected a bunch nonetheless.

They found loads of different fruits, some delicious and some disgusting, but only the bananas were familiar to Louis.

He knew he’d be living off food found in the wild, but in his mind he’d be eating wild strawberries and blueberries and the like. He should have known fruit native to the jungle would be different to anything he was used to.

“Now I show you the bugs.” Harry chirped excitedly, and Louis felt like he was going to be sick.

He forgot about that.

Strange fruits he could deal with, but bugs: fuck no.
Harry got down on his knees and flipped a small decaying branch over, and Louis watched with horror as tonnes of different colourful insects ran and squirmed about. “You can’t eats all of them. Some have poisons. Usually the colourful ones.”

“I’m gonna be sick, Haz. This is like the fucking Lion King. Some Hakuna Matata bull shit.

“Yes.” Harry nodded, as if he understood. Then he picked up a black shiny beetle, pinching it between his fingers to examine it. “This a good one. You want?”

“No. Fuck, no.”

“Well what you going to eat for meats?”

“I brought tinned beans with me, they’ve got protein. Probably more than bugs do, even. I’ll live off them ‘til I run out.”

Harry eyed him dubiously, but shrugged his shoulders and said “If that what you want” before shoving the insect in his mouth.

Louis gagged at the sight. “I’m not kissing you for the rest of the day, not ‘til you wash your mouth out. It was still alive, Haz!”

Harry made a show of swallowing and then grinned “Not now.”

---

Louis was still queasy when they got back to the tree, and he must have looked it because Harry’s human mother was running up to him with concern.

“What happened?”

“Harry ate a bug.” He groaned, and her face broke out into a smile.

“He being a sooky.” Harry said with a roll of his eyes.

“I didn’t call you sooky when you didn’t like tea, or threw up after take-away Thai!” Louis whined, and Harry pouted.

“That is true.”

“Let’s go up, shall we? I see you have plenty of fruit, I can make us a nice platter for breakfast.” His mother said, and Louis just did as he was told. When they were up in the tree house she said “I’ve begun cleaning out the water talk, and once it’s done I’ll begin filling it. I’d appreciate some help, there’s only so much water I can carry at a time.”

“Sure.” Louis said as he sat at the table.

Harry stood behind him and began rubbing at his shoulders, and Louis melted under his touch. He shut his eyes and tilted his head forward, relaxing as Harry kneaded at his knots.


“What it?” he asked, and squeezed Louis’ shoulders a little too hard.

“I just noticed this morning how quiet it is. Where are the gorillas?”
Harry’s hands stopped their work. “My Mum is hidden. Only I know where she is.”

“I mean the rest of them, the male and the other females and their children.”

“I don’t know.” Harry muttered, and Louis’ eyes shot open.

He turned around to ask “What do you mean?”

“They gone.”

“What? Why?”

Harry shrugged, and took the seat next to Louis. “They left long time ago. Didn’t want to stay at the house anymore when I gone, only Mum did. Alone to wait for me.”

“Why?”

His mother cleared her throat, and Louis looked to her for an explanation because Harry was refusing to look up from his hands.

“Remember how I said it was unusual for gorillas to stay in the one place for long?” she asked, and Louis nodded. “It seems they did leave when Harry did.”

“So your Mum has been waiting here for you the entire time you were in London?”

“Not whole time. Maybe two of human weeks. She came back here to look for me because she” Harry paused to sniffle. “she not going to live much more.”

“I should see her, Harry.” His human mother said. “I might be able to help her.”

“She doesn’t want to see you.” He snapped. “She not want to see Lou, either. She mad for him taking me.” Harry turned to Louis with wide eyes, hands splayed in front of him apologetically. “I told her I want you for my mate and she will see you maybe one day. Just still now she upset you both here. Wants just me and her together now.”

Louis couldn’t help but feel hurt. “Should you go to her?”

“I left this morning for her to sleep. I should try to tell her to see you, yes?” Harry said sincerely. “I try my best, I want you to see her. I need help to say goodbye.”

Louis nodded, too upset to say anything. Not for himself, of course, but for Harry.

His human mother cleared her throat. “I’ll give you some of this fruit to take down once I’ve cut it all up.”

Harry went back to rubbing at Louis’ shoulders, but it was no use. Louis couldn’t let the tension drop away.

When Harry left with the fruit, Louis asked “Why did the gorillas just leave her to die alone?”

“There could have been lots of reasons.” She shrugged, putting a plate in front of Louis. She didn’t say anything more until he popped a piece of banana in his mouth. “It’s not as simple as survival of the fittest. Gorillas do form bonds, and while the male did have four female mates he still felt very strongly towards them. My guess is that a new male took over the group and didn’t care so much for her so let her go. Any children she would have had recently would have left to join their own groups, so she would not have had any support from them. Or perhaps it wasn’t as complicated as
all that. Perhaps they just didn’t realise she was ill and so let her leave, thinking she would come back. Or maybe she slipped away from them and ran away.”

Louis bit into another piece of fruit and cringed at the taste. It was one of those strange sweet orange ones. “So, she came here knowing she was going to die to wait for Harry a week or two ago. Which was around the same time Harry started growing more and more desperate to come back. That’s strange, isn’t it?”

“Very. There are some things I’ve given up trying to understand about nature, including coincidences like that. Some things just can’t be explained.”

---

Louis spent the rest of the day helping Harry’s human mother clean out the water tank and then fill it.

It was hard work, they had to climb up and down the tree to collect drinkable water from the falls, and after the tank was nearly halfway full Louis decided to have a swim in the lake to cool himself down.

He took off his boots and stripped off his clothes, and dipped his bare toes in the water.

His skin broke out in goosebumps and his hair stood up at the back of his neck, but he kept on walking until the water just covered his belly button.

That was when he spotted it.

A crocodile at least six feet in length was sliding into the water from the bank opposite him.

Louis walked backwards as fast as he could, eyes fixed on the monster as it came closer, long tail propelling it forward impossibly fast.

His heart was in his throat, he physically couldn’t scream despite very much wanting to.

When his knees were out of the water he turned and ran up the muddy bank, leaping forward when he heard splashing not far behind him.

He followed the path back to the tree, not realising he’d left his shoes and clothes at the lake until he was climbing through the door and Harry’s mum was asking him what happened.

He collapsed onto the floor, rolling onto his back, just sucking in air until he could choke out the word “Crocodile.”

“Where?”

“Lake. I went to swim.”

“Well you can say goodbye to your boots, and your clothes.” She said, then threw a pair of pants on top of him. “Put them on, will you?”

Louis did as he was told with shaky hands. He didn’t even know there were crocodiles in the jungle. He hadn’t even thought of them when he considered the dangers of this place, so it was a real wakeup call to have been so close to one. And it was only his first proper day in the wild.

“It must have spotted you while you were getting water from the falls, just waiting for a time to strike. They’re obviously a lot stronger in water, it was lucky you saw it and got out before it was
“You’re not helping.” Louis groaned. “I’m trying to calm myself down.”

“Don’t. You need to be afraid, or at least wary, to survive out here. You can’t just do what you want and expect luck to keep you alive.” She said coldly.

Louis pushed himself up and glared at her. “What’s wrong with you?”

She shook her head and sighed. “Nothing. Just – this place is doing things to my head. I need to get out.”

“You mean go home?” Louis asked, trying to keep how hopeful he was out of his voice. She was helpful, and someone to keep him company while Harry was caring for his gorilla mother, but he still didn’t trust her. Not when she was hiding so much.

“I mean get out of this house. I was thinking about locating the gorilla group, actually.”

“How come?”

She shrugged. “Just interested in what they are like now.”

Louis didn’t say anything. It was obvious now why she was here; for research, not for Harry. It shouldn’t have surprised him but it did nonetheless. “This is only our second day here.”

She looked at him as if to say your point is? so he didn’t say anything more.

---

She left two days later to go out on her own expedition. Harry didn’t say anything to her, just rolled his eyes and let her go. Louis said goodbye, at least. It was all so odd, how quick she’d been to decide to leave. She very obviously didn’t want to be there in the house with them. He wouldn’t be surprised if he never saw her again.

Harry had been strange the past few days, over the moon one moment and irritable the next. Louis assumed it had something to do with the health of his gorilla mother.

As soon as the human mother left Louis asked Harry if he could see her. “Just once, if she doesn’t like me I’ll go!” he begged. “I’ve got nothing to do here. At least when your mum was here I had some company when you went off.”

“I don’t know.” Harry frowned. “I ask her today okay?”

“Fine.” Louis snapped. “Maybe I’ll go for another swim.”

“No!” Harry whined, and pulled Louis to his chest. It was a low thing of Louis to do, he knew Harry still felt terrible about not being there when he nearly got attacked by the crocodile, but the jungle was putting him on edge. It hadn’t even been a week and he felt like he was losing his mind.

First, there was his new diet. His stomach was constantly irritable, rejecting most of the new fruits and vegetables, so Louis hadn’t felt full since he left London. Secondly, he hadn’t slept more than a few hours since that first night when he’d passed out from exhaustion. His muscles still ached all over, legs wobbling whenever he walked and arms shaking whenever he lifted anything up. He refused to bathe in a lake after the crocodile incident, so his skin felt tacky and disgusting. He could push his hair back from his face and it would stay smoothed back along the top of his head,
that’s how greasy it was. He wasn’t just being precious, he felt utterly disgusting, his own smell making him gag. No wonder Harry didn’t want to spend time with him anymore.

“I need to get out of this house.” Louis muttered against Harry’s shoulder. “Just take me somewhere, please?”

“Okay.” Harry nodded. “We go for a walk together, then we go see my mother when she wake up.”

Louis kissed Harry’s jaw and pulled back to smile. “Thankyou.”

He followed Harry down the ladder, taking Harry’s hand when he offered it. “Would you like to swim? Somewhere there no scary things?”

“Yeah. I need a good wash, I feel horrible.”

“You not happy here.” Harry stated.

Louis cringed. “I’m trying to be. It’s just hard. I feel sick and tired and –” he tripped on a fallen branch and rolled his ankle. “Fuck! Everything hurts all the time. And I’m bored, and lonely, and there’s so much I miss already.”

“I understand.”

“I don’t want to be all precious, I’m trying to toughen up a bit, but this place is gonna send me mental. I’m not going to leave or anything, I’m just – probably going to be a cranky twat for a bit. Think you could put up with me?”

Harry smiled, albeit a sad one. “Of course. And I told you, when Mum gone I will see you. You won’t be lonely always.”

“I know.” Louis said. “I get it, that you need to be with her while she’s still alive. I’m just being selfish.”

He kept his petulant thoughts to himself after that, fully aware of how insensitive he was being. Harry had been cared for by that gorilla for most of his life, and there Louis was complaining about his aching body.

They got to a waterfall not long after, and it was so stunningly beautiful Louis’ jaw dropped.

It had to be at least forty feet tall, water crashing down into a deep blue lake.

“You want to climb?” Harry asked, bopping up and down, rolling from the balls of his ankles to the tips of his toes. “We can jump from the top, it very fun. No crocodiles either. No fishes, no snakes, just us.”

His excitement was infectious, and Louis found himself clambering up the rocks behind Harry.

Harry stopped at a ledge, pulling Louis up to stand beside him, and when Louis looked down he gulped.

“You want to jump?”

Louis shook his head, words caught in his throat.

“Please?” Harry begged. “With me? You climb on my back if you want.”
“You’re sure it’s safe, yeah?”

Harry nodded. “Yes, very.”

“Okay.” Louis exhaled, and gripped Harry’s hand. “Just like this.”

Harry grinned, then counted down from three. He leapt at one, and all Louis could do was jump with him.

He didn’t even have time to feel terrified about the rapidly-approaching water before he plunged inside, the cool of it washing over him.

He opened his eyes under the water, grinning wide when he could see Harry’s own smile.

He swam up to the top, laughing when his head broke the surface, Harry following shortly after him. “That was insane. Fucking mental!”

“Fun, yes? Again?”

Louis didn’t bother answering, just swum over to the bank and pulled himself out, running to scale the rock wall again.

He climbed even higher than before, stopping on a ledge to wait for Harry to catch up. Adrenaline was rushing through his veins, making the drop down to the water look abysmal. He could get even higher, he decided, and he wanted to.

But Harry’s hand wrapped around his wrist as if he could read his mind, and that touch channelled Louis’ excitement elsewhere.

Before he even knew what he was doing, he had his lips against Harry’s, parting their mouths to breath in more of him.

Then he pulled back and grinned. “I’m gonna count this time” was all he said, and Harry just nodded sluggishly, dopey smile on his face.

Because they had jumped from somewhere higher, the fall had been that much longer and they plunged through the water that much deeper.

There’d been a moment of terror when all Louis could see was black, but he bobbed up again quickly, filling his lungs when he could.

He looked around him for Harry, spotting the boy swimming over to the waterfall.

“What are you doing?” Louis called. “I wanna jump again!”

“Come here!” he shouted back. “Want to show you this!”

Louis did as he was told, speeding up when Harry disappeared.

He swum through the wall of water, spluttering as it crashed onto his head and filled up his mouth. He was disoriented for a moment, a bolt of panic hitting him when he couldn’t see anything and could barely breathe, but he felt a hand in his and he immediately relaxed, letting himself be pulled through the water.

When his eyes adjusted to the minimal light, he could see Harry was pulling him towards a large rock surface. He picked up some of the slack then, kicking his legs and swimming for himself.
rather than letting Harry drag him along.

He pulled himself up onto the rock, rolling over so that he could watch Harry do the same. He was facing the waterfall rather than away from it and so could see far more clearly, using the light creeping through the breaks in the water at the cavern entrance to take in his surroundings.

It was a small cave, walls smooth with rivulets of water running down them, vines hanging from the ceiling. The noise of the fall was deafening, but it was also oddly calming. It numbed his brain from thinking of anything else outside of what he could see.

Which was Harry, peering through his mess of wet hair with blinking eyes and a soft smile. His skin was smooth and glistening, caramel in colour after his time in the jungle. He’d lost a lot of his tan in London.

“It pretty in here, yes?” he said, low and husky, words reverberating from the walls.

Louis answered by pulling Harry to him, one hand gripped around his bicep while the other slid behind his neck. He fell back, Harry going with him.

“What you do that f-“ Harry got out before Louis shut him up with a kiss.

Harry was quick to respond, spreading Louis’ thighs apart so he could fall down between them.

Louis groaned into Harry’s mouth, wrapping his legs around Harry’s and pressing his feet behind his knees.

Harry broke the kiss to suck at Louis’ neck, breath hot and tongue wet against his skin, sending shivers all over Louis’ body.

The air was so cold, and their skin was so wet, but Harry was hot on top of him, hips grinding down.

“I need-“ Louis huffed. “I need to get my shorts off. Wanna feel you.”

Harry rolled off, taking a hold of his cock and stroking as he watched Louis undress. “We don’t have lube.”

“Fuck.” Louis groaned.

“We wait for sex until we at the house.” Harry said, still jacking himself off. “We do something else now.”

“I didn’t bring any lube with me at all.” Louis realised out loud. “Didn’t bring any to the jungle full stop. Fuck, I’m an idiot.”

“You can fuck me without it.” Harry said, dropping his head back and biting his lip. Louis’ eyes immediately fell to his cock, hard and leaking.

“I don’t know Haz.” Louis said unsurely, sucking his bottom lip into his mouth. The sight before him was incredible, Harry long and wet and lying on the ground with a hand slow on his cock.

“We can’t just not fuck ever again, I want it. You make me really loose and it will be good. I already so relaxed. Please?” he whined. “Please fuck me?”

How could Louis say no to that, really?
He climbed on top of Harry, shifting his hand from his cock in the process. “Don’t want you to come yet.” Louis explained, because Harry looked up at him like he’d committed some horrible offence. Which, he supposed he did, denying Harry pleasure like that.

Harry lay back on the ground and Louis sat on his stomach, just looking down at him.

His hair was a mess over his face, his lips pink and plump, his pupils blown up big.

Louis leaned down to kiss him, smoothing his hair from his forehead.

Harry arched up into it, splaying his hands on Louis’ lower back.

Louis broke the kiss, and nuzzled his nose against Harry’s as he said “Just tell me if it hurts, yeah? I don’t want to do it if you don’t like it.”

Harry nodded quickly, rolling onto his stomach and arching his back so his arse was high in the air.

“Eat it, yes?”

Louis couldn’t help but grin, a laugh escaping his lips in a short bark.

Harry turned back to look at him with a frown, peering through his hair. “What?”

“Just – never been with someone who just says exactly what they want without embarrassment. I love that about you.”

“Oh.” Harry said, and turned to face forward again. “Good.”

Louis smoothed a hand over Harry’s back before he dragged it down to grip onto one of his arse cheeks. He dipped his thumb into the crevice, pulling to the side to expose Harry’s hole.

Harry inhaled sharply, so loud the noise echoed, and Louis immediately let go, watching Harry’s arse cheek wobble back to normal.

“Why you stop?” Harry gasped. “What it wrong?”

“I just – got scared. Thinking I hurt you.”

“You didn’t even do anything.” He huffed.

“You made that noise though.”

“I like what you doing, that why! I tell you to stop if I want it to, okay?”

“Okay.” Louis nodded.

“And don’t just stop when I make a noise. I like to make noise!”

Louis smiled, finally relaxing enough to put his hands on Harry’s arse again. “I like it when you make noise.”

“Good.” Harry grunted, signalling the end of the conversation. “Get on it.”

Louis made quick work at exposing Harry’s hole to the cool air, not needing to be told again.

He swiped the pad of his thumb over it, resisting the urge to pull back when Harry gasped, and instead pushed inside with the tip.
Harry’s breathing increased, back rising and falling with his pants, but he wasn’t telling Louis to stop.

So Louis lent forward, brushing his nose against Harry’s hole before kitten-licking his rim.

“Oh, it good.” Harry groaned. Louis had barely done anything so he couldn’t help but think his vocalisations were a bit showy. Then again, neither of them had had sex for weeks, and it was encouraging more than anything else to hear that Harry was enjoying himself – it reassured Louis that he wasn’t doing anything wrong.

So Louis pressed his tongue down harder, using the flat of it to rub Harry’s hole over and over again, feeling his own cock fatten up again with the sound of Harry’s pants. They echoed around them, bouncing off the walls, and Louis felt completely surrounded by them.

It was incredible, and encouraged him to push his thumb further into Harry’s hole.

It clenched around him, and Louis paused to see if Harry would protest but he didn’t. Just carried on moaning.

Louis reached his other hand around and wrapped it around Harry’s cock, tugging it slowly as he pulled out his thumb and replaced it with his index finger. It was thinner but longer and so could go deeper inside him, and also made Harry moan out a yes.

“Another.” Harry begged. “More. And more eating.”

Louis went back to lapping at Harry’s hole, made difficult by his finger. He tongued around it, then ducked his head underneath his hand to lick at Harry’s taint. Harry mewled, and Louis slid in a second finger.

Which had Harry hissing, and Louis immediately stilled.

“I okay.” Harry assured him. “Just wait.” Louis remained stock-still until Harry said “Try to move them.”

Louis pushed his two fingers an inch back and then two forward, and Harry cried out in pain.

“Burns.” He groaned, and Louis carefully pulled his fingers out.

“It’s okay, I’ll just lick you out. You’re too dry without lube so it’s going to hurt.”

“No.” Harry spun around to face Louis and crouched. “I want you to fuck me.”

“I can’t babe.”

Harry pouted, then his eyes widened in realisation and a grin spread over his face. “You can! In the water! It wet in there, I won’t be too dry inside!”

Louis twisted his mouth up to the side in thought. “We could try.”

And without a moment’s hesitation, Harry was jumping into the water.

Louis followed him, feeling his cock soften at the shock of cold water.

Harry was still just as hot for it, climbing half-up the rock ledge they’d been sitting on, arse still in the water. “Come on! I wet now! But you can’t eat my bum now or you will drown.”
Louis grinned despite desperately wanting to laugh, knowing it would upset Harry if he did.

Louis waded over to Harry, putting a hand on his shoulder when he was close enough. He found some ground with his feet, and slid a hand to grasp onto Harry’s cock again.

He was still very much hard.

“Will I try my fingers again?”

“Yes.” Harry panted. “One first though.”

Louis did as he was told, easing the first finger in smoothly. He pumped it in and out of him, and watched as Harry flopped his head down to rest his forehead on his arms.

Louis moved his hand from Harry’s cock so he could wrap his arm around Harry’s torso. He needed to hold something sturdy to help him balance, but Harry wasn’t happy about it.

At Harry’s grunt Louis asked “Will we try another finger?”

“Yes.” Harry moaned. “Need more.”

The slide of the second finger was just as easy as the first, Harry making no sounds of protest.

In fact, he pushed back against Louis’ hand, coaxing his fingers in further.

“It good.” He sighed. “Much better. No pain. I think I ready for your cock now.”

Louis snorted at that. “You’ll have to wait a little longer.”

Harry shook his head, but before he could say anything Louis scissored his fingers wide apart and Harry let out a mewl.

“There!” he gasped. “Do it again!”

So Louis did, twisting his wrist as he pulled his fingers apart, making Harry cry out again in pleasure.

He took the opportunity to slide in a third finger, pumping them slowly as Harry adjusted. Louis could feel Harry stretch around him, and listened carefully for a change in Harry’s breathing, but the jungle boy was still panting beneath him, muttering into his arms.

“What are you saying?” Louis groaned into his ear, the sight in front of him, the feel of Harry’s body against him and his arse around him, getting to be too much. He needed his cock inside Harry before he came into the water between them.

“I want you now.” He moaned. “I need you inside me now, please Lou I ready.”

“Okay.” Louis pulled out his fingers and took hold of his cock, stretching up onto his tip-toes to get himself in line.

But it still wasn’t enough, Harry was too high up on the rock-ledge.

Instead of pulling the boy down lower, he gripped onto Harry’s shoulders with one hand and hoisted himself up a little higher. He used his other hand to align his cock, nudging the tip against Harry’s rim.
Harry moaned out, telling Louis that he was more than ready to push in.

So he did, slowly and carefully, fingers digging in to Harry’s shoulder. He pressed his forehead between Harry’s shoulder blades, waiting for the man beneath him to adjust.

“Move.” Harry grunted, rocking back to pull Louis’ cock in further.

Louis wrapped his legs around Harry’s thighs in response, fucking into him deeper.

Something he was quickly learning he loved about sex in water was the fact that gravity wasn’t a problem. His body naturally wanted to float upwards, he barely had to put any effort into holding himself up, so he could completely throw himself into pumping his hips forward and back.

Harry’s back was slick and smooth against his chest, the sound of water lapping between their bodies as he moved a new kind of erotic. Add to that Harry’s pants and soft moans echoing around the cave; Louis knew he wasn’t going to last long.

“Lou I gonna come.” Harry groaned. “Don’t touch my cock or I come.”

Louis immediately took his hand from Harry’s cock, gripping onto his hip instead. It gave him better leverage so he could jackrabbit his hips harder, making Harry cry out louder.

His cock slid smoothly in and out of him until Harry’s hole began clenching around Louis as he shouted out a loud Oh!

Louis knew he’d come then from how his arse was squeezing and releasing his cock in pulses, vice-like one moment and completely loose the next.

It was driving Louis mad, those short-sharp grips, and he found his eyes rolling back into his head as he came inside of Harry.

He pulled out slowly and carefully, lessening his grip on Harry’s shoulder and hip.

Harry turned to face him, smile dopey on his face.

“Wow.” He grinned. “Wow wow wow. We have sex always in the water now, yes? It feel so nice. And so loud in here, it pretty.”

“Pretty is one word for it.” Louis smiled back just as sluggishly. He was utterly exhausted, had fucked away the last of his adrenaline so that after it all he felt just as languid as the water he was in. He laid back and let himself float, closing his eyes when Harry began drawing little circles along his stomach.

“We should go back now.” Harry murmured.

“You don’t want to just relax here for a bit longer?”

“I worrying for Mum. I feel not right.”

That had Louis’ eyes opening quickly, his body righting itself so he could look into Harry’s eyes.

“What’s the matter?”

“I don’t feel good inside.”

“Do you feel guilty?”
“What that?”

Louis reached his hand out to push Harry’s hair behind his ear before he replied. “When you feel bad because you think you did something wrong.”

“We did nothing wrong.” Harry frowned.

“But – I don’t know how to explain. Can you tell me why you don’t feel right?”

“I feel bad inside because – I having nice time with you when Mum sick. I should be sad always.”

“That’s guilt.” Louis whispered, moving his hand from Harry’s cheek to travel down his shoulder until he could grip onto his hand beneath the water. “But you’ve got nothing to feel bad about. You’re allowed to be happy about some things even when there’s something else you’re worrying about.”

Harry just gave a small nod in reply, perhaps unsure of what to say. Or he didn’t believe him, was just saving face, so Louis didn’t press.

“Let’s go. You can see her, and I would like to come but I don’t need to. We’ll do whatever you like.”

Harry nodded. “We go see her together. I want you to come.”

They swam out from the cave one after the other, Louis not realising until he was climbing up onto the bank that he’d left his shorts and pants in the cave. He’d already lost a pair to the crocodile, and if he left these behind too he’d soon have nothing left.

“You ready to go?” Harry asked, bringing him back to the present.

“Yeah. Just thinking. About being naked. Does it not feel weird having everything out in the open all the time?”

Harry shrugged. “I find clothes weirder. They good for if it cold, but it not cold here so don’t need them.”

“Yeah, I s’pose.” Louis murmured. Maybe he just needed time to not let his nakedness bother him, but as it was he still felt incredibly exposed without pants on. It felt odd going to meet Harry’s mother properly in nothing, even though he knew it shouldn’t matter because she was a gorilla for fuck’s sake. Clothes would make no sense to her either. He sighed, trying to exhale his very human insecurities out with his breath. But it was hard, and Louis wondered not for the first time whether anything would ever get easier out here. “Let’s go see your Mum.”

---

Louis’ eyes immediately welled up at the sight of her.

She was lying on the ground, surrounded by uneaten bananas and fruits and bottles of water.

Her stomach was heaving up and down slowly, her breaths were loud and wheezy, and Harry immediately dropped to her side and put his ear to her chest.

He cooed to her softly, running his fingers through her fur, and Louis could barely stand it just watching.

So he kneeled down beside them, fingers clenching his own knees, not sure what to do with
himself. He wanted to comfort her too, but she wasn’t just some animal he could pat. She was Harry’s Mum.

“Harry?” he whispered.

At that, the gorilla’s breaths grew ragged, she tried to push herself up, obviously distressed.

“Ooo.” Harry muttered, trying to calm her down with soft coos.

“I should go.”

“No.” Harry said gently. “Pass me water.”

Louis did as he was told, grabbing one of the water bottles from the floor and giving it to Harry.

Who pressed the rim to her lips, trying to get her to drink. But she wasn’t having it, kept pulling her head away.

“Please.” Harry begged.

She grunted at him, pulling her head back again.

“She want to die.”

Louis looked to Harry, eyes wide with shock. “No she doesn’t.”

“She does. She tell me. Want me to leave her alone to die. Says that how it is, she old and it her time to die. Nature want to take her, and she want to go.”

“Oh Harry.” Louis said, putting his hand on Harry’s shoulder, soothing him with small rubs. “I’m so sorry love. Sometimes there’s just nothing we can do. She’s not ill, she’s old, we can’t help.”

“But I don’t want her to go.” Harry whined, giving up with the water and putting his hands back in her fur. She calmed immediately, settling under his touch.

“I know.” Louis’ voice cracked, and he wiped his face with the back of his hand to get rid of the tears on his cheeks. “But you don’t have a choice. You have to let her go.”

Harry lay down beside her, wrapping his arms around her limp body, tucking his face into her neck.

She huffed, blowing Harry’s hair out of his face with her breath. She grunted something, and Harry began to sob.

His body heaved as he cried, and Louis could do nothing but put a hand on his back to soothe him minutely.

His mother’s breaths were slowing, Louis could see it in the way her chest was moving, and he’d never felt so helpless.

She’d been the only important figure in Harry’s life for so long. Louis knew that now, after learning more about gorillas. How they’d grow then leave to find their own groups, so any siblings Harry had would be long gone. He wouldn’t have had a deep connection to them, to anyone outside of his mother. Who’d stuck by him, cared for him, even though it went against her nature. And now she was dying, and there was nothing either of them could do but sit by her until she left.
They buried her deep at Louis’ suggestion.

He was worried some other animal would take her, but he didn’t need to explain that. Harry luckily didn’t ask questions, just helped dig at Louis’ side.

Harry dropped his hands to his side when they were done, defeated. “What now?” he muttered.

Louis took one of Harry’s hands in his. “What do you mean?”

Harry looked to him. “What we do now? We just leave her in there?”

“When things die, some humans have what’s called a funeral. Where they say nice things to celebrate the life that ended rather than mourn for it.”

Harry sniffed. “Who they say it to?”

“Each other, I suppose. Some people say it to their god.”

“You want me to say nice things about my Mum to you?”

Louis smiled small as an attempt to comfort. “Only if you want to.”

“I do.” Harry nodded. “I just want to say that I love her a lot, she is my real mother, she cared for me always in my life, and I sad I left her for her last while of living with not saying goodbye to go away. And that when I come back here, I wanted to go away again straight away.” Louis looked up at that, searching Harry’s face for what he meant. Where did he want to go? Back to London? But Harry’s eyes were closed, his face passive. “I just glad I could see her alive for a little while more before she have to go too.”

Harry was silent for the following few days, refusing to leave the burial place of his mother. Louis could do nothing but sit with him, leaving only to get Harry food and water.

He noticed on the third day that all the fruit they’d picked together last was beginning to rot, bananas going brown and the strange berries bruised and mushy. So he looked in the cupboards of the kitchen, finding only a couple of tinned beans left. Which they would have to eat cold, because he hadn’t quite worked out how to get his solar-powered stove-top going.

What he really needed to do was go out searching for fruit himself.

He put on a shirt and pants and some socks to protect his skin a little from being scratched by branches when he searched through the jungle.

He climbed out of the window to fill a water bottle from the tank, then put it inside a large backpack.

He was terrified of going out alone, that he would get lost or attacked, but he knew it had to be done. Louis wanted to be independent out here, not some little boy that needed to be cared for at all times, so he climbed down the tree, shaky but determined.

He ran in to his first hurdle immediately; he had no idea where to look.

He couldn’t remember the places Harry took him, and wandered around for ages before he found
some fruit that was recognisable to him.

It was those gross sweet orange things, but it was better than nothing.

He tugged the little fruits off, putting them in his bag.

The next thing he spotted were bananas, making him groan.

They were Harry’s favourite, and he desperately wanted to get them, but he knew he couldn’t. The last time he tried he hadn’t even made it halfway up the tree.

But, he was going to try again for Harry.

He dropped his backpack on the ground and leapt up as high as he could go, wrapping his arms around the trunk. But he didn’t follow with his legs quick enough so came sliding back down immediately.

He groaned, and tried again.

On the fourth try he managed to get a decent grip, and stayed for a moment to make sure he wasn’t going to slip again.

When he was confident he was okay, he began shimmying up the tree.

It was much easier when he didn’t have Harry watching him. He’d felt so embarrassed and inadequate that first time, so concerned about looking stupid, but now that he didn’t have an audience he found himself getting quite high.

He discovered it was easiest when he clenched his thighs hard around the sides of the tree trunks, only loosening them when he pulled himself up with his arms before clenching again to stop himself slipping down.

He was shocked when he made it to the top, could only stay there wrapped around the trunk for a few moments to catch his breath.

Then he reached out to pull the bananas down, and came across his second big problem.

They wouldn’t budge.

He wrenched harder but it made no difference.

Then, he committed what had to be his stupidest mistake yet. He reached out to the bunch of bananas and hung off them, trying to pull them down using all of his weight.

It wasn’t until he heard the cracking of the branch that he realised what an idiot he’d been, that he was trying to pull down the only thing that was keeping him from falling to the ground.

Before he could wrap himself around the tree trunk again, the bunch fell, him along with it.

He was in absolute agony when he hit the ground, screaming out at the top of his lungs.

He’d bent his ankle when he landed, could feel it throbbing with pain.

“Oh fuck.” Louis groaned, falling back, pushing the bunch of bananas off him. He gritted his teeth, clenched his eyes shut, willing himself to ignore the pain long enough to be able to come up with some sort of plan.
But pain was shooting up his right leg, he couldn’t ignore it.

He’d heard people got rushes of adrenaline in situations like this, where they could get up and run on their bunged up leg or whatever until they were safe.

He sat up, breathing through his teeth, and finally looked to his ankle.

It was bent at a horrible ankle, just the sight of it had Louis feeling sick.

“Christ.” He groaned, flopping back down. There so many ways he’d imagined himself dying out in the jungle, but falling from a banana tree certainly wasn’t one of them.

Not that he was dying, but he could eventually. If Harry couldn’t find him he would starve, or some wild animal could find him and eat him.

“Fucking hell.” He swore again, feeling himself begin to hyperventilate.

He needed to get to Harry, so he tried to force himself up onto his good leg.

Only he began tipping to the side and instinctively went to stop himself falling with his bad foot, and the pain that shot through him was enough to send him into unconsciousness.

---

When he woke, he was in the tree house, Harry by his side.

His eyes were wide and blood-shot, filled with terror, but when he realised Louis’ eyes were opened he sobbed out and kissed Louis repeatedly all over his face. “Lou you okay! I so scared. I come looking for you when you gone so long. What happened?”

“I fell.” Louis rasped out. He cringed at the ache of his throat, and took the water Harry offered him gratefully. He drank almost half the bottle down before he added “I was trying to get us food and I fell from the tree. Landed badly on my ankle. Fuck it hurts.”

“What do we do? I don’t know how to fix it, and it bent all funny!”

Louis physically couldn’t get himself to look down, was too scared of what he’d see. “We need to go to a hospital.”

“Okay.” Harry nodded.

And Louis blinked at him. “What?”

“I said okay. I get us clothes on and we go.”

“But – we’ll probably have to go back to London for it.”

“I know, that why I get us clothes on. How we get there? I can carry you but I don’t know to where.”

“But you’ll have to leave the jungle.”

“I know, Lou! I not stupid!” Harry snapped. “Stop it being crazy person and tell me what we do.”

“W-we can come back here afterwards if you want? When my ankle is all fixed? I’m sure I’ll just need a cast for a few months or something.”
“Lou please!” Harry begged. “I scared, okay? I don’t want you dying! Please just tell me what to do!”

“Pass me that satellite phone. I’ll call my manager, get her to figure it out.”

Harry did as he was told immediately, grabbing it from one of the boxes under the bed.

He watched with wide eyes as Louis dialled the number, waiting for his next command.

“How are you? It’s so good to hear from you, I was beginning to think you’d died or something!”

“About that…” Louis grunted, and his manager fell silent. “I’ve had a bit of an accident, fell from a tree and broke my ankle pretty bad. Do you think you could find a way to get me out?”

“Of course!” she cried. “Jesus Christ Lou of course I can. Where are you?”

He recited off the coordinates he’d learnt from Harry’s human mother, and hung up when his manager told him to so she could get on organising a way to get him out.

Harry’s head was in his hands, and Louis reached out to play with some strands of his hair. “I’m sorry babe.”

That had Harry’s head shooting up. “Why? You not going to be okay?” And before Louis could answer he began to sob.

“No! Haz, please, I’ll be fine!”

“Why you say sorry then?” he cried.

“Because I’m making you leave again!” Then he realised something. “Not that you have to leave with me. I just – assumed, because you said you were gonna get dressed. But you can stay here if you want.”

“I don’t want to come back here ever again.” Harry shook his head.

“What?”

“I don’t want to come back here. I don’t want to live in London either but I can’t be here anymore. I have no one but you, and I can have you anywhere. I’d rather have you somewhere you be happy and safe.”

“But – I can’t be the reason you leave again, Haz! I wasn’t enough to make you happy in the city the first time, why would I be the second time?”

“Because the first time in my memories of the jungle I had family to come back to. But when I came back, I only had my Mum and now she gone. The other gorillas left me, they don’t care, it is their ways. I want to go back to where we have other people! Where your family are to become mine. We can start our own family, too. Get our own babies. We can get jobs and be proper humans. I know you don’t want to be here, you nearly died twice and you’ve been here for a week, it not safe.”

“Harry, are you sure this is what you want? You promise you’re not just saying this to make me happy?”
“I promise.” Harry nodded. “I don’t want to be here anymore. I thought it would be different. I thought I could come back here to things as they were but they not.”

“Because of me. Because I made you leave.”

“No.” Harry shook his head quick. “Think, Lou! My Mum would have died anyway from being old, then what would have happened to me? I would be pushed out from the group and left alone. If you never found me, I would be stuck here alone forever. I not gorilla, I different to them, they would not have had me. It not their nature. I am human, I have humans who love me now because you took me to them. And I have you to love, I will be happy there.”

Louis couldn’t help but grin with elation. Harry wanted to go back with him, actually chose to under his own volition. “We can move to Doncaster, yeah? Away from the big city, you liked it there. We can see my Mum and the kids all the time, maybe we can have our own some day. Were you ever told about adoption? We can do that. And you can get a job, we can figure out what you want to do. And we need to figure out what I want to do. No way in fuck am I going back to modelling. Christ, I haven’t thought of doing anything else besides that or acting for years.” He rambled, excitement growing in his chest. He had no fucking idea what was going to happen but he didn’t even care. He and Harry were going to figure it out together. Make new lives for themselves, side by side. “Have I ever told you how much I love you?”

Harry grinned. “No, but you didn’t have to.”

“I did have to. I need to. I love you so much. More than anything else.”

“I know.” Harry nodded, honest as always. “Just like you know I love you for forever.”

“We’re gonna be so happy, Haz. We’re gonna have everything we want. You’re gonna get everything you deserve.”

Harry smiled and took Louis’ hand. “I already have everything I want. You’re more than I deserve.”

And Harry leaned down to kiss him, hand gentle on his cheek.

The phone rang beside them, loud and shrill and completely ruining the moment.

Harry passed it to Louis to answer.

“Hello?” he asked.

“Louis! An emergency helicopter will pick you up and bring you to the airport, then you’ll be flown to London for treatment.”

“Will Harry be able to come too?”

He could hear the smile in her voice when she said “Of course. How is he?”

“Good. Worried.” He added with his own little grin.

Harry had got up when he was on the phone to rush about the room, pulling out all his clothes from the wardrobe and shoving them inside one of the empty backpacks Louis had brought with him.

“I’ll see you soon, then. I’ll let your friends know, too. They haven’t stopped pestered me, they didn’t believe when I said I had no way to contact you. They’re going to think I’ve been lying
this whole time now that you’ve called me.”

“Okay yeah, that’ll be good.” Louis replied dismissively, desperate to get off the phone so he could help Harry out. “I’ll see you later.”

And he hung up without waiting for her response.

Harry looked to him at the sound of the phone clattering to the floor. “What happening?”

“We’re getting a lift back to London.” Louis grinned. “I guess the plus side of all this is that I don’t have to make that horrible trek through the jungle to get back to civilisation. We’re getting flown in a helicopter.”


“You could be a nurse when we go back.” Louis suggested. “You have good bedside manner, and kids and old people would love you.”

“Relax.” Harry hushed.

“Or maybe a child-minder. You could run your own childcare centre in Doncaster. Probably have to get a few qualifications and stuff, but we could do it.”

Harry shook his head, small smile on his lips as he bent down to get Louis’ boxes from under the bed. As he pulled out all the clothes from them he asked “What will you be?”

“Dunno.” He shrugged. He shifted on the bed, accidentally moving his ankle and flinching in pain.

“Sleep.” Harry said. “You need to sleep.”

Louis muttered that he didn’t, but closed his eyes nonetheless. “I always liked footie when I was younger. Was pretty good, too. Maybe I’ll coach kids or something.”

“That would be good.”

“I’ve been pretty into animals lately too.” Louis said. Or tried to, he yawned halfway through. “It’ll be good, won’t it? Being somewhere we both want to be? With people we actually want with us? Everything will be easier. We’ll be happier. Not always looking for some kind of out.”

“Everything fixed.” Harry agreed, running his hand through Louis’ hair.

It was how Louis fell asleep, despite the pain shooting through his body and the thoughts whirling around in his brain. Harry’s hand gentle on his head, soothing him. He could feel his lips pull up, too happy to stop them. They had finally found a home together, somewhere they both wanted to stay. Somewhere they could fall in love with each other over and over again for the rest of their lives.

Chapter End Notes

Wellll wasn't this a long journey!!!! Far longer than I think any of us ever thought, hope you all enjoyed it!

Just want to say a big thankyou to my friends who never failed to tell me what they
thought of each chapter and were so encouraging and motivating. Kate tescotommo, Brie fookingharry, Liz sstylinshaw and Eleni seplei, if it wasn't for y'all I doubt I would have finished this!

Thanks everybody for reading, and remember if you want to say hi I have tumblr and twitter :) xoxoxoxo

oh and ps if you're on tumblr and liked this fic enough to maybe want to rec it then perhaps reblog or like this post?? if you want!
Harry collapsed onto the sofa, bottle of beer in each hand.

“One of them for me?” Louis asked with a grin, reaching out from his chair to prod at Harry with his toe.

“Nope. Big day today, you go get your own.”

Louis pouted, and prodded at Harry again and again until the man rolled his eyes and passed him one of his beers. “Cheers!”

“Lazy.” Harry snorted.

Louis poked his tongue out, wagging it from side to side until Harry gave him a wide toothy smile.

Then Harry swallowed down a mouthful of beer and asked “You talk to your Mum?”

“Uh, not yet.” He replied sheepishly. “Bit noisy out there today. Hard to do anything when the kids are like that.”

Harry crinkled his brow and said “Hey! They weren’t bad!”

“I never said they were bad, babe, just that they were noisy.”

“What you did today?”

Truth be told, Louis did what he’d done every day for the past two months; he watched Harry work.

He couldn’t help it, really. The amount of mornings he’d got out of bed with the intention of actually accomplishing something were ridiculous, but he never did because Harry was too fun to watch.

They’d only lived in Doncaster for five months or so but Harry already seemed to have everything
When they had returned from the jungle, and after Louis’ short stint in hospital to get his leg seen to, they spent a couple of months in London just doing absolutely nothing. They spent the time cuddled up in Louis’ flat together, so absorbed in their own little world that they paid no attention to the outside. And in time, the outside world lost interest in them too.

It only took a few weeks of hiding out, but eventually the paparazzi that had been waiting in the streets and the journalists that had been speculating about what they were up to abandoned their search for answers. When Louis was in hospital it had been hard to hide out, reporters so hungry for information that they lied their way into his room for interviews, but he only had to put up with it for a couple of days before he could go home.

And when he went home, he just didn’t leave.

He deleted his twitter, quit his job, and changed his phone number so only people he liked could contact him.

Louis’ friends had been worried at first, suspecting he was having some kind of post-jungle breakdown, but they realised it was for the best. Besides, Zayn was still staying in Louis’ guest room so made it his job to keep watch. Which Louis appreciated, in all honesty, because he was stuck wearing a bloody cast on his leg for six weeks and needed help doing practically everything.

His manager, or ex manager, did what she could to help too, no love lost between them. She helped ease him out of the modelling business, keeping as many contacts as possible happy with him, hopeful that Louis would one day return. Which was useless, but Louis wasn’t going to say anything. He appreciated everything she did for him.

Louis found it nice having Harry to himself. They’d spend whole days on the sofa watching marathons of shows on Netflix or in bed having slow sweaty sex under the duvet. Louis would eat whatever he wanted, concern for his body weight gone with his job as a model. Because of Louis’ leg, Harry made all of their breakfasts and lunches so he didn’t really get to eat much worse than he would have liked. Still, it was nice to have the freedom. Plus, Zayn made their dinners when he got home from work most evenings and the food he made was always delicious.

Then there was showering. Having a cast on his leg made it almost impossible to do without help, which Harry was more than happy to offer. Louis had a slight suspicion that Harry actually loved that most about the whole situation. He would carry Louis into the stall and prop him up against the wall, wiping him down with a flannel and washing his hair until he was squeaky clean, then sucking him off while he struggled to stay on one leg. He’d have to grip Harry’s head for support, which only encouraged him further. It was probably Louis’ favourite thing about the whole thing too, in all fairness.

But despite their days of cuddling and sex and TV, eventually they got bored; Harry of being cramped indoors, and Louis of London all together.

It made sense they move to somewhere smaller and quieter, so of course they found a house in Doncaster not far from Louis’ family.

Well, his Mum found it, and checked it out for them, and said it would be perfect. It was ridiculously big, far too big for just the two of them, but it had a huge garden and that was what sold it to Louis in the end. Plus, the buying price was the same as two years’ rent in his London flat; he couldn’t complain about that.
Louis’ family was over practically every weekend for dinners and sleepovers, and on her way to work every morning Louis’ Mum dropped the babies off to be looked after. Which Harry absolutely loved.

It was how Louis originally got the idea.

Harry was so good with them, so gentle and attentive and caring and just all round amazing, that Louis asked his Mum if perhaps she knew of anyone who needed some help with their children. For a price, obviously.

Turns out, she knew a lot.

Harry went from caring for Louis’ siblings to looking after six kids all out of their house. It was safe to say Harry loved it.

He had endless amounts of energy like they did, could run around in the garden for hours with them playing tag and hide and seek and make believe. The kids were in awe of Harry, Louis could see it in their little faces. It was like they knew he was kind right to the core, that there was no one more gentle and honest than him.

The oldest of the children was four, and when she’d first come she was a right terror. She’d snatch toys from the others, throw herself on the ground in fits when she didn’t get what she wanted, and scream until she turned blue in the face if any of the other children got Harry’s attention. She’d choose the books Harry read before naptime, would refuse most of the food Louis prepared for them, and would poke the twins until they cried.

But this behaviour didn’t last long; Harry had her eating out of his palm after the third day. All he did was give her hugs and piggy backs and pull funny faces until she laughed, and when Louis asked him how he did it Harry replied “She is a lot like a baby monkey. She is cheeky like them, and loud, and very quick. When they were sad I just settled them with hugs and let them in my hair.”

“Right.” Louis had replied, eyebrow quirked up. “Don’t tell her parents that, though.”

But whatever Harry was doing worked. Louis was sure Harry was a genius when one afternoon he heard the naughty girl say to her parents “I want my hair long like Harry’s. I want to be tall like him, too!”

They just laughed fondly, but Louis knew what she meant. They all idolised him, Louis watched them all follow after him in the garden every single weekday morning, the toddlers waddling on their little chubby legs and the older ones running circles around him, jumping around in front for his attention. Louis couldn’t say he blamed them.

He missed having Harry all to himself.

Louis tried to busy himself by helping Harry where he could, he handled the parents and the money and the food, but apart from that he felt pretty useless. Louis had had jobs since he was sixteen, had known exactly what he wanted to do since he was that age too, and it was a horrible feeling to have no idea what he wanted in life any more. Harry had his little business that could eventually expand, but Louis only had Harry. If there was one thing Harry had taught him, it was that thinking about one’s own happiness was important too.

Louis needed to find something to occupy himself or he would become dangerously dependent on Harry again. He knew all of this, anyway, but he wasn’t exactly doing anything about it. It was too
easy for Louis to spend his days sitting outside watching Harry play with those children, seeing how happy the lot of them were together brought a smile to his face, and he was getting too comfortable on his arse doing nothing for himself.

It was classic him. He wanted to change things, he knew he needed to change things, but he just couldn’t be bothered. It was something to worry about later, something that would happen when it absolutely had to.

And that time wasn’t right then, sitting in the lounge with a beer in his hand and Harry watching him expectantly.

“The usual.” Louis answered with a shrug. “Still trying to find something all the kids would like eating. Can’t believe one of them doesn’t like pasta. Every kid likes pasta.”

Harry put his beer on the coffee table, then opened his arms wide. “Come sit.”

So Louis did, plopping down on Harry’s lap so they were facing each other. Harry put his hands on Louis’ hips, and Louis pressed a palm to the back of Harry’s neck, fingers latching onto his hair. His other hand was still clutching the beer, so he twisted around to put it down by Harry’s one.

“Finished?” Harry smirked.

Louis rolled his eyes, then ducked quickly down to give Harry’s collarbone a peck. The boy beneath him squawked out a laugh, and Louis did it again just to hear more.

“Stop!” Harry whined. “Want to kiss you properly!”

“You gotta catch me first!” Louis said with a grin, and jumped off Harry’s lap. He wriggled his eyebrows at Harry, waiting for him to catch on.

And when Harry’s mouth changed from a confused pout to a grin of realisation, Louis spun on his heels and made a run for it.

He barely made it upstairs before Harry had him, throwing a cackling Louis over his shoulder and carrying him into their bedroom.

Then Harry dropped Louis onto the bed and sat on his thighs, grabbing Louis’ wrists with one hand and pressing them into the pillow. With his free hand he rucked up Louis’ shirt and pressed a kiss right in the middle of his torso.

“I thought you wanted to kiss me properly.” Louis teased.

Harry simply hummed, and kissed a little higher on his chest. Louis’ heart leapt, and Harry grinned as if he’d seen it happen. Then he kissed Louis’ left nipple, then his right, and said “This is properly” and planted his lips on Louis’ throat and sucked.

Louis whined “I think I prefer it when you aren’t a tease. At least when you’re horny you give it right up.”

“Liar.” Harry murmured into his skin. “You come best when I take my time and tease. And I am horny. Just want to make you more.”

“I am more.” Louis groaned, trying to tug his hands free so he could grab hold of Harry’s head and kiss the life out of him. Harry was too strong though, and continued teasing with his tongue while Louis writhed beneath him.
Louis had never realised how much better sex could be with someone he loved. He’d always figured it would be boring shagging the same person night after night, but with Harry it never was. They knew exactly what the other liked, could tell how far off they were from coming and what to do to get them there. They were always learning too. Just when Louis thought he knew every inch of Harry off by heart he’d find a new freckle on his skin to taste or hear a new noise fall from Harry’s lips. And, such was his nature, Harry loved to learn. He’d find new positions for them to try out, would experiment with new kinks, always looking for new things to do. Some of it wasn’t great, some of it was fucking incredible, and some of it was just too weird for Louis to even want to try. But something that would remain Louis’ favourite, no matter how much research Harry did and how many new things he found to try, was when Harry rode him.

Harry had endless stamina and incredible core strength, could probably ride Louis for days. They’d once tried to see how long Harry could manage it, but they never found out because it was Louis who had to tap out, cock overstimulated to a painful degree.

Harry’s face would scrunch up with determination, his mouth would fall open with pleasure, his eyes would glisten with desperation, and Louis could just lie back and watch it all happen.

It’s what he hoped would happen with Harry sitting on his thighs like he was. They’d tried cuffs and ties, but having Harry holding his hands to the bed was way hotter.

“Haz!” Louis whined, bucking his hips into nothing. “I’m so horny already, you wouldn’t believe. Just get on my cock already.”

Harry chuckled against his neck, breath cooling Louis’ saliva-wet skin and making him shiver. “Wanna suck you first. Lick and suck everywhere.”

Louis groaned “Get on with it, then”. But Harry just grinned in answer, and Louis knew he was in for a long night. “Want you to fuck me.”

Harry released Louis’ wrists and shuffled down his body, planting his hands on Louis’ hips. “Fuck my mouth, then I’ll fuck you.”

“Christ, okay.”

Harry wrapped a hand around the base of Louis’ cock and licked a long stripe up the underside. Louis instinctively bucked his hips, and Harry glared up at him. Louis obeyed the wordless command to be still, gripping the pillow underneath his head and focusing on that to try to calm himself. Only then did Harry wrap his lips around the head of Louis’ cock.

Louis couldn’t contain the groan that slipped from his mouth, and Harry rewarded him by swirling his tongue around and over Louis’ slit.

Fuck but it was good. Always so much better than quick fucks, when Harry took his time and teased. Everything he did felt so thought out, like he’d planned beforehand exactly what he was going to do to Louis, and it made Louis feel pleasantly overwhelmed. Like he was completely helpless, totally under Harry’s control.

Harry relaxed his throat and lowered his mouth down onto Louis’ cock, then drummed his fingers on Louis’ hipbones, their silent way of saying ready.

So Louis fucked up into Harry’s mouth, thrusts shallow because of how high Harry was sitting on his legs. He could only manage small hip rolls, but fuck was it good. Harry’s throat was tight and warm and wet around him, his lips soft against his skin.
Then, with a pop, Harry pulled off. He rolled off of the bed and disappeared into the bathroom, then jumped back onto the end of the bed with the lube in one hand. He pushed Louis’ legs up and apart then settled himself between the gap. Harry stared down at Louis’ cock, slick wet and shiny with his spit, and grinned.

“Gonna open you up now.” He said, covering three fingers with lube.

“Hurry up.” Louis whined.

Harry answered by sucking Louis into his mouth again, holding his hips down with one hand on his lower abdomen and using the other to spread Louis’ arse cheeks apart.

Harry’s finger pushed through his rim just as he gave a particularly strong suck, and Louis couldn’t help but gasp out. Before he could even get his breathing under control, Harry added another finger. Louis liked to feel the stretch of two fingers best, one wasn’t quite enough and two was just the right amount of too much, and Harry knew not to wait too long between entering the first and the second.

Louis’ breathing was growing ragged already, so Harry pulled his mouth from Louis’ cock and planted his lips on Louis’ pubic bone instead. He kissed it sweetly, in complete juxtaposition to how his wet fingers were fucking in and out of Louis’ hole hard and fast, scissoring them and twisting them on every push in.

“Ready?” Harry breathed against his skin, and after Louis whined out a yes he added a third finger, brushing his knuckles against Louis’ prostate and sending a jolt through him.

“I’m ready for your cock.” Louis groaned. “Had enough of fingers.”

Harry didn’t need to be told twice, pulling his fingers out and pouring more lube onto his palm. He stroked himself quickly, covering his cock in the substance, then he lined himself up.

His cock nudged at Louis’ entrance, tantalisingly close as he asked “You sure?”

Louis rocked his hips, whining out a “Fucking yes”.

Harry held his cock in one hand and slowly pushed in, pausing when Louis whimpered. “Too much?”

“Yeah, but don’t stop.”

So he sunk into Louis deeper, keeping eye contact, watching Louis’ expression to see whether he needed to stop. But Harry’s concern only made Louis want him even more, for them to be even closer, so Louis canted his hips up to pull him further in.

Harry rocked his hips experimentally, brushing Louis’ prostate and making him moan. It gave Harry the confidence to pull out further before pushing back in again.

Louis threw his head back, pushing his hair into his hands that were still above him despite no longer being under Harry’s hold. His fingers gripped onto the strands, tugging, trying to bring himself back down.

“So good, Haz, fuck. So good.” He gasped.

Harry responded by pulling out until only the very tip of his cock was keeping Louis open. “Yeah?”
“No,” Louis whimpered, opening his eyes to find Harry grinning cheekily. “In. Fuck me, please. Need it.”

“This?” he teased, pushing in half an inch, smile growing when Louis gave a high pitched whine.

“Yes, no. More!”

Harry did as he was told, pushing in to the hilt, swerving his hips and pulling out again. Before Louis could complain, Harry drove in hard and fast repeatedly, finally fucking him how Louis needed it.

Louis gripped his hair harder to stop himself taking hold of his own cock, and Harry wrapped a hand around him as if he could read his mind.

Harry jerked Louis in time with his thrusts, hand moving faster with his hips until Louis felt like that pleasant buzz of **too much**.

“I’m gonna come.” Harry grunted the words on the edge of Louis’ tongue.

Louis felt Harry’s thrusts getting erratic and he whined “Don’t stop, keep going.”

Harry clenched his eyes shut and stilled his hand on Louis’ cock for a moment, trying to calm himself, but Louis wasn’t having it. He canted his hips, fucking up into Harry’s loose fist, clenching around Harry tightly.

Harry came with a stream of groaned **Fucks**, slowing his hips, causing Louis to beg him to “Keep going. Fuck, don’t stop.”

Harry collapsed onto Louis, cock still buried deep, managing a few shorts thrusts. He was still thick inside Louis, come warm and wet inside his arse.

Louis rolled his hips, fucking himself on Harry’s cock and up into Harry’s hand until he was coming onto Harry’s fingers and stomach.

“Fuck.” He huffed, completely exhausted.

“Yeah.” Louis agreed from beneath him, finally letting go of his own hair to run his fingers through Harry’s instead. “Good work.”

Harry snorted a laugh into Louis’ chest. “You too. We need to clean the come. It everywhere.”

“Your turn.”

Harry groaned in response. He carefully pulled himself from Louis’ arse before rolling off the bed to get a flannel.

Louis managed to keep his eyes open long enough to watch Harry’s arse waddle away, but had already drifted off by the time he was leaving the bathroom again.

---

The thing with Harry was that he still woke up at ridiculous hours of the morning, no matter how late they were up the night before.

Louis felt the tell-tale shift in the bed when Harry got up, and cracked open an eye to look at the time. It was just gone seven, so he groaned and rolled onto his stomach. Which rumbled, crying out
to be filled.

He tried to ignore it for as long as possible, desperate to go back to sleep, but it was pointless.

Louis forced himself up, and stumbled out of the room in search of Harry.

“Haz!” He called, then let out a croaky yawn. “Babe, ‘m hungry!”

“In here!” Louis heard coming from the lounge, so he wandered in only to find Harry bent over backwards, feet and hands firmly pressed to the ground with his back arched and his stomach high in the air.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

“Yoga!” Harry said, head still hanging upside down, the ends of his hair brushing against the floor. “Keeps me stretchy.”

“How do you know about yoga?”

“TV! Before the breakfast news show they do it. At six o’clock. I missed it but I remember moves so now I can do it with no watching.” Harry slowly lowered himself to the ground as he spoke. “You want to join?”

“God no! I’ll go make us some breakie.”

Louis made himself a cuppa as the bread toasted, watching Harry contort his body into different positions. It was a hilarious sight, but also an incredibly hot one.

Harry didn’t wear clothes around the house. He only did when people were coming over or they were going out, but when it was just the two of them Harry wore nothing so the majority of weekends were spent nude.

So there Harry was, on a rug in the lounge room, doing yoga with his cock hanging free.

It did explain a lot. Harry was incredibly flexible and his muscles were still incredibly defined despite the fact that he didn’t do exercise, as far as Louis knew. He’d thought Harry’s only method of expelling energy was running around with the kids until he’d discovered the secret yoga. Louis wondered if that was also how Harry could get into the most impossible of positions during sex. He’d always figured it was because of the muscles he used and the joints he worked during his jungle days that most people would never have had to use.

“I want jam toast!” Harry called when he heard the toast pop up. “And throw me a banana please.”

“You can have it at the table, you always leave the peels everywhere.”

“Fine.” Harry harrumphed, and Louis grinned down at the toast he was buttering.

“I’ve found too many rotting in weird places to risk it love.”

“I said fine!”

“No need to be grumpy about it.”

Harry sighed loudly as he stood up straight. He walked into the kitchen and wrapped his arms around Louis and gave him a kiss on the nape of his neck. “I not grumpy. I just didn’t know.”
“It’s okay. Now you do. Peels go in the bin, yeah?”

“I knew that. Just I didn’t know I forgot sometimes about it.”

Louis turned his head around enough to give Harry a quick kiss. “What jam do you want?”

Harry pursed his lips in thought, and Louis couldn’t help but kiss them again before Harry answered with “Blackberry.”

“’kay. Can you pour us some juice?”

“Yep.”

Louis missed Harry’s arms around him as soon as they were gone. He’d never been with anyone who liked touching as much as Harry did, and it was one of his favourite things. He had a lot of favourite things about Harry, too many to count, but his need for receiving and giving affection was definitely in Louis’ top ten.

After they ate breakfast, Louis called his Mum.

“You promised you’d call yesterday!” she chastised.

“Hello to you too.”

“Oh, stop it. How were the kids this week?”

Louis rolled his eyes at the question. “Fine. Good. Like they always are.”

“And Harry?”

“Amazing as always.”

“What about you?”

“Good.”

“Anything new?” she asked hopefully.

“No.” he replied. And here it comes.

“I just worry about you Lou!”

“I know Mum, you tell me that every time I see you.”

“You’ve just gone through so many changes in the last year, and I know what you’re like. I know you’re not used to doing nothing, or relying on others. You’ve had to worry about yourself ever since you were a little boy.” Louis rolled his eyes again, because the amount of times he’d heard this spiel from his mother was ridiculous. He knew she felt guilty about how little time she had for him once the first set of twins were born, she’d outright said it so many times, just like he’d told her it was not an issue. He’d accepted that he had to look after himself when he was a teenager and just got on with it. Packed his own lunch for school, washed his own clothes. It was all for the best, what with how early he left home to move to London. “But Louis, don’t let anything build up. If you’re feeling lonely, say something. If you’re getting bored, find something to do! If you’re getting jealous of Harry then don’t let it grow into resentment.”

“Christ, Mum, if I knew you wanted to lecture me I wouldn’t have called!”
“Don’t be like that love.”

“You don’t be like that!” he snapped.

And Harry was by him, arm thrown over Louis’ shoulder and pulling him into his side in comfort. “Can I speak to her?” he asked, and Louis nodded and pushed the phone into his hands. “Hello!” Harry said chirpily.

Louis could hear the faint chatter of his Mum but couldn’t make out exact words.

“They are very good, yes.” Harry hummed. “Getting bigger all the times! They played with blocks this week, getting very good at building.”

There was a pause, then Harry laughed. “Yes, one day. Are you coming for dinner tonight?”

Louis poked Harry’s thigh and shook his head. “The boys are coming over remember? They’re all driving up and staying for the night.”

Harry nodded and said into the receiver “Another time, yes. I am going now, would you like for to say goodbye to Lou?” Another pause. “Yes, goodbye! Love you!”

Then Harry was shoving the phone back into Louis’ palm with a stern look.

Louis sighed before pressing the phone to his ear. “Sorry Mum.”

“It’s fine, love. I’m sorry.”

“Yeah yeah. We’re fine. I’m fine, honestly. If I feel any of those things I’ll tell you okay?” he lied. But his Mum believed him. “Yes, please.”

“Love you Mum.”

“Love you too.”

And after Louis hung up the phone he dropped it down onto the sofa and groaned. “I love Mum, I do, but I’m too old to be told what to do! She keeps trying to make sure I’m okay which makes it feel like she thinks there’s something wrong, you know?”

“I know.” Harry nodded.

“Do you actually know or are you just saying that?”

“I actually know. But it’s because she cares! Don’t be rude to her.”

Louis sighed again, but didn’t say anything more. Harry was right, as usual. Louis just wanted to whine but it was awkward to whine about his Mum when Harry’s was so – odd. They’d only heard from her twice since she left them in the jungle. The first time was when she got back, calling to tell them she was okay, and the second was when they first moved to Doncaster and she promised to visit them. That had been over a month ago, though.

Louis would just complain to Zayn when he got there that evening.

“Can we watch telly now?” Harry asked, already reaching for the remote.

“Yeah, I’m done on the phone.”
Louis lay himself down on the sofa while Harry scrolled through the Sky menu, rolling onto his side and putting his head on Harry’s thigh and curling his legs until his knees were against his chest.

Harry put his spare hand in Louis’ hair and fingered the strands, and Louis was asleep before Harry had even picked a program to watch.

---

Their mates didn’t get there until well after lunch, and Harry ran to them with open arms as if he hadn’t seen them for years.

It had only been a few weeks since they were over last.

Niall was first to get a hug, laughing when Harry nuzzled into his neck and gripped him tight. “Good to see you too.” He snorted. Then, when Harry released him to grab hold of Liam, Niall came over to Louis for a quick hug. They’d all become very huggy since Harry joined their little gang, they barely even shook hands before Louis’ trip to the jungle.

“What you been up to?” Louis asked as he pulled back. “You’re looking very pink.”

“Been golfing loads. It’s this bloody Irish skin, burns in seconds. What about you?”

Louis shrugged. “The usual. Nothing.” Then he turned to Liam, whose face was slightly pink after Harry’s hug. “All right?”

“Yeah, mate, forgot what he’s like.” Liam said, grin falling over his face. He threw one of his arms over Louis’ shoulders and asked “What’s been going on?”


Liam frowned. “And what’s the usual?”

Which was when Zayn finally wormed his way out of Harry’s grip and joined their conversation. He pulled Louis to him, squeezing tightly before releasing him to say “Worshipping Harry, obviously.”

“He does more!” Harry squawked. “He helps me with the children.”

“How many you two got now?” Niall asked.

Louis answered with “Six. Might be a seventh starting soon.”

“It very good.” Harry nodded. “Parents like Louis and the children like me so we doing well.”

“Don’t you need, like, government checks and stuff? Like legal shit?” Zayn asked with concern. “To make sure your house is child-friendly and all that? I remember when my auntie was looking for a place to stick her kids she was fussy as all hell. Isn’t it like that here?”

Harry looked confusedly at Louis, who said “Probably, but most of the parents know me, or at least know my Mum really well. I doubt we could take on more than eight, not with just the two of us, but maybe one day this could be a proper business and we can hire people and stuff. Make this level of the house a proper child care centre. At the moment we’re just winging it.”

“What you all doing?” Harry asked, putting his hands behind his back and rocking back and forth on his heels, little smile on his face. He looked proud of himself, and probably was. He’d been
I’ve just been taking pictures and painting and that. Got a few photography gigs lined up. Well paying ones.” Zayn said, and Louis grinned.

“How’s the boss?”

“She’s good, yeah. Keeps asking for you, wants to know what you’re up to. She misses you loads I think.”

“I’ll have to invite her up some time.” Louis thought aloud. He missed his old manager too. She’d been a big part of his life for so long, they could definitely do with a catch-up. As it was, they’d only really kept in contact through Zayn. She’d signed him up once he graduated his course, promising to help find him some work with all of her connections. He was inexperienced, his portfolio was lacking, so the jobs he was getting weren’t the most high-end but they paid well enough.

“And you Liam?” Harry asked, still wearing that proud smile. “What you up to?”

“He’s got a girlfriend!” Niall near-shouted, obviously unable to contain himself.

“I don’t!” Liam groaned. “I’ve only been on a few dates with her.”

“But you’re practically in love.” Zayn said with a roll of his eyes.

Liam sighed. “Well, yeah, but I don’t know if she’s my girlfriend.”

“Anything else then?” Louis prompted.

“Nah, still just working and studying. Occasionally dating. That’s my life.”

“Same here.” Niall nodded, and Louis smirked.

“And golfing.”

“What that? Is that on the telly?” Harry asked excitedly. “Can you teach me?”

“’course! I’ll bring my clubs over next time, we’ll set up a course in the yard or something. Do some putting.”

“There’s a proper course a few miles away.” Louis suggested. “I’d rather you not go tearing up our grass.”

“Christ, aren’t you an old man now?”

Louis pushed Niall in the shoulder, grumbling about being a responsible adult while the others laughed at him. He liked their yard, he didn’t want it to get chopped up by Niall’s bloody clubs.

“I made a cake!” Harry interrupted them, holding his hand out towards the kitchen. Louis was starting to get suspicious that maybe Harry had stumbled across the Stepford Wives film or something.

It got them all out of the hallway, anyway, and into the lounge. Harry rushed off to fetch the cake, and Louis followed him into the kitchen to make some tea, watching Harry as he cut if up and put it onto plates.
“What kind of cake is it?”

“Banana!” Harry grinned. “I thought it would be funny, and also I like banana. I Googlered the recipe.”

“When did you even have the time to do this?”

“When you was asleep.”

The boys all devoured the cake, which was surprisingly good. It shouldn’t have been a surprise, really, because Harry was good at everything he tried. He beamed under their praises, serving up seconds with his proud little smile.

Louis probed Liam about his new maybe-girlfriend, and Harry asked more about golf. Zayn showed them copies of some of the pictures he’d taken, and eventually Louis brought out the beers.

They talked and drank well into the evening, and Harry popped off for a bit to get something sorted for dinner.

He just made up some pasta and they ate it in front of the telly, and one by one they slipped off to bed until it was just Louis and Zayn left.

Louis could barely lift his head from the back of the sofa, but he managed to roll his head over to give Zayn a grin. “So.”

“Here we are, last ones standing. As always.”

“I reckon the lads do this on purpose.” Louis slurred. “Give us private time.”

Zayn scrunched up his face. “Why would they do that?”

“cause they know we miss each other the most.”

“True.” Zayn nodded. He lifted the beer to his mouth, but the rim of the bottle missed his lips by over an inch. Louis burst into a fit of laughter, and Zayn punched him on the knee.

“How’s the flat hunt going?”

“It’s okay. My sister said I can just stay in the spare room at my parent’s place but I’d rather not. Feels like I’m still under their thumb when I’m there. I liked being at yours’, you know?”

“Sorry about that.”

“What? That you’re lease is running out and I can’t afford to renew it myself?” Zayn scoffed.

“I could –”

“Pay for the lease yourself?” Zayn interrupted, giving Louis a look that shut him right up. “For a flat you’re not even living in anymore? Don’t be a twat.”

“’kay.”

“So tell me about what you and Harry are really like?”

“What do you mean?”
“It can’t be that perfect. No relationship is.”

Louis pouted his mouth, crinkling his brow in thought, searching his brain for something less-than-perfect about Harry.


“I mean, we’ve got problems, sure. Just dumb normal stuff. Like –” Louis paused again. “Fuck, I can’t even think of anything. Think we had more than enough issues to sort out before we went off to the Congo, you know? We’ve had our fair share of drama, we’ve been through more than a lot of people can say they have, so now we’re just – here. Happy.”

“You two are proper domesticated, aren’t you? You’ll be adopting kids and getting married in no time.”

Louis shrugged. “One day, yeah. Once we got careers sorted, I guess. Can’t live off my modelling money for ever, and Harry’s little business doesn’t bring in much just yet. We had to spend loads to stock the place up with toys and shit.”

“You’re Mum still on your arse about finding work?”

Louis threw his head back and groaned. “Yeah, every day I swear. She says she’s worried but it’s fucking annoying. I’m too old for that shit.”

“Give her a chance to mother you for a bit. She never really got to.”

“You sound like Harry.”

‘Course I do, we’re both geniuses. Great brains think alike and all that.”

“Toss off.” Louis laughed.

Zayn let him for a few moments, but brought Louis back to reality with the words “It’s true though, you know. You remember how happy she was to see you when you visited with Harry that first time. You just gotta let her do this stuff for you. Listen to her advice, or at least pretend to. Don’t shut her down when she’s trying to help. Appreciate her a bit more.”

Louis didn’t say anything. He didn’t like admitting when others were right and he wasn’t going to just do it. Maybe he’d tell Harry he was, but not Zayn. Zayn wouldn’t let him live it down and besides, they were off their faces; the ribbing would be at least twenty times worse. So Louis just swallowed down another gulp of beer and stifled a yawn with the back of his hand.

“Bed time, yeah?”

Louis nodded. “Yeah, better. Harry’s probably waiting up for me so I can fill him in on everything we’ve said.”

“Why doesn’t he just sit in with us?”

“I won’t say everything I want to. He reckons when he’s here we don’t talk about this stuff at all, but if he’s not we do and then after I’ll him everything anyway. He’s right, too. Like always.”

“He really is a smart one, isn’t he?” Zayn said, sounding incredibly impressed. “Seems to have you figured out.”
“He’s far too observant.”

“You know him too, though. I swear half the conversations you guys have are telepathic.”

“Yeah?” Louis grinned. “You noticed?”

“Fuck off to your own bed and get out of mine.”

“You sleeping on the sofa? You realise we’ve got, like, four spare rooms? Harry made a bed up for you and everything!”

Zayn got up to grab himself one of the throw rugs that were piled up amongst all of the board games and toys. He grabbed Louis’ arm and wrenched him off the sofa as he said “But I have to go upstairs for that, don’t I? I like sleeping here, anyway. Feels proper homey.”

“Fine.” Louis got out through a broken yawn. “Suit yourself.”

He threw a good night over his shoulder before he trekked up the stairs and went into his room, collapsing onto the bed with a grunt.

He felt a hand in his hair and he sighed out.

“Brush your teeth.” Harry demanded. “You stink like beer.”

Louis grunted again, but after a few nudges from Harry he did what he was told.

He took off his clothes and climbed into the bed, curling up against Harry’s side.

“So?” was all Harry said before Louis was recapping the entire conversation he’d just had.

Harry had Louis wrapped around his little finger, but Louis couldn’t ever say he minded. It was the best place to be, after all.

---

The following week was the same as always, and yet at the same time it wasn’t.

Harry played with the kids, Louis fed them, they both put them to sleep during nap time, but something felt off.

It wasn’t enough for Louis, he needed more.

He couldn’t watch Harry piggyback the kids around in the morning for more than half an hour without feeling entirely bored, making little sandwiches and cutting up carrots into sticks made him frustrated, and by the evening when the kids started getting grumpy with tiredness, worn out from their busy day with Harry, Louis was feeling just as snappy.

Harry noticed his mood, and kept asking him what the matter was, but Louis couldn’t tell him because he had no idea.

Well, he did have an idea, but it wasn’t anything new. It was the same thing that had been bothering him for the last couple of months, not having his own job to do, not having his own thing to accomplish, so why was it affecting his mood only now? Why wasn’t watching Harry enough anymore?

“We should go out.” Harry suggested. “It been four days and you still are grumpy. We need to get
out of the house and do something. Maybe you are feeling trapped.”

“I’m not feeling trapped!” Louis snapped.

Harry’s face fell, and in a quiet voice he said “It okay if you are.”

It made Louis feel like absolute shit, the expression on his boyfriend’s face. “No, babe, I promise I’m not – well, maybe I do feel trapped. Not here or with you or anything, but just – I don’t know. I’m just bored.”

“So let’s go out!” Harry chirped, thousand watt smile back where it belonged. “I want to go to the cinema! Liam said he took his not-girlfriend there, I think we should go. Can we?”

And Louis couldn’t help it – he burst out a laugh. What a bloody normal thing to do. He couldn’t imagine doing anything more normal. Harry frowned, and Louis was quick to assure him that “I’m not laughing at you! Just – we don’t do normal stuff.”

“Why not? We should! Do you not want to go?”

“Nah, I do. It’ll be nice, actually. You’ll love it, it’s like watching telly on a massive screen.”

“I know, that what Niall said. So can we? Right now?”

Louis looked down at himself, at his trackies and stained shirt and holed house socks. “Give me time to have a shower, yeah?” Harry smirked, and Louis was quick to add “You stay out of it! I just need a quick one to wash myself, I don’t need you giving me ideas.”

“Fine.” Harry rolled his eyes. “But if you not out in five minutes I coming in.”

---

They’d settled on the new Avengers film, and all the way there Harry was chattering away about the first ones. Louis could barely remember them, but Harry had seen them both rather recently and was filling Louis in on every minor thing that happened.

He stopped talking when they got to the cinema, too busy taking everything around him in to carry a conversation. It was a Thursday night and the place was far busier than what Louis expected.

“It very bright and noisy.” Harry frowned. “How we meant to hear the telly?”

Louis answered with “Just wait and see”, and put his arm around Harry’s waist to lead him to the queue.

They bought tickets and popcorn and some chocolate and fizzy drink, and Harry held it all in his big paws while Louis shoved the tickets in his back pocket.

They were standing in the middle of the foyer, waiting until their screen opened up, when Louis felt a tap on his shoulder.

He spun around to find a couple standing there smiling. “Hello?” he said unsurely, racking his brain for whether or not he’d met them before.

“Hi, we were just wondering if we could grab a picture with you and Harry?” the man asked.

At the sound of his name, Harry spun to face them as well. He had his lips pursed around the straw of their drink, releasing it from his mouth to ask “What?”
“We just – we’re big fans!” the woman said excitedly, stepping from foot to foot like a child.

Harry frowned. “Fans for what? We don’t do anything.”

She ignored his question to say “We thought you’d both left for the jungle again! But here you are at our cinema! We come here every Thursday, it’s date night you see.” Her partner nudged her shoulder with his, and she stopped. “We’d love to ask you what the jungle was like. The both of you are fascinating. And to think, you threw away the chance to be with an American celebrity to be with Harry. It’s obviously true love.”

“Christ, you read a lot of Heat don’t you?” Louis laughed, but the joke went over her head. She just kept going.

“It was probably for the best, though, he’s not doing so well now I heard.”

Louis couldn’t help but grin. He’d heard a lot about it when he came back, how the actor’s movies all flopped.

“It’s that awful attitude he has,” the man piped up. “I read that he can’t get a job because word spread that he’s difficult to work with.”

Louis gave them a strained smile and said “That doesn’t surprise me. Look, we’re just here on a date too, so we’d rather not get pictures and stuff you know? Kinda trying to leave all that behind.”

“Oh!” the woman gasped. “Of course, we’re so sorry to bother you! We just saw you over here and couldn’t believe our eyes.”

“Just thought we’d give it a try.” The man nodded along.

“Sorry.” Harry said sincerely.

“Enjoy your film, yeah?” Louis added, offering his hand for the both of them to shake. Harry watched the exchange longingly, obviously wishing he could do the polite thing. His hands were full, though, so he had to settle with smiling at them and saying bye as they left. Louis turned to him when the couple was out of earshot and said “Can’t wait ‘til we’re totally forgotten about. It’s awkward when that happens.”

“It happens a lot?”

“At Sainsbury’s, at Boots, even at the bank when I go. People always ask about you.” Louis added with a grin.

Harry smiled back and said “That is nice of the people. They care!”

“Bit weird though.”

When their screen opened, Harry was quick to the front of the line. He blinked at the usher who asked for their tickets, and Louis quickly got them out of his pocket and passed them over.

When they got to their screen, Harry gasped at the size of it.

“Wow! It huge!” he grinned. He made to sit at the seats at the very front, but Louis was quick to get him up and to the back row. When they sat down, Harry grunted “But we are so far away!”

“The front seats are the worst. Nobody chooses them, they’re too close and you can’t see anything!”
Harry didn’t look convinced, but he shrugged and turned back to face the screen. “Turn it on. Who has the remote?”

“Babe, it’s not actually a giant telly. We just have to wait ‘til it starts.”

Harry scrunched up his face adorably, and let out a big long sigh. He shoved some popcorn in his mouth and flopped back into his seat.

“Don’t get stroppy.” Louis couldn’t help but laugh.

Harry was just about to answer back, had his mouth open and words ready on his tongue, when the screen flickered to life and an ad started playing, one of those ones telling everyone to switch their phones to silent.

Immediately, Harry’s eyes were widening and his mouth was dropping open. He looked to Louis, grinned wide, and that was the last Louis saw of his eyes at all until the film was over. He was transfixed, couldn’t look away from the screen, even when Louis muttered to him about passing the bag of malteasers over he didn’t stop watching.

Only when the credits started to roll did Harry look away. He had a huge smile on his face, a handful of popcorn clenched in his fist. “That was good.” He said, and shoved it all into his mouth in one go.

Louis laughed and asked “Yeah?”

Harry nodded, popcorn falling from his lips as he said “Really good! Much better. Can we buy one of these for the house?”

“Maybe one day.”

They were the last to leave, even after those that stayed for the bit at the end of the credits. Harry was too happy in his seat, munching on his popcorn, staring at the giant screen. “What next?” he asked, and Louis had to slap himself.

“Nothing! We’ve got to go home now, or pay to see another film. I don’t think there are any more playing tonight, actually. We’ll come back to see something on the weekend, yeah?”

Harry scrunched up his nose but nodded his head anyway, picking up all his bits and throwing them away on their way out. Louis found that funny, how it was just instinctual for Harry to tidy up after himself when most of the other people in the cinema had just left their rubbish behind.

“I’m tired.” Harry sulked, grabbing onto Louis’ hand and flopping his head down onto Louis’ shoulder. It made the walk to the car a lot more difficult, but it was sweet. When they were both buckled in, and Louis turned the ignition, Harry said sleepily “Thank you for taking me out. We should do date nights too, like those people. Do the cinema and different things. Dinner, too, like what you did with the movie man for pretend.” Harry’s eyes were closed, his head tipped back against the seat. When he was tired his language slipped, showing just how much he had to think about his speech and how little of it was automatic. He had improved a lot, but somewhere along the line he’d plateaued.

“’course love. We’d be like a proper old married couple.”

“When we getting married?” Harry asked, peeking an eye open to peer over at Louis.

Louis was silent for a moment, unsure of what to say. It was odd. He’d always thought marriage
would be a big deal, and in honesty he’d never thought he himself would be one to go through with it, but with Harry it just felt like natural progression. He couldn’t picture his life without Harry by his side, every one of his thoughts of the future included him, so marriage was a given. The when of it though was something he didn’t know. “When do you wanna get married?”

Harry shrugged. “I like being boyfriends right now. It funner to say. We are boys and friends.” He put a hand on Louis’ thigh and laughed. “Who fuck a lot and live together and be together for always. We can just be that. Be Harry and Lou. That can be it for now.”

Louis smiled to himself, risking a glance away from the road to look at Harry. Who was still grinning, just staring at Louis as he drove. “That what you want? To just be us? Because I’m happy with that. It feels obvious that we’ll get married one day. No need to rush it, is there? Not when we’re perfectly okay now?”

“Yes.”

Louis looked back to the road. “You know, marriage is usually a big conversation for couples. Usually someone proposes and there’s crying and all that malarkey.”

“I know, I see the movies.”

“You don’t want that?”

“No.” Harry answered, quick, with absolutely no hesitance. “I already have you, we don’t need any silliness. You my Lou, I your Harry, that is even more than enough.”

---

Louis felt far better the following day.

When they got home, they fell into bed, too tired for even a quick handjob. It had been the first night in months that they hadn’t had any kind of sex, and Louis obviously wasn’t the only one who noticed it because he was woken by Harry’s mouth on his cock. He was still sleep-groggy when he came, and felt guiltily grateful that Harry got himself off by humping the sheets while he gave Louis head.

“I don’t want to work today.” Harry sulked, crossing his arms over Louis’ stomach and peering up at him from between Louis’ legs. “I want to sleep more.”

“You could have been sleeping just now instead of sucking me off. Not that I’m complaining.”

“But I was more horny than sleepy just then.” Harry got out through a yawn.

“It’s a Friday, we can sleep in tomorrow yeah? One more day, then we don’t have to be responsible adults.”

Harry groaned, but climbed out from under the covers and disappeared into the bathroom. He had a shower, calling for Louis to jump in after he’d finished.

They were both washed and dressed and fed by the time Louis’ step dad arrived with the twins, and so started their day.

Louis was back to feeling quite happy after his week of self-doubt, and even the naughty girl’s foul mood wasn’t ruining his day.
She was clearly getting to Harry, though.

Harry looked three seconds from crying when she wrenched his hair hard, trying to get him to put down one of the toddlers and pick her up instead.

Louis hurried to her, kneeling down to ask “What me to pick you up instead?”

She gave him the most horrified of looks and said “No! You’re not my horse, are you? You’re the stupid prince’s horse. I’m a princess, I can’t ride a prince horse!”

Louis looked to Harry, who was bouncing his little baby brother up and down on his knee, trying to calm him. He turned back to the girl and said “But, did you know I’m actually the prince’s sister’s horse? She just lets him borrow me because she’s older and kind to her little brother. So really, I’m a princess’ horse just like Harry is. I’m sure she wouldn’t mind if you had a ride on me instead.”

She considered it for a moment before tilting her chin up and saying “Very well. Bow down, steed.”

Louis bent down on all fours and let her climb onto his back, and next thing she did was grab fistfuls of his hair and pulled them hard, shouting Go! as soon as he was up on his feet.

He ran around their yard, going faster when she tugged his hair and neighing when she told him to. Louis was huffing by the time she let him stop, almost collapsing on his knees when he ducked down to let her off.

She released his hair and dropped down from his back with surprising grace, then rubbed her hands on her skirt as if he’d made them dirty. “Come on, princey horse, I need to brush you and give you carrots.”

She didn’t give Louis time to answer, just spun on her heels and headed towards the house so all Louis could do was follow. He did a quick search for Harry, who was sitting with the littler ones in the plastic sea-shell-shaped sandbox helping them build castles.

“Come down!” she called, waving a hairbrush about in front of her.

Louis sat down cross-legged, resisting the urge to watch her as she disappeared behind him. He flinched when the brush plonked down on his head, and gritted his teeth as it ran through his messy hair.

She tutted and said “Silly horsey, you’re so knotty! I have to tell the other princess that she is not looking after you properly. Maybe I should have you instead, and she can have Harry. He doesn’t let me brush his hair.”

“It’s ‘cause there’s so much of it. Plus, he’s got the others to care for too, you know?” Louis asked, but was answered with a thwack to the head with the brush.

“My mummy said you were an actor. Is that really true?”

“No, not really. I wanted to be one but I was a model instead.”

“What’s that?”

“Someone who gets their pictures taken for a living.”

“Yuk!” she shrieked. “I hate getting my picture taken. Why would you do that for a job? You’re
silly.”

“I know.” Louis laughed. “I don’t do it anymore though.”

She was silent for a moment, just running the brush over his back and arms as if he had fur like a horse. Then she said “What do you do now?”

He pursed his lips in thought. “Nothing really.”

“Of course you do something, you’re a grown up!”

“Well, I help Harry.”

“That’s not your job though!”

“I don’t have a job, then.”

She stopped brushing him and took a step back, frowning hard. She just blinked at him, incredulous, before asking “What did you want to do when you were really little?”

“How little? Your age?” he asked, prodding her in her little tummy.

She managed a small smile, as if humouring his attempt at a joke, before nodding.

“I wanted to be a football player.”

“Why don’t you do that, then?”

“It’s a bit hard.” He grinned. “I’m not good enough to play properly.”

She put her hands on her hips and stared him down. “Mum says you can be whatever you want when you’re a grown up, and you’re a grown up. Is she wrong?”

“Well, no, but –”

“No buts.” she shook her head. “Now get up, horsie, we have to go get you food now.”

Louis grunted as he stood up, and grinned when the little girl tutted.

“You’re like my grandpa.” Then she held out her hand for him to take, and pulled him into the kitchen. “Yours is much nicer than mine. It’s very big and clean and brown. Do you have a cleaner?”

“Don’t need one, it’s just the two of us.” Louis shrugged. He went to the fridge and pulled out a bag of carrots. “I have to get everyone’s morning tea ready, if you’d like to help?”

She sighed and rolled her big blue eyes. “Fine. Don’t give me the stupid jobs though.”

“I won’t.” Louis promised. He pulled out a knife from the block and the peeler from a draw. “Can you grab me six plastic plates from that cupboard there please?”

She did what she was told, skipping over to where Louis had been pointing. As she carefully pulled out the plates and some plastic cups, Louis peeled the carrots and chopped them up into sticks. He grabbed a container of pre-cut cucumber sticks out of the fridge and put it on the bench, then told his little helper to share them and the carrots out onto the plates. As she did that, and Louis got out a tin of biscuits, Louis asked “What do you want to be when you’re grown up?”
“A princess.”

“But I thought you already were one?”

“I am.” She pouted, putting down the last of the carrot sticks. “Just like you’re a football player. Could we play some after our snack? I’m very good.”

“Of course! I’m a bit rusty, you might have to go easy on me.”

She let out a long sigh and said “Fine, but you have to play your best.”

Louis called in the kids for food, and as they ate the little girl told them all about football. The only others who were keen to play was a little boy and girl a year younger than her, and when she heard this she gave Louis a pointed look and said “We need to discuss strategy, so please go.”

“Three versus one, is it?” he asked with mock outrage. “That’s not very fair!”

She rolled her eyes and waved him away, so Louis did as he was told.

He was rather excited for the game, and couldn’t wipe the grin from his face as he wiped down the kitchen.

He was still smiling like an idiot when Harry came into the room with a pile of dirty plates. “You playing football with the children?”

“Yeah! I’m looking forward to it, actually.” He took the plates from Harry and began piling them into the dishwasher. “Should be fun. Haven’t played in years, not since me and Niall kicked a ball about at a park.” When he finally turned around to look at Harry, the man looked seconds away from laughing. “What?”

“Nothing. You just look happy. I haven’t seen you this way for a while.”

“Really? I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry!” Harry laughed. “It good! I’d rather see you like this then not.”

“I suppose. I am happy though. You know that right?”

“Yes, I do. You are happy with me, but I know you want something more. For yourself. You have me, and I have you, but I also have these children. You can have them too if you want. I think you do want, you just scared about us having everything the same.”

Louis frowned and said “That’s not true! I mean, it’s true that I do want something for myself, but that’s just because I get bored in here.”

“You know you can always come out with us, yes? I always see you watching us. Is it because you want to join? Because you can, they all love you. They would love to play with you too.”

“Doubt it.”

“What have you been doing all morning? Playing! And you had fun, yes? Why don’t you give this a go with me? Just because it not something you always wanted, it does not mean it something you won’t love. It what happened to us, yes? I know you didn’t imagine your one-day-husband to be like me, but I perfect for you. Maybe this will be too if you try. You are good with children, you are good at teaching, you are patience, it will be perfect!”
“But – it’s your thing. Don’t you want to have your own thing?”

“No!” Harry snorted. “I want everything to be with you. It will be fun for us to do this together. We will be a team!”

Louis was stumped. He’d been trying so hard to separate himself from Harry’s work, even leaving his own siblings to be cared for by Harry to create some kind of sense of professionalism, thinking that’s what he would want. He’d taken a step back when all Harry wanted was for him to remain at his side. “I’ll give it a go then, yeah. I have been feeling a bit –“

“Trapped?” Harry asked, smirking knowingly. “You can say it, I won’t feel sad.”

“Fine,” he sighed. “I’ve been feeling trapped. Not with you or anything, just – in my head. I don’t know how to do nothing and it’s been tearing away at me.”

Harry pursed his lips, silent as he thought. “I think that what is good about this is that we can do whatever we love to do. I can run and be silly and climb trees and not think of what I don’t understand. That is why I like this, because I can be me with no worries. Being silly to adults it not good, but being silly for children is. We can put what we love into this. You love football, you love acting, you can do the things you love for fun again and the kids will be happy for it. It will be good for you, Lou.”

“Fuck it.” Louis groaned. “How do you have the answers to everything?”

“How do you know that about me and never ask me for them? Talk to me, Lou! I need to know how you feeling because I trying so hard to know everything about your world but it hard when I still don’t know you sometimes!”

Louis was quick to wrap his arms around Harry, kissing him firmly before saying “I’m sorry. I’m not used to someone getting me like you do, or caring about me this much, and that’s something I’m still learning to manage.”

Harry kissed him again, and they were interrupted by a shouted “Yuck!”

Louis pulled back to peer over Harry’s shoulder at the group of small children in the doorway, the oldest girl with her arms crossed in front of her.

“You are meant to be playing football, not snogging!”

“Sorry.” He laughed. “I’ll be right out.”

The kids ran to the back door to put their shoes on, and Harry said “The twins are still in their chairs, I need to get them out.”

“All right,” Louis nodded. “you go work. I’ve got some football to play.”

“You will think about what I said, yes?”

“Don’t need to, I already know you’re right.”

Harry gave him a quick kiss again, made sweet by the wide grin on his lips, before letting him go to collect the toddlers from their high chairs.

As Louis wandered out into the yard, he tried to picture doing this for the rest of his life, teaching football to children and preparing them food, putting them to bed with stories and playing games of
make-believe. It wasn’t hard, not at all, and once he let himself he could see the two of them with their own children. He could see himself looking happy and proud and glowing with love, and for the first time in a long time he could see a way to make that future possible.

Works inspired by this one
  Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!