By Any Other Name

by nightwalker

Summary

Harry was not the type to resort to pet names and diminutives, at least, not as a habit. But there was something in Eggsy that made Harry feel soft and fond and, well, indulgent. And Eggsy had not been indulged overmuch in his short life, which made Harry even more inclined to spoil him.

Notes

Thank you to Mollie for doing the read-through. Any remaining embarrassing mistakes are entirely my own fault.

Eggsy

He had always been Eggsy to Harry, right from the first moment of acquaintance, when Harry spoke gently to a sullen, confused little boy who played with a snow globe while his mother sobbed her heart out beside them. He was Eggsy again, nearly two decades later, when a favor was finally cashed in. And he was Eggsy a final time, when Harry watched him walk out of a police station, confident but not cocky – grateful for a second chance, but not arrogant enough to think he deserved it. He is Eggsy in that moment, when Harry finalizes his decision to propose him to Kingsman.

That was Eggsy. He would always be Eggsy to Harry, no matter what code name he eventually assumed, no matter what his legal documents said. Eggsy was brash and brilliant and a breath of air
in a house that had been stale for far too long. Eggsy was cheer and sass and a deep abiding kindness that underlay a soul made heavy with worry and resignation.

Harry was not the type to resort to pet names and diminutives, at least, not as a habit. But there was something in Eggsy that made Harry feel soft and fond and, well, indulgent. And Eggsy had not been indulged overmuch in his short life, which made Harry even more inclined to spoil him.

If it helped Eggsy realize the hopeless depths to Harry's affection, then he would whisper sweet nothings and petnames in his lover's ear every day for the rest of his life.

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Son

This one comes to his lips thoughtlessly one afternoon shortly after he was released from medical. He was feeling stronger than he had in many long weeks, and his mood was equally buoyed, so he had decided to indulge himself to an afternoon at the firing range with Eggsy. Loud noises still set off his headaches, but there were other weapons at their disposal, and early in the day most of their fellow agents were still nursing their first cups of tea and glaring blearily at each other as they attempted to sort out who had used the last of the milk, so they had the range to themselves.

Harry himself was a little tired – a product of his ongoing recovery, he was certain, as he was usually quite an enthusiastic morning person – and he blamed that for the word ever slipping past his mental filters.

Eggsy was quite thoroughly distracted with one of the stun guns, this one disguised as a tube of lipstick, which he was already plotting to steal and slip to his mother. Harry had left a handful of self-defense weaponry with various informants and civilian contacts over the years and was quite content to turn a blind eye as long as Eggsy didn't flub the lift. Perhaps that was how it slipped past him, torn between keeping an appraising eye on Eggsy as he spun the tube over his knuckles and looking like he wasn't paying attention at all. “Obviously that one won't be part of your regular arsenal, though Merlin has R&D working on a pen version. It will have a similar voltage to the signet rings, but will be far more effective at longer distances.”

“The ring is very effective,” Eggsy said with a rather wicked smile. “You should have seen Charlie dance when I hit him with it.”

“I did see,” Harry said. “Merlin played that particular piece of video for me with no small amount of satisfaction. Quite well done there, son.”

As soon as the word left his mouth he caught it with a grimace. It rolled awkwardly across his tongue and hung heavily in the air between them, weighed down by Lee Unwin's sacrifice and the eighteen years afterward.

Eggsy didn't so much as blink. Perhaps he was used to hearing it from teachers or his commanding officers in the Marines. Perhaps the other Kingsman agents called him that from time to time since he had no official codename to be called by and proper names were often frowned upon. Perhaps he was so enamored with the memory of his rival trainee jerking like a marionette at the hands of a particularly inept puppeteer that he didn't even hear.

It was not the word Harry wanted between them. 'Son' was not the word that came to mind when he looked at Eggsy and it embodied entirely the wrong sort of feeling. It left Harry uncomfortable in his own skin.
“Perhaps we should move on to the tranquilizers,” Harry suggested, just to push the word further away.

Eggsy grinned like a lunatic as he took aim with a tranquilizer gun that could bring down an elephant only slightly faster than a missile.

Harry watched him – eyes bright and keen as he sighted the target, hands held steady and strong on the grip, lips pursed in concentration – and had to close his eyes for a moment.

No. Son was entirely the wrong word.

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Gawain

They let Harry be the first to say it, when Eggsy had been a Kingsman in all but name for months, working supervised missions with Percival and Bors and Kay – knights Harry and Merlin trusted with their own lives, knights they were absolutely certain had not been recruited by Chester King. But with Percival set to take command as Arthur and the chaos the world had been thrown into after V-Day slowly easing, there was time to finally make it official.

They'd been waiting for an Arthur to formalize things, according to the official story, waiting for a lull in the storm of violence to elevate Eggsy to agent status, to start proposing new candidates for the empty places at their table. But when Percival placed the gold lapel pin in Harry's palm and offered to let him be the one to pin it on Eggsy's collar, he knew they had waited for him. For better or worse.

“Gawain,” he said in a clear voice, uncaring if every last person listening could hear the pride and affection in that word. It was not the name he'd ever thought to call Eggsy by, having at first been so sure he'd take on the mantle of Lancelot like this father. And then later, when his hands shook and the pain made his vision white out and he'd thought he'd never serve again, then he'd thought that Eggsy might be called Galahad. But this was different – better, in a way – because there was no legacy here to overshadow what Eggsy had accomplished himself.

Harry smoothed the lapel of Eggsy's newest suit – a gift from Harry, like his first one. The suit was charcoal grey, the tie the same aquamarine as Eggsy's eyes. Eggsy looked beautiful and vibrant and strong, everything and so much more than Harry had known he had the potential to be that day at the police station.

Eggsy lifted his hand and covered Harry's where it rested over the small gold pin that would be the only sign of his status Eggsy would ever receive.

“My Gawain,” Harry said softly, for no ears other than their own. “I knew you would be the best of us.”

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Dear Boy

“My dear boy,” Harry murmured as Eggsy handed him a cup of tea, prepared just the way he liked it. He said it with pride when Eggsy excelled at his hand-to-hand combat training, when he passed another of the Kingsman trials, when he walked out of the firing range with better scores than most of the active agents could boast. He said it with appreciation when Eggsy mastered the perfect martini on his first try, and in amusement when Eggsy attempted a French accent. He said it with
fond exasperation when Eggsy talked Roxanne into commandeering a tank, and he said it with resignation when he thought Eggsy had failed the final trial.

He said it with shaken, desperate relief when he opened his eyes in that Kentucky hospital and Eggsy was sitting beside his bed, whole, unbroken and beautifully alive. He said it again as Eggsy leaned over him and pressed their foreheads together, his strong hand holding Harry's as it shook with the effort of holding on.

He said it with wonder many months later when he slid his fingers along the curve of Eggsy's jaw and Eggsy smiled and tipped his head to the side so Harry could kiss him.

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Sweetheart

Eggsy giggled the first time Harry called him that, a surprised, almost delighted sound that made him immediately clap a hand over his mouth. “Okay, no,” he said in what was supposed to be a stern tone, but only managed to sound breathless and amused. “That's not going to work for me.”

“No?” Harry was just as breathless, perhaps even more amused as he dragged his nails over Eggsy's stomach, tracing pink lines against the soft skin and watching the muscles clench and twitch at his touch. “That's a pity, it's so apt. You do have quite the sweetest, kindest heart I've ever encountered.”

“Harry,” Eggsy said, something vulnerable and aching in his voice.

Harry leaned in and kissed him. “I shall have to find something more to your liking, I suppose.” He dropped a kiss on the tip of Eggsy's nose just to hear him laugh. “Sweetie pie?” he suggested and Eggsy snorted. “No, too similar. Perhaps honey? Pumpkin?” He kissed Eggsy's jaw, then buried his face against Eggsy's throat to kiss the rapid beat of his pulse. “Cutie patootie?”

“Oh my god,” Eggsy said, his whole body shaking with the effort of holding back his laughter.

“Kitten?” Harry suggested as he pressed a wet kiss to the skin behind Eggsy's ear. “Angel? Lambkin?” He traced the thin tendon of Eggsy's throat with his tongue, brushed his lips over Eggsy's collarbone. “Loverboy?” He pressed a suckling kiss against the skin over Eggsy's heart and cupped his lover's rear in one palm. “Studmuffin,” he said in a deliberately husky voice.

It was an entirely new experience to have a lover laugh at him so hard they fell off the side of the mattress. But as Eggsy dove back onto the bed and tackled him against the pillows, kissing him till he was as breathless as Eggsy, Harry thought he could get very used to it.

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Dearest

“Dearest,” Harry said one morning while he was heavily immersed in a mission briefing packet, “would you have the surveillance reports on the target's step-daughter?”

He noticed, but did not truly register, or particularly care about, the way the other agents in the room exchanged glances.

Eggsy grabbed the report from the center of the table and leaned over to pass it to Harry. “Here you go.”

Harry accepted the papers with an easy smile. “Thank you, dear.”
Merlin may have rolled his eyes. Lancelot certainly did. Percival just heaved one of those trademark sighs that had become entirely too common since the man was elevated to Arthur.

Despite Merlin's repeated and preposterous claims of workplace harassment, they were quite professional at Kingsman. If the occasional kiss or embrace before one of them left on a mission was enough to scandalize their fellow agents, well, frankly those agents needed a new line of work. There was no hanky-panky in the corridors, they did not bring their arguments to work with them (even the work-related ones) and the details of their private lives remained private.

(If Roxanne knew any intimate details of his life, she was good enough to pretend she didn't, for which Harry remained grateful.)

And if he slipped up from time to time and called Eggsy "darling" during a briefing or if he met him after an assignment with a quietly murmured, “Welcome home, my love” then it is worth validating Merlin's incessant teasing for the way Eggsy smiles at him afterward.

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Fiancé

It's not that Harry has anything against the word 'boyfriend.' It's a perfectly serviceable word, one Harry has used himself and one which has, on a few occasions, been used in regards to himself. It just isn't one that he particularly favors in this case. He is, he feels, rather too old to be referred to as 'boy' anything. And, to be honest, he can't help but feel that the word embodies a sense of impermanence that he quite opposes.

Eggsy is not his boyfriend. Eggsy is not someone that he spends time with after work or on the weekends. Eggsy is not someone he is dating, Eggsy is...

Well. And there you have it. Eggsy is a great many things to him. A lover – though that word used as a noun makes Harry feel like he's living in a regency romance novel. He's Harry's partner, in every sense of the word, but that particular title lacks the sense of... of romance, of devotion. Spouse, perhaps, comes closest to describing what Harry feels but it is not, technically, accurate.

And as of today, Eggsy is also his roommate, although that is perhaps the least appropriate of any name he could give their relationship for all its technical accuracy.

“Is that all of it?” Harry asks. There are five cardboard boxes stacked on the curb. Three of them are labeled “Stuff” in black sharpie. The largest says “Shoes” and the last says “Books/Bathroom.”

This is where Harry has chosen to lay his affections.

“Well, all that's left,” Eggsy says, slamming the boot of his borrowed ride. “Most of it's here already.”

Most of Eggsy's belongings can fit in Harry's guest-room closet apparently. Harry is briefly surprised, but then Eggsy is young and has never lived in his own home – it isn't as if he would have large amounts of furniture or artwork or even the rather haphazard collection of knick-knacks and remembrances that Harry has gathered over his years and travels.

It occurs to Harry as well that a man like Dean Baker would not be particularly interested in providing for as child that wasn't his and what few possessions Eggsy has he likely provided himself. He allows himself a brief moment to dwell on all the things he could – and possibly might – do to the man if he were ever unwise enough to cross Eggsy's path again.
“Oh, Harry, dear!”

Cressida Elliot-Collingsworth, wife of Sir Daniel Elliot-Collingsworth and Harry Hart's across the street neighbor was walking toward them at a brisk pace, her heels clicking on the sidewalk, her bichon frise scampering along behind her. The skirt of her lavender dress swayed dramatically from side to with every swish of her hips and she tossed her long blond hair over her shoulder in a fashion more fitted to a woman in a shampoo commercial than a woman walking her dog.

Harry inclined his head as she approached. “Cressida, what a delight. I don't believe I've seen you in months.” By design – though beautiful and intelligent, his neighbor was also apparently hunting for a bit on the side and even were Harry available he did not see himself enjoying the position of the 'other man.’

“I was starting to think you were avoiding me,” she said with a knowing smile. She looped the dog's leash over her wrist and reached out. Harry could hardly justify being so rude as to refuse her his hand, though he was not the least surprised when instead of shaking it, she clasped it in both of hers and tucked herself against his side.

Eggsy cleared his throat.

“Forgive me, how rude. Eggsy, this is Lady Cressida Elliot-Collingsworth. Her husband is the Secretary of State for Transportation.”

Cressida offered Eggsy a smile and her free hand. “It's such a pleasure to meet you. Eggsy, was it?”

Eggsy didn't even bat an eye, just returned the easy smile. “It's a pleasure to meet you as well, Lady Elliot-Collingsworth.” He took her hand in a gentle clasp, every inch the proper gentleman, even though he was wearing a hoodie and baseball cap with ratty jeans and designer sneakers. “I haven't had the opportunity to meet any of Harry's neighbors yet, so I'm glad I got to meet the most lovely neighbors first.”

“Such a charmer, Harry. Is he your nephew?”

Eggsy arches one expressive eyebrow at him, his smile impish and amused. Eggsy is well aware of Harry's feelings on the word 'boyfriend.'

“Actually,” Harry said, gently extracting his hand from Cressida's grip. “Cressida, this is Gary Unwin. My fiance.”

“Fiance?” Cressida repeated, surprise evident in her tone, but no sign of any less pleasant emotion.

Eggsy drew in a sharp breath as Harry took his hand. Harry raised both hands to his lips, pressed a soft kiss against the knuckles. “That is,” Harry said quietly, “if he will have me.”


“Congratulations,” Cressida said. The dog yipped loudly as she laid a hand on Harry's shoulder. “I'll leave you to celebrate your good news. Call me later, we have so much to catch up on.”

Harry pulled back enough to offer her his goodbyes, then Eggsy dragged him back into his arms.

“You fuckin wanker,” Eggsy said lowly against Harry's ear. “Did you seriously just propose to me just so you didn't have to make yourself say the b-word anymore?”
Harry turned his head to kiss that delightful mouth. “Do you really believe I would make such an important decision as marriage solely so I could avoid using a term I found slightly distasteful?”

“Yes,” Eggsy said.

“Well, I was going to ask anyway,” Harry said.

“Completely barmy,” Eggsy said. “Oi, so do you have a ring in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?”

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**Husband**

It's not a church where they take their vows. Harry has overcome his lingering trepidation about entering a house of worship – had to, if he was ever going to be allowed back in the field – but that doesn't mean the memories and the fear don't still linger. He wants none of them to surface on this day of all days.

So the ceremony is held in a small botanical garden about twenty minutes from London. The weather is lovely and their guest list is small and private. Less than forty people are watching when Eggsy takes both of Harry's hands in his.

“Harry,” Eggsy said. He was wearing a suit, as no gentleman wore a tuxedo to a daytime wedding much to his mother's disappointment. The fabric was a deep charcoal color, the tie silver shot through with vivid green thread the same color as Eggsy's eyes. In the shop the fabric had looked flashy, on Eggsy it made his eyes shine like emeralds. Harry had taken one look at him standing at the altar and felt a wave of emotion hit him that left him light-headed and almost dizzy.

Eggsy raised the joined hands to his lips, pressed a soft, dry kiss against the back of Harry's left ring finger. “I didn't love you because you saved me,” Eggsy said. He held Harry's hands close, kissed the back of his hand and the base of his thumb before lowering them again. “Or even because you thought I was worth saving, which, honestly only three people in my whole life had ever thought. And one of them was my mum, so she doesn't count,” he added with a wry grin while the guests chuckled. “And the other two were these bastards and we all know their judgment's for shite.”

Ryan standing behind Eggys's right shoulder, raised a threatening fist. Jamal, at his other shoulder, just rolled his eyes to the sky as if asking God himself why he was being so maligned.

Eggsy glanced down at their hands again for a moment, before squeezing Harry's hand tightly. “We both know you would have saved me if you could have. But you did something better. You showed me how to save myself. You had faith in me. You honestly believed I could be something more than just another bum wasting his life away in the pub waiting for something to change. How could I not love you for that?

“You gave me a choice, maybe the first one I'd had in a – a really long time. Maybe the most important one of my life. And now I'm making another choice.” He rocked back on his heels and offered Harry the same confident smirk that often accompanied explosions and the fall of regimes. He laced his fingers with Harry's, pressing their palms together. “I'm choosing you. For good, for keeps. You're mine, Harry Hart, and as far as I'm concerned that ring is just gonna be proof of something we both already knew.”

Harry squeezed their joined hands tightly, raised his free hand to run his thumb along the line of
Harry didn't even realize the minister had spoken until Merlin nudged his arm. He held out his hand to Harry and Eggsy's ring was in the middle of his palm, gold gleaming in the sunlight.

If Harry's hand shook slightly as he took the ring, no one ever mentioned it.

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Their honeymoon was scheduled for six days in Venice, a week in Prague and two weeks in a secluded chateau in the Swiss Alps. Harry had spared no expense, determined to show Eggsy every indulgence it was within his ability to bestow. Eggsy would have been content with a long weekend in Paris, which only made Harry all the more determined to spoil him. Besides, it was important to him, in a way he couldn't really explain, that they have this time to themselves. They've been as good as married for a long while now, each of them sure of the other, but this was the first time they would be alone together as a couple without a mission getting in the way, or the risk of being called in by Arthur. Four weeks off the grid – barring another V-Day or something of similar intensity – with nothing to think of but each other and the life they were building between them.

Their wedding night, though, was spent in their own home, in their own bed. That had been Eggsy's only request, that they not depart till the following morning.

“I want to make love to my husband for the first time in the same bed where he touched me for the first time, the same bed where I wake up in his arms every morning. The same house where he first told me he loved me.” Eggsy had blushed but met Harry's gaze with an earnest intensity that he couldn't have resisted even if he'd wanted to. “It's stupid, but it means something to me. I want that first night in our own home, not a hotel room half the continent away. I want to remember that night every time I walk into our bedroom. So if you want to spend our honeymoon going to the opera in every city in Europe, I'm along for the ride, but I want that first night.”

It had seemed sweet and romantic at the time, and easily enough accommodated. Harry had adjusted his plans accordingly and thought nothing more about it.

Until now.
The wedding and reception were over. The guests have been thanked, the toasts have been made, and Harry and Eggsy slipped away shortly after dessert, leaving their friends and family with an open bar and a band to occupy them for the rest of the night. They took the train back to the house, where their bags were packed and waiting by the front door.

And Harry paused in the front hall, stood in the dark silence of the home they shared, and kissed his husband until they were breathless and panting into each others' mouths.

He hadn't known he needed this as much as Eggsy had until that very moment, when Eggsy pressed their foreheads together and stroked a hand down Harry's chest.

“Husband,” Harry said in a hushed voice, his breath a whisper against Eggsy's lips. His blood quickened when his boy shook against him.

“Take me to bed,” Eggsy said and it was a command Harry had no intention of disobeying.

Their room was dark. JB was with Michelle and Daisy, the house was silent save for the sounds they made together. Eggsy was louder than was his usual habit, as if his skin was hyper sensitive to every touch and kiss and thrust. He gasped and moaned into Harry's mouth with every kiss, shouted Harry's name as climax overcame him, arched his back with a breathy cry when Harry came inside him.

And when their breath had evened out and the sweat has cooled on their skin, Harry cupped that beautiful, precious face in his hands and started it all over again.

“Husband,” he said out loud in the dark as he slid inside Eggsy's body. “My husband,” he said as he began to thrust, their left hands laced together so Harry could feel the solid, unfamiliar weight of his ring pressing against Eggsy's.

“Yours,” Eggsy said through bruised lips, voice cracking on the word as he surged up to take Harry's mouth. “Yours, always yours. I'm yours, Harry, ain't nothing or no one ever going to change that.” He dragged their joined hands to his lips, suckled the soft skin on the back of Harry's fingers, tasting the ring he'd placed there just hours before. “Take what's yours, Harry.” He hooked one leg around Harry's waist and dragged him in closer, held him in place. “Because I already have what's mine, don't I?”

Harry thrust into him, rough, almost desperate, as he crushed Eggsy's mouth against his own. He dragged their joined hands to Eggsy's cock, heavy and thick against his belly, and stroked him in time with each snap of his hips.

“I have always been yours,” he said, echoing the words from his vows. He leaned in close, trapping Eggsy's cock between their bodies, still clenched in their joined hands, and pressed his lips to Eggsy's ear. “And you will always be mine, husband, till death itself tears you from my arms.”

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Harry

Harry had never been overfond of nicknames.

Eggsy, though. Eggsy had a dozen different names for his sister, each sillier than the last. He called Merlin a variety of names, some more flattering than others (Inspector Gadget, Donatello, Q – which usually resulted in Merlin losing all professionalism over the comm lines) and if he'd ever called Roxanne by her full name, it certainly hadn't been in Harry's presence. He made up ridiculous names for Jamal and Ryan and did not seem to remember what they were from one meeting to the next.
Even the other Kingsman agents were not exempt. Only his mother was spared.

And Harry.

Harry did not feel particularly left out. He had no desire to be addressed as James Bond and while Eggsy had made all the Galahad and purity related puns he could think of in the first few weeks of their acquaintance, he'd never tried to call Harry anything but his own name. (And “bruv” which Harry thought he might dislike only slightly less than Bond)

Harry had been concerned once. The age difference between them was not insignificant and if Eggsy wasn't able to see Harry as his equal, if he wasn't comfortable treating Harry as a partner and friend... Harry thought, perhaps, he would have to end this fledgling relationship before that power imbalance resulted in something that couldn't be undone.

But Eggsy said his name. A thousand times, in a thousand different ways. In a broken, tearful voice as he leaned over Harry's hospital bed; aggravated and annoyed when they fought over the dog; concerned and affectionate when they separated for missions; happy and pleased when Harry surprised him with dinner after a long day; soft and breathless and wondering as he came apart under Harry's hands.

Harry learned to hear the differences. He heard dearest, when Eggsy accepted a cup of tea. He heard lover when Eggsy introduced him to his civilian friends. He heard husband when Eggsy murmured his name first thing in the morning, still half asleep.

Harry Hart has never cared for nicknames, but this he holds close to his heart.

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