### THE GANG CELEBRATES A BIRTHDAY

**Summary**

the second part in the Who/Led Zeppelin series! more action, more shenanigans, and you guessed it, a birthday.

**Notes**

i finally got my notes organized and my plots mapped out. i'm going to slowly be updating every few days, let me know what you think as we go along! enjoy! ;)

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**Rating:** Mature  
**Archive Warning:** No Archive Warnings Apply  
**Category:** F/M, Gen, M/M, Multi  
**Fandom:** The Who, Led Zeppelin, Bandom  
**Relationship:** who isn't in love tbh, Roger Daltrey/Pete Townshend, John Entwistle/Pete Townshend, Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey/Robert Plant/Pete Townshend, pete townshend/jimmy page, Jimmy Page/Robert Plant, John Entwistle/Keith Moon, John Entwistle/John Paul Jones  
**Character:** Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, John Entwistle, Keith Moon, Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Original Characters  
**Additional Tags:** The Who - Freeform, Led Zeppelin - Freeform, Road Trip, Vacation, Birthday, travelling, gay ass homoeroticism, Series, Sequel, Continuation, Love, Friendship, Sex, Porn, Fluff, Crack, Crack Treated Seriously, Angst, Jealousy, Tension, Sexual Tension, Drugs, Alcohol, Bucket List, Stripping, Strippers & Strip Clubs, Strip Tease, cross-dressing, Foursome - M/M/M/M, the boston tea party, Poker  
**Series:** Part 2 of the who feat. led zeppelin  
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Look, John Paul Jones was a good guy. He paid his bills on time. He smiled at old ladies and little babies on the sidewalk. He liked to play his instruments with the band and stay out of trouble. He most certainly didn’t deserve this kind of punishment.

It was ten in the goddamn morning, and he was just trying to sleep before they had to leave for the airport. But no, John Paul Jones didn’t deserve the simple luxury of sleeping in. Because in the bedroom next to his, he could hear his bandmate Jimmy Page fucking Pete Townshend through the paper thin walls.

But this wasn’t just regular fucking that was uncomfortable rocking for seven minutes. It was straight up kinky shit and moaning and groaning and filthy dirty talk and wet noises and it had been almost an hour and Jonesy considered throwing himself out of the window.

Getting the room next to Jimmy was a torture he was just learning to tolerate, but now Townshend was here and it had been weeks and he was still hanging around. It wasn’t that Jonesy blatantly hated the guy. They got along, but he thought Pete was incredibly sketchy, more than ever now that Jonesy knew what weird sex shit he was into. The rest of his band were great guys, and he liked when the eight of them all hung out together. But he would trust a hundred strangers before he would trust Pete.

“Fuck, you’re so big,” Pete swooned on the other side of the wall.

“Mm, baby, you look so good stuffed full like that,” Jimmy murmured.

“Harder, oh god, please daddy—“

Jonesy went over to the window, opened it up, and peered down. There was a good dozen feet he could fall. If he threw himself hard enough, the worst case scenario would land him in a coma in the hospital.

“Unh, tell me, please, I need to hear it,” Pete groaned, his nasally voice making Jonesy’s skin crawl.

He heard Jimmy snicker, then there was a momentary shift and rustle. He heard Jimmy start fucking him again while he…played guitar? “Yeah, baby, just imagine how I rely heavily on the minor pentatonic box pattern using mostly the top three or four strings. And when I go down to the bottom string, you know I love to shift positions with my middle finger on the 5th string.”

He heard Pete sob with pleasure.

“Yeah, do you like my fretboard pattern in the key of E with the root note E falling on the top and bottom strings at the 12th fret? Yeah you do, you big slut. Using this visual pattern as a template, you can begin a phrase by playing a Chuck Berry-influenced ‘smear’ motif—”

“Oh, god, I’m gonna come—“

“You’ll have to beg for permission first—“

Jonesy went to his record player and put on Pink Floyd’s latest album on full blast. He knew Jimmy had some weird beef with Roger Waters and any mention of him made Jimmy angrier than anything. And with that, Jonesy trudged out to the bathroom and turned on the shower.
Over the roar of the shower down the hall and the insufferable experimental Pink Floyd from Jonesy’s room, Jimmy endured another interruption. The phone on his bedside table started ringing, and he and Pete looked at each other. They knew that was their warning call and they were running out of time.

Pete, bless his little heart, struggled to reach the phone and pick it up while Jimmy kept fucking him anyways.

“H-hello-oh?” Pete tried to talk despite the rough punctuations of Jimmy’s thrusts shaking his small body.

“Hey, Petey!” It was Roger, bright and cheery as usual.

“I’m quite well, actually! I just made a really good omelette. I saw this recipe on a cooking show and the lady used vegetable oil to fry it in instead of butter to cut down on fatty acids and—hey, are you alright? You don’t sound too well—“

“I’m fine,” Pete panted. He put a hand on Jimmy’s chest, silently begging him to slow down before he came in the middle of a phone call. “I’m just, ah, on the—ah, fuck, elliptical. I love exercising and staying healthy.”

“Oh, good, then you’ll love this show I’m watching, and—oh, wait, John is telling me to hurry up. Yeah, anyways, we’re just about to head out now. Tell the others we’ll be round to pick you guys up in about twenty minutes, yeah?”

“Uh huh,” Pete whimpered as Jimmy slowly drew himself out of Pete and slowly slid in again. Pete bit his knuckle.

“See you soon, love! Can’t wait!” Roger giggled, excited, before hanging up.

The second he heard the dial tone, Jimmy plowed right into Pete again. The sound of Pink Floyd was inspiration enough to finish as fast as he could so Jimmy could run next door and turn it off. He grabbed a handful of Pete’s hair and gave it a good tug, making Pete cry out, but he smiled the whole time and it warmed Jimmy’s heart. Jimmy gave him a sloppy kiss and gave his last few thrusts. He reached his free hand down to stroke Pete and they came seconds apart, moaning and instinctively harmonizing. It was a bad habit.

There was no time for lazy cuddling, and they were even more hopped up on adrenaline now. The two wrapped themselves in bedsheets and scurried out to the hallway, just as Jonesy was coming out of the steamy shower, towel wrapped around his narrow waist. He rolled his eyes when he saw the two of them and slunk off into his room. Pete and Jimmy quickly hurried in, starting the shower again.

“By the way,” Jimmy poked his head out the bathroom door and shouted to the rest of the band. “They’ll be here in twenty minutes.”

Pete tugged at his arm, giggling, and pulled him into the shower.

Twenty five minutes later, John Entwistle and Roger Daltrey pulled up outside of the flat in Pete’s
old beat up van where the Led Zeppelin boys were now renting in London. They were a few minutes later than expected because Roger couldn’t find the right radio station, and wouldn’t let John leave the driveway until they had a song with “the right ambience”.

John hadn’t even put the van in park yet, and Jonesy was already stomping out with a scowl on his face. He always looked effortlessly cool in plain old jeans, a jacket, and the right sunglasses. He carried a regular sized duffel bag and kept it near him at all times. He climbed into the van and sat in the seat behind John so they could talk the whole drive.

“Hey, Rog,” Jonesy nodded. Roger waved, all smiles and rainbows and excitement.

“Hey, Jonesy,” John reached back and patted his friend on the shoulder. “You sure look chipper.”

Jonesy leaned in, glaring back up at the flat. “I want Townshend out of my house. If I hear him say ‘daddy’ in that nasally one more time when I could be sleeping, I swear I’ll file a fucking lawsuit.”

Roger shivered. John nodded sympathetically. “Yeah, Pete’s great, but he’s a bit of an annoying slut sometimes. We love him though.”

“We can’t really complain,” Roger told him, and John nodded. “Once you have a go with him, you kind of understand all the hype.”

“That’s the opposite of what I want,” Jonesy gagged. “Just let Jimmy stay over sometimes so I can sleep for once.”

John and Roger shook their heads. “Nope, no can do. They’re yours.”

“Oh, come on!” Jonesy begged.

The annoying but lovable sluts in question came out of the front door a few minutes later, and they were laughing and giggling like teenaged girls. Jimmy was carrying Pete’s bag and wheeling his own suitcase. Jimmy loaded the luggage in the trunk as Pete motioned Roger to roll down his window. He kissed Roger on the cheek and bumped fists with John.

Pete smiled at the other bassist. “Hey, Jonesy!”

“Don’t.”

“Haha, okay.”

Pete opened the van door and took the back row of seats. Up above, Robert Plant opened up a window and called down, “Oh, Jimmy!”

“Oh, shit,” Jimmy cursed himself for forgetting. He called back up to Robert. “I’ll be there in a moment, my queen!” The small, worried man rushed back into the flat and upstairs to go escort Robert.

John rubbed his eyes, laughing. “Oh, boy. This will be one hell of a trip.”

The four of them watched from the van as Jimmy came back down a few minutes later, struggling with carrying three of Robert’s large suitcases and a stuffed backpack on his back. Pete took pity on him and helped him open the trunk. Robert appeared at the door, dramatically posing and looking moodily off in the distance, leaning elegantly against the door frame. He wore a tiara and a big fluffy pink boa. On his shirt, he stuck on a pink pin that said ‘Birthday Bitch’.
“I’m here,” he announced.

John rolled down his window and waved. “Come on in, you beautiful bastard.”

Roger huffed and pretended to pick at his nails.

Pete and Jimmy crawled into the back row of seats, and Robert strutted down the three steps in front of the door and across the patch of grass to where their dingy-ass chariot was waiting. With hips swaying and a mandatory flick of his hair every few seconds, Robert finally made his way into the van.

“I want to sit in between you two,” he declared.

Reluctantly, Jimmy and Pete separated and let Robert sit in the middle of them at the cramped back of the van, with all the awkward fun of having your feet stepped on and getting an arse in your face and being elbowed as Robert settled in.

“Your birthday’s not until Sunday, do you have to wear that now?” John laughed as he put the car back into gear and they drove off.

“He’s been like this all week,” Jimmy informed them all as if it were blatantly obvious. “Robert’s birthday week is one rung below a national holiday.”

Robert nodded in agreement.

Up in the passenger seat, Roger folded his arms across his chest and slumped down in his seat, muttering angrily. “How dare he have a birthday…how rude of him…bastard…”

John looked over at the poor guy. He was still nursing a broken heart from the first time they met Led Zeppelin and Robert rejected him just as hard as Roger had fallen for him. Although maybe John was the only one that noticed the subtle difference, where Robert was blind to everyone who wasn’t Pete in general, but Roger took it as a rejection. Either way, Roger had now moved into the bitter phase of his heartbreak, which meant their trip would leave plenty of opportunity for a wild, foreign fling to ease the pain.

In the back row of seats, there was a peculiar but beautiful accumulation of relations going on. There was the odd three-way love triangle that developed when the two bands first met. Robert wanted Pete and Pete wanted Jimmy, and Jimmy was sorta into both of them but still seemed a little shifty and undecided, and Roger was in there somewhere waiting patiently for his turn. But now, the three of them melted together, practically fused at the hip, when somewhere along the line they decided that instead of picking sides, they would just come together in every sense of the word. This time, the attention was all focused on Robert for his special weekend.

John eavesdropped on every phone call and sat through every midnight hangout where Pete gushed about the weird sex he had just had earlier, and John had most of the gaps filled in. But he still had questions, though.

a) When had Pete become interested in Robert? Were they sleeping together too? At first he was annoyed by the blond hippy but now he was in the honeymoon phase with Jimmy and Robert simultaneously.

b) Did they have threesomes every night, or take turns with Pete? The two were very possessive of him, but Jimmy and Robert were also practically a married couple.

c) Did Pete know Jimmy fancied him yet, or did he still naively think it was just a sex thing?

d) When will someone tell Robert that his magical kiss was with Roger and not Pete?
Their lives were ten times more dramatic now that their social circle had expanded. The Who would work steadily for a few weeks, and it would be the four of them like old times. Then, Jimmy would ring them randomly and Pete would practically be running out the door for the offer of free sex. Or, all eight of them would just hang out and watch telly and eat junk food for hours and not say a single word. And then the next week more soap opera shit would go down, and Roger would wail about his broken heart until Pete came back to comfort him. John kept serious tabs, placing bets with Jonesy, Keith, and Bonzo. Hell, it was a lot better than when the four of them were clawing at each other’s throats after being cooped up together for months at a time.

On cue, John pulled into Keith’s driveway. Keith and Bonzo, who had become close very quickly, spotted them from the window and came out seconds later. They even wore matching sunglasses. Bonzo stuffed a small bag in the trunk. Keith sat next to Jonesy with his small backpack and Bonzo sat beside him on the end.

“Is that all you brought, Keith?” Roger turned around and asked. “Are you sure you’ll be okay…?”

“Trust me, I know my survival packing,” Keith assured him.

“All those years in the girl guides served you well, eh, Moon?” Pete teased.

Everyone laughed. And finally, they were all together again. There was a cocktail of unresolved angst and sexual tension, but what’s a group outing without it?

John pulled out of the driveway and they continued en route to Heathrow airport. John turned up the radio to a song they all liked. Keith, who was easily friends with everyone, was having a blast. He and Bonzo were air-drumming like maniacs, Keith nearly hitting poor little Jonesy in the face. Jonesy looked out the window moodily, but he absentmindedly tapped the piano chords on his leg along with the song. Roger also looked out the window moodily, and he watched Pete in the rearview mirror, who was getting all this attention from Jimmy and Robert. The three in the back quietly flirted with each other, teasing and touching and laughing, all lost in their own little world. And John watched the roads, but did feel the same as Roger. They knew Keith was usually friends with everyone, but they were sort of jealous to see their Pete spend his affections on others, and John and Roger were left to wait for Pete’s attention until he came home later that night, or when they went out for food during rehearsal times. The two forced themselves to be happy for Pete. because it wasn’t everyday that he got all this romantic attention. Pete wasn’t ignoring his friends, but there was longing for Pete to be affectionate with them like old times.

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Bonzo was a tough guy, and he had a wicked moustache to prove it. He was man enough to admit that airports freaked him out a little. It was the opposite of a crazy party. It was a strictly regulated environment with lots of scary government stuff. There was too many people, too much commotion, too many papers and too much surveillance. And then it only got worse. You had to pay extra money to get into a flying steel sausage where they gave you free peanuts to distract yourself from the fact that you might crash and die. Or you might not. It was the one kind of gambling Bonzo didn’t like.

“Keith,” he nudged Keith as they waited by the front doors of their airport terminal. They were waiting for John to park the van before they went inside. “Keith, I’m nervous.”

Keith turned to his friend. “You gettin’ the pre-flight jitters?”

Bonzo nodded.

“Don’t worry my pal, my friend, my guy…” Keith looked around them quickly. Their friends were
distracted with their own problems. There was a perfect blond suburban family standing a few feet away, waiting for a cab. When no one was looking, Keith reached into his inside jacket pocket like a fucking sketchbag and pulled out a baggie full of blue pills. “Here, take one.”

Bonzo reached in and took two, swallowing them quickly. He was a firm believer in Don’t Do Drugs, Kids, but this was actual medicine, so it wasn’t too bad, right? “Thanks, mate.”

“Not to worry. They kick in real gentle,” Keith grinned. He was trying to stuff the pills back in his jacket when the perfect blonde suburban daughter looked over at them, and Bonzo felt personally offended at how judgmental this little kid looked at them.

“What, you want some?” Keith taunted. “Want some adult medicine?”

“Fuck, Keith!” Bonzo quickly clapped a hand over Keith’s mouth. The blonde brat turned to tug on her father’s sleeve, pointing at them and ratting them out. Bonzo scooped up his bag and pushed Keith inside to hide before he got arrested before their flight for trying to give out drugs to little kids.

Inside the terminal, there was a few of those empty luggage carts, just begging to be used. Keith and Bonzo exchanged one look before Keith hopped on with their bags and Bonzo started pushing him.

The rest of their friends came through the doors a moment later.

“Keith, no,” Roger warned like a mother. Bonzo stopped to turn back to him, leaning on the cart handle, but he underestimated how light Keith was and Bonzo accidentally sent the cart flying across the linoleum airport floor.

Pete and John burst out laughing. Keith tried to steer the cart before he crashed into someone or something. Luckily, a patrolling security guard managed to stop Keith just in time. The angry glare she gave Keith was enough to make him grab his bags and run back to his friends before he got in trouble yet again.

“Alright, children, stay together now,” Pete joked, assuming the role of the leader. The eight of them navigated the airport. First they checked in with a mad flurry of papers, in which Pete got frustrated and Roger had to take over. Then they sorted out their luggage and went through security. It was the 1960’s and no one gave a fuck back then, so that meant they tossed their bags into a storage bin and if you had a friendly smile, security let you through.

They had about thirty minutes until they could board, which back then seemed tedious. They all waited at their gate. Jonesy, bless him, pulled a deck of cards out of his bag. He shuffled and Robert, Jimmy, Keith and Bonzo all sat around to play cards together. Pete, Roger, and John wandered around to explore.

“So, what’s the game plan for this trip, eh?” John asked, eagerly rubbing his hands together. “What kind of mischief are we going to cause?”

“Hopefully, we’ll cause every kind of mischief in the book,” Pete grinned. “I hear Jimmy and Robert have some things planned for us, which terrifies me slightly, but also sounds fun, and I think I’m a little turned on.”

Roger looked wounded. Pete wrapped an arm around him. “Come on, Rog. You still have seven other friends who love you. Just relax and try to enjoy yourself.”

“We’ll take care of ya,” John agreed, nudging him on the shoulder. “Now’s the perfect time to have a scandalous affair fuelled by revenge. We’ll try and find you someone nice.”
Roger looked away woefully. “Oh, I don’t know…”

“You’ll get caught up in all the excitement in no time,” Pete reassured him.

“I did have a list of things I always wanted to do if we ever traveled there…” Roger hinted with a smile. He reached into his back pocket and pulled out a square of folded up paper.

Pete tried to grab it, but Roger clutched it close to his chest. “I’ll show you guys later. It’s very personal.”

“Come on, I want to know what’s on your bucket list!” John pleaded.

“I have to make some adjustments first,” Roger suddenly got very coy, and tucked the paper away.

“What about you, Pete?” John asked, wiggling his eyebrows. “I’m sure you’ll be duly occupied?”

“At night, yes,” Pete smirked. “But I’m looking forward to spending the days with my friends, without worrying about work for once. Just proper fun.”

“Finally, he’s ours again!” Roger cheered, linking arms with Pete.

“I’m on a mission now,” John declared. “We have a bucket list to complete, shenanigans to be had, and we need to make sure everyone gets laid at least once while we’re away.”

“It would be our duty,” Pete agreed.

Roger pouted. “Me first please, I’m heartbroken so I have special privileges for sexual encounters.”

Pete kissed the side of the shorter man’s head. “Of course. We’ll find only the grooviest babes for you this weekend.”

“Let’s head back to the others, yeah? They should be letting us board soon,” John interrupted.

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Now that Pete was out of sight, Jonesy could relax a little. The five of them played every card game they could think of, but Robert insisted on Crazy 8’s over and over again because it was his birthday. So, they played Crazy 8’s, and every round Robert blatantly cheated in front of everyone.

“Robert, that’s cheating!” Pete called him out.

“Will everyone please relax?” Robert huffed, adjusting his ridiculous tiara. “I’m taking artistic
liberties, and I’d appreciate if my fellow musicians would respect that.”

“Let’s all respect each other’s artistic liberties, please,” Jimmy echoed.

“Oh, piss off,” Jonesy laughed, then took the artistic liberty to throw down some extra cards in the pile. “There, I win.”

“You can’t do that!” Robert cried, clutching his chest. “That’s cheating!”

“Ladies and gentlemen and anyone else,” the woman at the front desk spoke crisply into the intercom. “We will now be boarding passengers for British Airways Flight 42069, one-way flight from London to Las Vegas, Nevada. Please take all your belongings with you. Remember, Americans are traitors and you don’t have to be nice to them. Enjoy your flight, and may everyone in the Economy Class get your cheap asses in line now to start boarding.”

“That’s us! We’re poor musicians!” Keith pumped his fist in the air.

“I’m so fucking excited,” Pete grinned. Everyone got their things in order and pulled out their tickets. Like proper schoolboys, they filed in line and behaved, waiting to get their tickets checked one last time. Bonzo was still fast asleep, so Keith had to carry him. He wrapped an arm around Bonzo’s middle and dragged his floppy body around, accidentally bumping his head on a chair.

“Is he okay?” the ticket lady stopped to ask him suspiciously.

“Him? Oh, yeah, he’s grand. Just a bit tired, is all, haha,” Keith stammered. Luckily Bonzo snored loudly on cue, confirming that he wasn’t dead and just sleeping like a log.

At the front of the line, John leaned over to Pete. “Someone’s gotta say it.”

“Not me, it’s too cheesy,” Pete shook his head.

“Say what?” Roger asked.

John whispered, “Before we get on the plane, someone has to shout, ‘Las Vegas, here we come!’, like in a terrible road trip movie.”

“That is really cheesy, actually,” Roger frowned.

“I don’t make up the rules,” John retorted.

Roger sighed. He stopped and blocked everyone in line behind them. He took a deep breath, pumped both fists in the air, and gave a dazzling smile like he was a small town heroine moving to the big city with her girlfriends to follow her dreams of being a real star. “Las Vegas, here we come!”

“Oh, god, Rog,” an embarrassed Pete covered his eyes and tugged Roger along. “We didn’t think you were actually going to do it…”
in love with sky

Chapter Summary

long ass flight + economy class seating + eight drama queens = shenanigans

To be fair, they were saving a ton of money by riding in the very back of the plane in the dingy, cramped seats. They couldn’t get eight seats all together so they were scattered around. There were three rows with three seats each, so group bonding was pretty much guaranteed. Once they got their seats and tickets organized, they were mostly pleased with the randomly assigned seating arrangement.

Robert got the window seat because it was his birthday, and Pete was next to him, and Roger was less than enthused to join them. Thankfully they had Pete trapped in the middle of them for the entire flight, right?

Jimmy sat in the row directly behind them, and he offered to switch to the middle seat so he could be behind Pete. There was a young woman at the window seat, and an older gentleman was on the other side of him.

On the opposite side of the plane, Keith hauled Bonzo to the very back and tossed him in the window seat, then bent over to buckle the snoring man in. Keith took the middle and John had the very end seat. This was going to be one hell of a flight.

Poor Jonesy got the one random ticket at the very back of the plane by the bathrooms, crammed in by the window by two larger women who appeared to be sisters. Still, it was better than being near Townshend. This was going to be a relaxing flight.

Back up ahead a few rows, Pete tried to get comfortable and fit his long legs in the little space provided for him. Robert was already holding his hand and leaning on his shoulder, and poor Roger felt grumpily out of place with his best friend and his worst enemy. There was already a lot of weird tension going on. This was going to be one long flight.

“At least this fits in with my grunge-punk aesthetic,” Pete reminded himself as he politely ignored the sticky armrest and the questionable stains on the seats. “I’m doing this for the aesthetic, I’m doing this for the aesthetic…”

Over the intercom, a flight attendant started giving the standard safety warnings. The air hostess in charge of doing the demonstrations for the economy cabin was hilariously bored, making jokes here and there. She had a deadpan expression that reminded Pete of John and his humour.

“So remember to buckle your seatbelt like this, and not like this. Put the oxygen mask on like this, and not like this. And let’s all collectively pretend that this isn’t realistically a 10-hour flight because that would be really boring to read about.”

Looking over, Pete saw Roger scribbling furiously on a cocktail napkin with a cheap pen on the fold out tray.

“What are you doing?” Pete whispered.
“I’m taking notes,” Roger fretted. When he moved his arm out of the way, Pete saw that he was writing down every safety instructions, complete with diagrams on where to exit the plane in case of emergency.

Pete patted his knee. “You’ll be fine, love.”

“What if something actually does happen this time? I’m not going to remember all this in a few hours.”

“I’ll save you, don’t worry,” Pete reassured him.

On the other side of him, Robert cleared his throat loudly and tugged on Pete’s arm.

“Pete, darling, have you seen the Sky Mall catalogue?” Robert said sensually, stroking the glossy cover. “They have those little lights you can clip on top of your book. Isn’t that innovative?”

“Yeah, god knows that would have come in handy when I was a kid and staying up past my bedtime,” Pete agreed.

“Pete,” Roger patted Pete’s knee anxiously. “Pete, I forgot, am I supposed to put the oxygen mask on you first or myself? Or do we help the children first?”

Robert tapped on Pete’s shoulder. “I would put an oxygen mask on you first, Pete. You’d look so handsome with one on, anyways.”

Roger tugged on Pete’s sleeve. “Can you swear to me right here and now that you’ll put an oxygen mask on me in case of emergency? I don’t trust myself to do it.”

“Yes, Rog, I swear I will help you with your oxygen mask,” Pete told Roger, then turned to Robert. “Then I’d help you next, because you’re the special birthday boy!”

Robert blushed.

Roger tugged on his shirtsleeve. “If you could only give your last dying breath to save one person on this flight, who would it be?”

“I think we already know the answer,” Robert chimed in. “I appreciate it, Pete. In our next lives, I’ll reward you with a sweet kiss.”

“Actually, I’d probably save myself…?” Pete suggested, but shut up quickly when the blonds both sported identical horrified expressions. “Just kidding, um, I’d both give you half a lung of air because we’re all friends and we love to get along, right guys?”

The overhead intercom buzzed. “Ladies and gentlemen and the economy class scum, please buckle your seat belts and stow away your personal belongings. We will prepare for takeoff shortly…”

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Jonesy always got a nervous thrill during that magical moment when the plane first lifted off the ground, and you knew you were diving headfirst into an adventure. It reminded him of riding roller coasters as a kid, when the slow build up the hill was even more exciting than the rush down.

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“Rog, are you…okay?” Pete asked gently.
Roger had stiffened up entirely. He was obviously trying really hard not to look scared. He nodded quickly. “Yep, I’m fine, never been better, how are you?”

Robert tugged on Pete’s sleeve. “Pete, I’m so nervous, and kissing is the only thing that calms me.”

He heard Roger mutter angrily under his breath.

“Rog, please, not now,” Pete whispered back to him. He turned back quickly and gave Robert a quick kiss on the cheek, hopefully quick enough that no one else on the flight noticed. Yep, just a whole bunch of heterosexual men enjoying a weekend with their mates, nothing weird going on here…

“I know that saving myself for you this weekend will have been worth it,” Robert purred. Pete blushed and Roger gagged.

“I’ll try and make it everything you’ve been hoping for,” Pete whispered so the million other people on the flight wouldn’t hear.

“Ever since you left me with that departing kiss all those weeks ago, I’ve been fantasizing every night since…” Robert sighed like a forlorn princess or something.

“Actually, that was—“ Pete started, but was elbowed harshly by Roger. He nearly forgot his scheme and blew their cover. “Never mind. Yeah, that was nice.”

Robert furrowed his eyebrows, looking over at Pete and Roger. “What? Why did you…?”

“Absolutely nothing, darling,” Pete chuckled nervously. Roger pretended to be interested in the Sky Mall catalogue. “It’s all fine.”

“You’re both acting strange,” Robert frowned.

“What were you saying about the magical kiss before I so rudely cut you off?” Pete tried.

“I was saying,” Robert started cautiously. “That was the first time I’ve ever kissed anyone and felt fireworks before, like in all those love poems. Didn’t you feel the same way, Pete?”

Pete nodded aggressively.

“Pete.”

“Yes, of course, I totally felt the same way when I kissed you.”

“Pete.”

“No, I swear,” Pete smiled really wide.

Robert looked like he was going to faint. “Are you…are you saying you didn’t feel the fireworks?”

“I—ah, I mean—“

“FLIGHT ATTENDANT,” Robert reached up and practically punched the help button above them. “I NEED A FLIGHT ATTENDANT, THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.”

“ROBERT stop please oh god—“ Pete tried to grab his hand before he punched a hole in the plastic. Robert started hyperventilating and Roger pretended to be asleep. Everyone around them was looking at them, concerned.
The deadpan flight attendant rushed over to see what the commotion was about. “What’s going on?”

“He’s fine, just being a little silly, haha,” Pete tried to reassure her. Robert’s tiara and gigantic feather boa he insisted on wearing were just drawing more attention.

“I see the light…” Robert grappled blindly at the space around them, his eyes squinting. He kept hyperventilating. “God? Is that you?”

“I swear to fucking god…” Pete muttered under his breath. He reached into the seat pocket and pulled out the barf bag and opened it, holding it to Robert’s face to breathe into.

Pete looked over at the flight attendant apologetically. “I’m so, so sorry, he’s ah…he’s part of a religion, they do this ritual all the time in the church he goes to, it’s fine.”

The flight attendant stared at him. “Well, erm, don’t hesitate to call if you need any more help…”

“Of course, thank you,” Pete smiled sweetly until she left. The other passengers politely went back to minding their own business. Roger popped one eye open once he felt he was safe.

“Robert!” Pete whispered angrily, then softened his tone. “Sweetheart, darling, please, you’re drawing a lot of attention to us…”

“I feel dizzy. I feel betrayed.”

“Robert, listen, ah, there’s something I—” he elbowed Roger. “Roger and I need to tell you.”

“No, we don’t,” Roger chimed in, acknowledging Robert for the first time in weeks.

“Yes, we do,” Pete laughed awkwardly, patting Roger’s hand.

Robert looked like if you knew you were about to get murdered and/or abducted by aliens. He reached his hand through to the seats behind him, blindly groping for his bandmate and hitting the stranger next to him in the process. “Jimmy…? Jimmy, I’m frightened…”

The ever-loyal Jimmy held his hand and popped his head through the space between Robert and Pete’s seats. “What’s going on?”

“Uh,” Pete stammered. “Rog, you tell him.”

“It was your idea in the first place,” Roger muttered angrily through his teeth.

“Are you talking about what I think you’re talking about?” Jimmy asked cautiously.

“Yeah, we are,” Pete pleaded silently for him to change the topic.

“Oh my god,” Robert groaned in frustration. He threatened to press the flight attendant button again with his free hand. Pete reached up and grabbed his hand, avoiding the certain wrath of the flight attendant they’d keep bothering. They were all holding hands and staring very intensely at each other, with Roger always excluded on the peripheral. Jimmy gave Pete an annoyed look where he knew he’d have to do the right thing.

“Okay, so, um,” Pete looked to Roger for reassurance. “You know how I asked you to sit down and close your eyes so I could give you a goodbye kiss?”

“Yes.”
“Actually, we had a fun little swap-out, it was all loads of fun, and Roger actually kissed you, isn’t that fun?” Pete forced a friendly chuckle.

“No, he didn’t,” Robert said. Pete and Jimmy echoed, “Yes, he did.”

“No he didn’t.”

“Yes I did,” Roger muttered.

Robert reached for the Sky Mall magazine to fan himself. “No, it couldn’t be. I felt the fireworks, Pete.”

“You owe it to him,” Peter jerked a thumb backwards at Roger.

“No.”

“Yes.”

“But…but why?” Robert asked in disbelief.

Because I felt bad for the poor guy? Because you broke his heart? I wanted him to have at least one moment of happiness? “I thought it would be funny,” Pete shrugged. Roger looked away, although secretly appreciative.

Robert got very quiet. “Do you know what this means?”

The three men shook their heads.

Robert looked out the window very solemnly and very dramatically without answering his own damn question. He stayed that way for like, an hour.

Everyone awkwardly went back to sitting properly, a tenseness falling over them for a reason they didn’t actually understand. Roger felt very uncomfortable acknowledging the love he once (?) had for Robert, and Pete had a feeling Robert wasn’t going to be very affectionate to him for a while which he was sort of looking forward to.

Pete leaned over to Roger and whispered, “I’m sorry, mate.”

Roger shrugged. “Whatever. I don’t regret it.”

More silence. Robert seriously wouldn’t budge. The passing of time was punctuated only by a dramatic sigh from Robert every so often, startling them each time. Pete watched him and he was positive Robert didn’t even blink.

Everyone else on the flight was relatively quiet, and enough time had passed that people who wanted to fall asleep finally had, and polite conversation topics had been exhausted around them. Even Roger pulled out a book—a second hand copy of The Hobbit that John had lent him— to read while he simultaneously mulled over the dramatic farewell kiss. Pete reluctantly pulled out the Sky Mall catalogue and wafted through it, drumming his fingers on his lap.

A folded cocktail napkin had been dropped into Pete’s lap from behind him. Only when he picked it up did it fall open and he saw Jimmy’s distinct handwriting.

ARE YOU PART OF THE MILE HIGH CLUB?

Pete’s cheeks burned. He reached for the cheap pen Roger had stashed away in the seat pocket.
NEVER GOT MY MEMBERSHIP

He folded the napkin and passed it behind his head, Jimmy grabbing it from him. Moments later, it was tossed back to him.

LET ME INITIATE YOU

A thrill ran through Pete as he heard Jimmy shuffle behind him, politely getting past the person beside him and heading to the back of the cabin for the loo.

Pete waited a few minutes as if he hadn’t noticed a single thing. He cleared his throat, and put away the magazine. “Right, well then, I’m going to go stretch my legs for a bit.”

He unbuckled the seatbelt and climbed over Roger, who didn’t even look up from his book.

--

The two women next to Jonesy had fallen asleep, so he didn’t even have a conversation to eavesdrop on. He had a notebook out but he was only able to produce nonsensical doodles. He tried to read but got bored.

He noticed Jimmy walking towards the back, and prayed that he’d stop by to chat. Jimmy smiled at him. “I’ll be back in a moment,” he mouthed, not to disturb the sleeping women. Behind him, Jonesy heard the door to the loo slam shut and latch.

Jonesy looked out the window, admiring the soft billowing texture of the clouds and feeling he had reached a special nirvana. He tried to write about it, but only a few lines of prose were jotted down before he was distracted again—this time, Townshend had awkwardly gotten up from his seat and was purposely trying not to look conspicuous as he walked straight down the aisle, went to the loo, knocked quickly, and was let in.

Jonesy nearly lost his shit. He screamed internally as he was trapped in the very back corner of the airplane, forced to listen to Jimmy and Townshend in the loo directly behind him quietly bumping around and whimpering with terrible attempts at subtlety. He furiously scribbled in his notebook to try and distract himself.

GOD IS DEAD GOD IS DEAD GOD IS DEAD GOD IS DEAD GOD IS DEAD

--

Jimmy leaned back against the sink while he gripped Pete’s head and fucked his mouth roughly, both of them eager from all the adrenaline of avoiding getting caught. Pete, on his knees in the sticky airplane bathroom floor, got a firm grip on Jimmy’s hips to get him down as deep as possible, and tears sprang to his eyes at how rough it was but he absolutely loved it.

Pete tried to motion to Jimmy to stop for a moment. Giving him some space, Jimmy withdrew himself from Pete’s mouth so he could talk.

Wiping up the drool from his chin, Pete begged, “Please say it, you know I love to hear it…”

Jimmy shoved himself back in Pete’s mouth and started moving his hips again. As quiet as he could physically manage, he whispered, “Gibson is coming out with an SG EDS-1275 double-neck guitar with double parallelogram inlays…”

Pete whimpered, his mouth full.
“There’s Kluson tulip-style tuners and a tune-o-matic bridge,” Jimmy’s breath hitched as Pete picked up pace, now pinning Jimmy’s hips against the sink and bobbing his head. “There’s a three-position toggle switch, one—uh—for pickup selection for the necks and one—ah, fuck—as a neck selector located between the bridges…” Pete clumsily stuffed his hand down his own jeans, desperate to gratify himself.

--

“Tea or coffee, gentlemen?” The deadpan flight attendant asked Keith and John.

“I’ll have a coffee—“

“Keith, no. You can hardly sit still.”

“Fine. We’ll both have a tea. Black.”

The flight attendant poured hot tea into two Styrofoam cups and carefully handed them over.

“Anything for your comatose friend?”

Keith poked at Bonzo’s face, eliciting a deep snore that legitimately relieved them all. “He’s going to be so disoriented when he wakes up.”

“It would be a terrible shame if you were to pull a prank on him when he wakes up in the middle of a flight, no?” The flight attendant smiled and wheeled the cart to the back. John swore he fell in love.

--


“You’re my soul mate,” Robert told him.

Roger turned his nose in the air. “Mm, probably not.”

“I felt fireworks. I’ve never felt fireworks when I’ve kissed someone before.”

“I just find it funny how…” Roger flipped a page in his book with as much bitterness as he possibly could. “…the first time we met, I told you we were meant to be together, and you brushed me off.”

“Yes, I do recall.”

“You didn’t appreciate me—“ page flip “You belittled me—“ page flip “And I’ve moved on.”

Robert went pale, clutching a hand to his chest. “No, don’t lie to me like that—“

Roger turned to him, foolishly letting his pride take over. “Oh, I’ve moved on. I’m already in love with someone else. He even wants to marry me. He’s obsessed with me.”

“No no no no no…” Robert started panicking. “Who is it? What’s his name? I’ll fight him, I’ll kill him if I have to…”

“His name, is, uh,” Fuck. Roger looked around desperately. “Um, his name is—“ book Hobbit Sky Mall magazine catalogue barf bag pen fold out tray old lady purse bag shoes flight attendant cart drinks snacks desserts treats “Sky, um…Sky Biscotti. He’s foreign. You wouldn’t know him.”

“The second we land, I’ll fight him for your love, I swear to you Roger Daltrey,” Robert’s eyes went wide. “I’ll ring Sky Biscotti in his home land and I’ll duel him and then I’ll win your love and I’ll
marry you.”

Roger picked nonchalantly at his nails. “Oh, I don’t know. I’m not very easily swayed…”

--

Jimmy bit down on his knuckle to silence himself as he came in Pete’s mouth, watching as it dribbled down his lip and onto his chin. Pete swallowed quickly and Jimmy swore he was in love. He knelt down and took over, stroking Pete until he finished as well with a soft sigh, spilling all over Jimmy’s hand. To show his affection, Jimmy ducked his head down and licked him clean.

“Fuck,” Pete tried to catch his breath. “I want a cigarette.”

Jimmy helped Pete stand up and they used the scratchy brown paper towels to clean up. Jimmy couldn’t help but kiss him again, deeply. “Welcome to the mile high club, love.”

Pete grinned, proud of himself. He unlocked the door and opened it a sliver, surprised to see the deadpan flight attendant. She watched as he slowly slid out, trying not to open the door enough to reveal the second man in there. Pete gave her another weak smile.

“Oh!” she gasped theatrically. “Do my eyes deceive me? Did I see someone else in there?

Pete shook his head quickly. When she went to go use the loo instead, he stopped her. “Um, actually, my friend is in there, and he was having some trouble.”

“Trouble?” she acted dumbfounded.

“Yeah, uh,” Pete cleared his throat. “He was in a terrible accident, you see. He, ah, lost the feeling in both of his hands. He needed me to help him—”

“Finish?”

“I meant wash his—uh, yeah, screw that. We fucked.”

“I know. I always know.” She rolled her eyes. “As long as it’s not drugs, I don’t care.”

The flight attendant turned on her heel and walked back down the cabin. Thank god nobody gave a fuck in the sixties.

--

Bonzo did that thing where he snored so loud he started choking on his spit. He coughed himself awake, feeling like he was jolted back to life. “Nhhgnhn…”

Suddenly, Keith was shaking him. “Bonzo, oh god, thank fuck you’re alive!”

John leaned over. “Dear god, we’ll have to tell the priest that the ceremony worked…”

Bonzo went into full panic. He looked out the window and found himself already above the clouds, flying over god knows where. He was already strapped into a seat in the back corner of an airplane he had no recollection of getting on.

“Where the fuck am I?” he slurred, his body still getting back into the functions. “What time is it? How long was I asleep?”

“You were sleeping for three days,” Keith told him.
John chimed in. “We were going to wait another twenty minutes before pronouncing you dead and tossing you out the side of the plane.”

Terror rolled through Bonzo. “Holy fuck!”

The two men shook their heads sadly.

He looked out the window again. “Where the hell are we?”

“Oh, that’s another thing,” Keith winced. “We accidentally got on the wrong plane. We’re heading to Russia.”


“Oh, he’s devastated,” John frowned. “The whole weekend is ruined. He sunk into a depression and is thinking about quitting the band to live as a Russian Sherpa.”

“No, I don’t believe it,” Bonzo shook his head. He pressed the flight attendant button. “Robert has a personal vendetta against Sherpas.”

Keith and John looked at each other. The deadpan flight attendant approached a few moments later. “Dear god, he’s alive!”

“We just broke the news,” John told her. “He can’t believe we got on the wrong flight and we’re headed to Russia.”

The flight attendant shrugged. “Mistakes like that happen all the time in this industry. Oh well. Fifteen-hour flights are usually easier on the way back.”

“I’m going to be sick—“ Bonzo wailed. Empty barf bags were tossed at him. He filled one. The poor flight attendant took the bag from him and left to dispose of it in a garbage bag.

“What the hell are we going to do?” Bonzo asked. “I didn’t bring warm enough clothes for the Russian climate.”

Keith shrugged. “We’ll get by, I guess. Maybe work in a factory to earn enough money for mittens and a plane ticket back?”

“Really? I wanted to stick around for a bit,” John pondered. “I was thinking of joining a few tour groups and seeing what the country has to offer me.”

“Я плохо говорю по-русски,” Keith agreed.

“How the fuck,” Bonzo asked quietly.

“Oh, I totally agree with you, Keith,” John nodded.

Bonzo buried his head in his hands. “Oh god, I’m going to have to learn Russian now…”

--

Robert watched as Pete slunk back to their seats.

“Pete! How could you not tell me about Sky Biscotti?” Robert cried, loud enough to draw attention from the people in the seats in front of them.
“What the fuck?” Pete asked, shuffling back into his middle seat. Jimmy wandered back to his seat unnoticed a few minutes later.

“Sky Biscotti!” Robert’s eyes were panic-stricken.

Roger nudged Pete as he buckled his seat belt. “Remember, Pete? The gorgeous man I’m having an affair with who’s a million times better than Robert?”

“Oh huh…” Pete tried not to laugh as he connected the dots in his head. “He’s quite the fellow. Always mysterious.”

“And really good at sex!” Roger added.

Robert’s eye twitched. “I will do anything this weekend to win you.”

Pete shuddered. Roger had the cockiest smile. “Let’s see you try.”

--

The sleeping sisters next to Jonesy woke up by the time a food cart was being rolled through, the two of them perking up as if they had a sixth sense for this sort of thing. When they were awake and chatting happily with their food, Jonesy felt better about asking to get past them to walk around. He decided his only option was to go see Bonzo and the other half of their gang. No way would he be able to face Townshend again after what he heard earlier. Well, not without a few drinks first.

When he made his way over to their seats, he found Bonzo looking very distressed, and Keith calming him. John looked like he was trying hard not to laugh. Clearly there was hooliganism going on, which meant he would have to play along with whatever prank they were pulling on his drummer. Jonesy didn’t like being the killjoy, which he was often teased for, but he didn’t like that poor Bonzo had to suffer for their entertainment.

John looked up at him and smiled. “Hey, mate. We broke Bonzo the news. He’s not taking it too well.”

Jonesy decided to sell out and play along. He wanted John Entwistle to like him. He’d make it up to Bonzo later this weekend. “Poor lad. I’m sorry you had to find out this way, Bonzo.”

The drummer looked up at him. “How could you let this happen? How can seven people accidentally get on the wrong plane?”

Jonesy looked over at John, gasping. “You mean you didn’t tell him how we got it mixed up?”

“He’s not ready to hear the politics behind it,” John replied without skipping a beat, and Jonesy was so platonically and heterosexually fond of him.

“You mean the government was in on it?” Bonzo’s eyes were as big as saucers. Keith, John, and Jonesy nodded solemnly in unison.

“I wouldn’t take it personally, though,” Keith said.

“It was our fault for drinking the punch,” John nodded.

“You just got dragged into it, it’s hardly fair,” Jonesy frowned.

They watched as Bonzo went through all the stages of grief.
“You know, maybe Russia won’t even be that bad,” Bonzo thought aloud. “They’re rich with a history that we often overlook due to extreme political differences.”

Everyone nodded.

“Plus, there would be century’s worth of art and literature waiting for me to discover.”

Everyone nodded and smiled.

“Plus, I slept with a Russian girl for a bit, she was fucking wild. I’m always a sucker for their blondes.”

Everyone nodded and smiled, patting him encouragingly on the shoulder.

Bonzo leaned back, and looked relaxed for the first time that day. Keith discreetly gave everyone else a look that asked how long they’d really keep this going.

“I think Russia would be a good place for me. It’s out of my comfort zone, you know?” Bonzo continued. “It would be a humbling experience for me as an artist. Starting off at the bottom and really earning my way into a society.”

Everyone nodded, smiling really wide.

--

Pete tried to read his magazine, but Robert kept leaning over his lap to pester Roger who made a big deal of ignoring him. It was getting kind of annoying.

“What does he have that I don’t?” Robert pleaded.

“He worships me,” Roger informed him.

“I can do that.”

“Sky showers me with gifts and food.”

“Easy enough.”

“We make sweet, sweet love every night and it’s beautiful and amazing.”

Robert reached over to grab Roger’s hand. “I can do that.”

Roger shrugged. “We’ll see.”

Pete politely ignored them, letting them have an obviously very private talk.

“I need to have that kiss one more time,” Robert begged. “I need to feel the fireworks again and know it’s real.”

Roger stiffened up. “Not here, everyone will see.”

Pete looked at his friend, noticing his eyebrows doing the scrunching thing when he’s secretly worried about something bigger.

“I’ll make sure it’s beautiful and romantic,” Robert assured him.

“Robert, your, ah, elbows are kind of hurting me,” Pete hinted quietly as Robert watched Roger
intently over Pete’s lap.

“Yeah yeah, whatever,” Robert brushed him off. “Would you like that, Roger? Something beautiful like a balcony at midnight under the stars?”

“If there was fancy champagne and music, then yes.”

Pete frowned. Suddenly, he was the one being excluded again. He managed to look back at Jimmy, quick enough to see that he had dozed off to pass the time. Damn.

--

John and Keith said goodbye to Jonesy as he left to go back to his seat and nap. Their gag was working so well. Bonzo even tried to get Keith to teach him some phrases in Russian. The deadpan flight attendant recommended tourists spots they absolutely couldn’t miss. Their trip hadn’t officially begun and the bar was already set too high for shenanigans.

“Ladies and gentlemen and whatever else, this is your pilot speaking with an update on your flight so far today. We’re reached the halfway point already. We’re also predicting some turbulence in about ten minutes due to the changes in clouds up ahead. Please remain in your seats and with your seatbelts buckled securely. Thank you again for flying with us, and there’ll be another update when we’re closer to our destination of Las Vegas, Nevada.”

Bonzo spit out his complimentary apple juice all over the seat in front of him, slowly looking over at Keith and John.

“What the fuck did he just say?”

Bonzo had just convinced himself Russia was going to be more fun than Las Vegas. Keith and John tried to hold back their laughter but failed.
The eight of them were overjoyed when the plane finally landed and they were free to leave and get fresh, American air. They rushed through more security and more paperwork. They retrieved their luggage, most of it Robert’s, and piled into two taxis to get to their hotel on the legendary Las Vegas strip. The excitement of the weekend paired with the intrigue of a new country gave everyone the sense that anything was possible for them.

--

Jimmy and Robert were the first ones to see the massive hotel suite, as the other six men couldn’t wait, already going off to explore. The suite was extraordinarily fancy, and more exquisite than any of the eight of them had ever experienced—so far. They even had bell boys help take all their luggage up for them.

Once they tipped the young man who brought up their bags, Robert threw his arms around Jimmy’s neck, hugging him and kissing him. “Oh, darling, it’s beautiful! You’re the best!”

Robert couldn’t fathom how Jimmy managed to get them such a marvelous suite to stay in. There was a spacious and extravagantly decorated common area and even a little kitchenette. There were two bedrooms, which posed the exciting predicament of sharing two huge beds between eight people. Each bedroom was decorated with fancy looking furniture and each had its own adjoining bathroom. The bathtub was big enough to swim laps in. Robert excitedly explored each room and admired the simple white and gold décor, and took inventory of all the different furniture he could have sex on over the course of the weekend.

Robert joined Jimmy in the kitchen again, who had pulled out a bottle of champagne chilling in an ice bucket, left on the counter by the front desk upon special request by Mr. Page.

Robert gave Jimmy a big, appreciative kiss. “I absolutely love it.”

“I’m glad you’re happy, my love,” Jimmy brushed Robert’s hair off of his face and kissed his cheek. “I want you to have the best birthday ever.”

Robert took the champagne bottle from him and started unwrapping the foil around the top. “Why don’t we enjoy some peace and quiet while we have the room to ourselves? I want to properly thank you for everything you’ve done for me…”
Robert popped the bottle open, the white fizz spilling out from the lip of the bottle. Robert held the bottle up and licked the champagne bubbles off the side. Jimmy smiled, wrapping his arms around Robert’s waist and pulling him closer.

--

Pete and Roger walked along the strip, enjoying the fresh air and getting a feel for the excitement of the city. So far the desert weather was much more overwhelming than the wet English climate they were used to. In the midday sun, the sidewalks and streets were full of tourists just like them, taking pictures, laughing, and talking.

Amongst all the new sights and smells of a new city in a new country, there seemed to be so many possibilities that Pete didn’t even know where to start.

“Oh, I nearly forgot!” he exclaimed. “Rog, let’s see your bucket list. We can try and get a few things crossed off tonight.”

Roger was no longer coy about the list, and grinned devilishly as he pulled the paper out of his back pocket and handed it over to Pete. In blue marker he had written ‘ROGER’S LAS VEGAS BUCKET LIST’. The paper was folded in three. Pete unfolded it once, and skimmed over the first half of the list.

“Let’s see here…” Pete read the list aloud. “Number one, ‘have a proper American cheeseburger’. Alright, easy enough. Number two, ‘try lobster’. You’ve never had lobster before?”

“Are you kidding me? I’m a rough working class boy, I didn’t have any luxuries growing up. I was too tough and masculine for a nice lobster dinner.”

Pete bobbed his head. “Okay, fair enough. Well, if it’s just food related, that can be arranged no problem. Let’s see… number four is to win money at a slot machine. That shouldn’t be too hard either. And number five…oh, god, ‘yell at an American about the Boston Tea Party’. You wouldn’t!”

“I would and I will! The Americans betrayed us and I’ll never forgive them.”

Pete laughed. “I feel like you’re taking the Boston Tea Party very personally, Rog.”

“You would too, if it happened to you.”

Pete rolled his eyes but smiled anyways. He was about to wrap an arm around Roger instinctively but reminded himself to play it safe in this strange, new land.

--

John and Jonesy had stuffed their swim trunks into Jonesy’s backpack and headed straight to the hotel pool, leaving Jimmy and Robert to fuck like hormone-crazed teenagers for a few hours and get it out of their systems. The indoor pool was unnecessarily massive. There were large saunas, bubbling hot tubs, a lazy river, and a gigantic swimming pool decorated with fake palm trees, beautiful waiters serving cocktails, and plastic poolside furniture made to look like it was made of bamboo.

“Was all of this really necessary?” Jonesy remarked, a bit overwhelmed by the strong smell of chlorine and the roar of the mini waterfall at the back.

“What, you’re not a fan of luxurious excess?” John teased as they walked to the men’s change room.
“I like to remain very simple and very humble,” Jonesy tried his best not to sound douchey. “All I need is a little bit of room to do some uninterrupted laps and I’m fine. Americans are so over the top.”

They put the bag down on a bench in the change room next to two old, hairy men wrapped in their towels. They eyed Jonesy suggestively, to which Jonesy scowled back at them. John watched him as his friend kept catching everyone’s eye. It was hardly a new feeling for him, as John was always upstaged by Pete’s allure back in school, or Roger’s stunning looks onstage. So, young John Paul Jones was also incredibly pretty, no big deal. John had a good personality, at least, which would take him farther in the long run.

Jonesy looked over nervously at John, feeling shy at everyone checking him out. “I’m, um, going to change in a stall.”

John felt better, because he was feeling shy too. “Yeah, I’ll join you.”

Once he locked himself in a stall next to Jonesy, John slowly took off his clothes and folded them neatly. He slipped on his swim trunks and looked down at his belly, which was a little softer lately than it usually was. And he was all hairy. And his legs were too awkwardly shaped. John frowned.

“Hey, Jonesy?” John called over to the stall next to him.

“Yeah?”

“I feel chubby and self-conscious and I never want to go outside again.”

“Oh, thank god. I feel scrawny and self-conscious too. This was a silly idea.”

“Fuck, is this who we’ve become?” John sighed. “At the same time, I want this to be a positive experience where we learn to love ourselves, yadda-yadda. It’s not like we know anyone here.”

“I don’t want to be that guy who wears his t-shirt into the pool. Like, I don’t want anyone to actually KNOW I’m self-conscious.”

John stepped onto the little bench and peered over the wall at Jonesy. Jonesy gasped, startled. He covered his nipples quickly.

“Jonesy, you look like a normal human being,” John told him. “There’s nothing wrong with you.”

Jonesy pouted. “I don’t have any muscles and my nipples are abnormally small. I’m a hideous monster.”

“Half of those guys out there are going to gawk at you the second you walk out of here, anyways.”

“Let me see you, then.”

Jonesy stood on the bench and John stepped down from his, moving back so Jonesy could look at him. He stood there, cold and awkward.

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“Okay, you’re a little hairy, but some people like that,” Jonesy told him.

“I need to go to the gym,” John frowned.

“I’m not gay or anything,” Jonesy said quickly. “But you are a very lovely person and you look normal and you have nothing to worry about. That’s just my heterosexual opinion, anyways.”
“Thanks, mate,” John took a deep breath. “We are beautiful, empowered young men. We can swim in that damn pool because we deserve to be here like anyone else.”

“Fuckin’ right,” Jonesy agreed. He stepped off the bench and joined John back outside, where they put their clothes in his backpack and shoved the bag in a locker.

The two beautiful, empowered young men walked out of that change room side by side. Their hair flowed behind them. The towel boy tossed them complimentary towels, which they caught effortlessly like badasses. People watched in awe as they walked through the steamy pool like handsome models, even if Jonesy’s nipples happened to be weirdly small.

They decided to go to the hot tub first, and they tried to get in as seductively as possible. It wasn’t until they sat down in the crowded tub that they scanned the faces around them and realized there were all freakishly beautiful men in there with them. A few gave Jonesy flirtatious looks, batting their long and full eyelashes. One even scooched closer to John, which made him feel better about himself.

The two bassists hadn’t been sitting for more than a minute when a woman in a hideous pink velour tracksuit came running up to the hot tub, waving her clipboard frantically.

“Gentlemen! Call time is in twenty minutes! Get off of your beautifully toned asses and get down to the theatre!” she fretted.

The men around them groaned and reluctantly stood up, reaching for their towels to dry the droplets of water off of the ripples of their defined chest and stomach muscles, not that Jonesy was watching or anything.

“You too, boys,” the woman swatted the back of the bassists’ heads with her clipboard.

“Ow!” Jonesy cried. “No, we’re not actually—“

“No excuses, come on,” the woman grabbed Jonesy’s arm and yanked him up, practically dragging him out of the pool. The man sitting next to John helped him up as well, and they were escorted out of the pool along with the hoard of suspiciously beautiful men, blending in with them perfectly.

---

The moment the drummers were left to their own devices, they turned to each other quickly.

“Casino?” Keith asked.

“Casino.” Bonzo agreed.

Keith took an American coin from his pocket and flipped it. Heads meant they’d find a casino on the left side of the street, and tails would lead them to the right side. It landed on the portrait of their Queen mother, God bless her. When they were off walking, Keith instructed, “Pick a number between one and ten.”

“Uh, six?”

The two of them walked down to the sixth building away from their hotel on the left side of the street. It was equally as posh as the hotel they were staying in. Just as the evening was beginning, the casino was just starting to fill up. Bonzo and Keith sneaked around the rows and rows of slot machines, each one blinking threateningly at them, inviting them to play. But these two weren’t here to simply play around.
Near the back of the main room was a door with a sign that said, ‘EMPLOYEES ONLY -- DO NOT ENTER’.

Naturally, Bonzo pulled Keith along and they went through anyways.

If they learned anything from their sketchy gallivanting around town, it’s that it’s always more exciting downstairs. The two of them raced down three flights of stairs to another big rusted steel door, pleased to find exactly what they were looking for. In the stretch of a dark boiler room, dozens of people huddled around dozens of green card tables. Drinks were poured, cigar smoke clouded the ceiling, music played, and gorgeous girls hung around big macho card players who raked in hundreds of thousands of dollars like it was nothing.

“Score,” the two drummers whispered to each other.

A doorman approached them, crossing his arms over his big muscular chest. “And what the fuck do you think you’re doing here?”

Bonzo whispered excitedly to Keith. “An American! He’s so aggressive and masculine, just like in the movies!”

“We’re here to play cards with the greats,” Keith pushed his shoulders back, standing up straighter.

“Oh, right,” the doorman said sarcastically. “This is a reputable albeit illegal gambling ring for special members only. You two hippies better scram and don’t you dare mention this place to anyone.”

Bonzo crossed his arms too, sizing up. “Come on, Keith. I think this place is too wimpy for us. After beating the great Master, nothing seems to be intense enough for us lately.”

The doorman’s eyebrows shot up, exactly as Bonzo wanted. “Wait, you two are talking about the Master? The English one?”

Keith caught on. “The one and only. My friend and I played him in Brighton.”

“And guess what?” Bonzo tried to look equally macho. “We kicked his ass.”

“Are you the two who made him retire?” the doorman dropped his guard.

Keith and Bonzo looked at each other. “Uh, yeah. For sure. Definitely. That was us. Uh huh.”

“Goddamn,” the doorman shook his head sadly. “I can’t believe I met the two dudes who dethroned the Master. He used to be a regular here during the world championships for decades.”

“Uh huh, that’s very interesting,” Bonzo said quickly. “Can we go in?”

“Please, be our guest.”

The two drummers continued past the doorman, snickering. There was no way their shenanigans with the poker Master in Brighton made him retire from the game entirely. That would be ridiculous, wouldn’t it?

Bonzo pushed Keith over to a table where a defeated looking player was getting up to leave. “Go on, get in there!”

“I dunno, mate,” Keith hesitated. “This is legit stuff.”
Bonzo steered Keith and plunked him down in the empty seat. Keith rubbed the girl scout pin on his jacket for good luck. The five other people at the table looked over at Keith, immediately not taking him seriously. Alright, so Keith had a nervous disposition and looked like he was twelve years old. Bonzo didn’t look very professional either. But they could prove themselves. Bonzo knew Keith had some weird luck when it came to gambling. He was sure they could win some decent cash.

“Who the fuck is this guy?” A macho American guy in a real ten-gallon hat growled. “Bruce, get him out of here.”

Bruce, the young man dealing the cards, shrugged. “I watched them get past the bouncer. He’s allowed to play if he wants to, Eric.”

The token dark, mysterious woman in a red dress snickered between long drags of her French cigarettes. In a thick Spanish accent, she drawled, “This is too cute. Let him play.”

“I’ve never seen these guys before,” an older, graying man in a tux eyed the two suspiciously. “And I never forget a face.”

There was an interesting change in Keith suddenly. His back straightened, he leaned forward on the table, and put on his signature posh, British accent. He was all swagger now. “Let’s just say I won against a certain Chinese poker Master and now I have to come overseas to play a decent game of cards trouble-free.”

“Bullshit,” a petite blonde woman rolled her eyes.

“There’s no way that was you. Rumour has it, he was dethroned by two of the toughest men in all of Britain,” the gray-haired man said.

“Yeah, that was us and it was my bass guitar he thought he won.”

Everyone seemed proper chuffed at the mention of the bass. It seemed that their story got overseas quick and clear.

“The name’s Theodore Barrington,” Keith jerked a thumb behind him. “And that’s my assistant, Oscar Sullivan. Now get me a damn cigarette and deal.”

Eric rolled his eyes, and the Spanish woman handed him a cigarette as a peace offering. Bruce started to shuffle the deck and the leftover poker chips were reclaimed. Bonzo stood behind Keith, lit his cigarette for him with a box of matches, and started rubbing his shoulders like an eager boxing coach.

“How many chips, Mr. Barrington?” Bruce asked.

Keith reached into his dirty jeans pocket and slid out his wallet. He only had an American five dollar bill. Keith slapped it on the table dramatically and slid it towards Bruce. The petite blonde woman howled with a nasty, condescending laugh.

“Oh god, this will be fun,” she wiped a tear from her eye.

Bruce slid Keith a single red poker chip, which Keith tossed into the middle of the table. Subsequently, Eric bet two patronizing green tokens and everyone else followed suit. The five players tensed up into a neutral look as the cards were dealt. Bonzo crossed his fingers.

Keith took one quick look at his hand, then blew out a long stream of smoke. Bonzo hadn’t even seen his cards, but even he was convinced by Keith’s boldness.
“Pair,” the blonde announced, tossing her cards down.

The gray-haired man showed his double pair. Eric had a three of a kind. The Spanish woman folded her hand, glaring at Keith as if it were his fault. Keith blew her a kiss and showed everyone his straight hand.


“Beginner’s luck,” the gray-haired man grumbled as Keith collected his winning pot of $205.

“Don’t be bitter, Patrick,” Eric flicked the ash from his cigarette. “His luck won’t last forever.”

Eric was right, which was good. Keith won the second round and raked in another $200. He bet modestly, losing the third and the fourth round but won the sixth when everyone started betting higher again. Bonzo left quickly to buy Keith a scotch.

“You’re doing fantastic!” Bonzo whispered, placing the drink next to him, just as Keith won the next round with a full house.

Keith took a sip, looking suave. He was growing into quite the posh character with his accent, which stopped sounding goofy and was now commanding as it was cocky. “Thank you, my friend.”

“Are you even shuffling the damn cards?” Eric started to lose his temper, throwing his hand down by Bruce.

“What do you want to buy when you cash all those tokens?” Bonzo asked quietly as the cards were reshuffled passive-aggressively by Bruce.

“I hadn’t even thought of it,” Keith whispered back.

“How late do you even want to stay?”

The next round passed quickly, with the two men folding immediately, and Keith winning again with a four of a kind. “Let’s play until my luck starts to run out.”

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After christening one of the plush beds with their passionate lovemaking, Jimmy and Robert were also the first to try out the massive bathtub. Robert relaxed amongst the frothy bubbles with the last of the champagne. Jimmy sat on the edge of the tub with his jeans rolled up, his feet in the water. Robert leaned back against him and Jimmy washed his hair, thoroughly lathering his long golden curls with his expensive French shampoos.

“What are our plans for dinner, my love?” Robert asked with a soft sigh, relaxing into the feeling of Jimmy’s long fingers massaging his head. “You’ve left me absolutely ravenous.”

“I love hearing that,” Jimmy cooed. “I made dinner reservations in the dining room downstairs. I arranged for the chef to specially make your favourite dish.”

Robert gasped, delighted. “Vegetarian lasagna?”

“Of course. And I made your favourite dessert before we left home.”

“Weed brownies? With crushed almonds on top?”

“Just how you like it.”
Robert tilted his head back, looking up dreamily at Jimmy. “Oh, I absolutely love you.”

Jimmy smiled, and leaned forward to kiss Robert upside down. “I absolutely love you too, my dear. Now let’s rinse your hair.”

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John and Jonesy were shuffled down to a basement, still dripping wet in their bathing suits. They followed the suspiciously beautiful men to a backstage dressing room, full of hair spray, makeup, and small, sequined outfits.

“Oh, fuck,” John whispered to Jonesy as the door was shut behind them. The two stood back and watched, dumbfounded, as the men started getting ready. Some started stretching, proving to be quite flexible. Some started styling their hair with dozens of different goops and gels and sprays. Some started priming their faces with layers of makeup. Most of them stripped down naked immediately.

“You must be the two new substitutes,” one gorgeous green eyed man approached them, giving them a less than friendly up-and-down look. “Good thing you’ll be staying in the back row. You, come with me.”

John was pulled away and set down in a chair. The green-eyed fellow immediately started spraying shaving foam into his hand, and then lathered it all over John’s chest and belly.

“Um,” John sat back, having no choice but to just let the other man expertly shave his torso with a pink disposable razor.

“You should have waxed already,” the man tutted. “That sort of unprofessional behaviour won’t look good in front of the director.”

“Oh, yeah. Silly me.”

Across the dressing room, two men cooed over young Jonesy. One started combing his hair, styling it.

“They’re so tiny! It’s adorable!” one gushed with a sweet southern drawl as he started dabbing concealer on Jonesy’s face.

“I’m a sucker for small ones too,” the one fixing his hair smiled.

“I’m entirely positive I have some weird disease. They’re too small. Like I never actually grew any and these are just freckles,” Jonesy looking down, examining his nipples.

John was shaved and cleaned up, his skin feeling raw and over-sensitive. Makeup was caked on him as well and his hair was slicked back. He and Jonesy were handed small, sequined shorts to change in to.

“Is this it? Where’s the rest of it?” Jonesy called, and the other men laughed loudly in response.

“This is weird as hell,” John whispered.

“We’ve gotta get out of here, we could get in trouble,” Jonesy tried to pull John out of the dressing room, but they were intercepted by a beautiful redhead.

“Nice try, sweetheart, but there’s no backing out now. We need a full group of dancers tonight or else the whole thing will look like shit. Again.”
“Come on you two, get dressed,” another man called out to them. “Everyone, get in positions, we’ll run the first number again before the show.”

The two bassists quickly turned away and took their damp swim trunks off and tried to slip on the scratchy sequin shorts. They politely didn’t look at each other’s nakedness, but John encountered a bit of a problem.

“Jonesy, does yours…fit?”

“What? Yeah, it’s a little tight around my hips but otherwise nice, why?”

“I, um, can’t fit my…you know…”

“Your what?” Jonesy made the mistake of looking over and catching an eyeful of John’s massive predicament. “Well, damn.”

“Fuck, this always ruins things,” John sighed. He just barely got it tucked in and secured in the small shorts. If he didn’t move around too much, he might not make a surprise guest appearance.

The men gathered in a line, facing the big mirrors. John and Jonesy were cramped in the back row and they kept bumping into the makeup counter and the chairs. Someone in the front line did a bad job of singing out the song, and the dancers marked each move, saving all their big energy for the stage. Right away the two bassists got scorned for not following along.

“Christ, what is wrong with you two?” one particularly high strung dancer cried out after John accidentally kicked him in the back of the leg.

“Were you two even at rehearsals with us?” another man rolled his eyes.

“Um,” Jonesy started.

“Can everyone please relax?” a bleach blond boy interrupted everyone, and wrapped his arms around the two outcasts despite the fact that the three of them have never met before in their lives. “Alex and Derek have been working really hard, I totally saw them sweating their cute little asses off in rehearsal yesterday, right guys?”

John cleared his throat. “Well, actually—“

“I totally saw them too,” yet another man interrupted. “Alex, Derek, don’t worry. Stefan is just being a bitch.”

“Like always!” someone murmured, and then received a few nods of agreement.

“Fine, fine,” Bitchy Stefan smiled devilishly. “Since these two English muffins have been practicing so hard, we’ll give them the special dance number, right boys?”

Screw loyalty, whatever the ‘special dance number’ was, the rest of the dancers started losing their shit. They squealed and laughed and the two bassists got very, very nervous.

The hideous pink velour track suit lady burst in again, still waving her clipboard frantically. “Gentlemen! Get in line backstage! The house is filling up quickly, and we can’t afford to fuck this up again.”

John and Jonesy were just too damn British. Feeling insecure like fish out of water, they were too polite to protest and decided to accept their fate and go along with it. They followed the other
dancers backstage and waited in the wings behind the curtains. The stage was vast and very, very brightly lit. There was no escaping this.

The bassists looked at each other nervously. The other dancers were trying to sneak peaks at the crowd through the curtains, calling dibs on the ones they thought were cutest.

“John, there’s a lot of men out there. Like, it’s all men.”

“Yeah, I have a feeling I know where this is going.”

The small band started playing from the lip of the stage, and the other dancers got ready. Line by line, they wound their arms around each other and started dancing onstage, kicking their legs high.

“I’m not gay! I can’t do this!” Jonesy whispered, terrified. Another line of dancers went out. “This isn’t right, I’m just appropriating their gay culture, I’m going to get in trouble—“

“I’m probably not gay either, but we have no choice!” John aggressively whispered back, shaking Jonesy’s shoulders. “Carpe fucking Diem!”

Like two valiant men accepting their hero’s death, they wrapped their arms around each other and boldly went out onstage.

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“Look, all I’m fuckin’ saying,” Roger drunkenly waved his fork at Pete, nearly stabbing him in the eye. “Is that the colonies needed our help, so we helped them. All we asked for was some extra taxes in return. We’re family. We help each other out. We’re supposed to love each other.”

Pete wiped the froth of beer off his lip after downing yet another pint of beer. He had already lost count of how many the two of them had, but it paired perfectly with the greasy, disgusting cheeseburgers they were served at the bar in their hotel. He slurried everything he learned in history class as a kid a decade ago. “Look, Rog, the United States were like, the angry petulant teenager. No teenager wants to be taxed excessively when they’re just trying to leave the nest and be independent.”

“Independence?” Roger shouted, a little too loudly. “They would be nothing without us!”

“You’ve got to let them be free! Fight the power!” Pete shouted back.

“Why can’t they just be like fucking Canada?” Roger slurred. “Canada still loves us. They still support us. They didn’t stab us in the back and abandon us, biting the hand that feeds!”

Roger attempted to stand up on the bench of their booth in the back of the bar. He wobbled a little, trying to gain his balance despite being more drunk than he expected. He started preaching to the other patrons at the bar. “Look, you filthy colonists, you owe me an’ Pete here an apology on behalf of all the pain and trouble you’ve caused the British Empire.”

“Sit down, Queen Elizabeth,” some bloke yelled from across the room.

“The Boston Tea Party was incredibly impolite!” Roger threw a handful of complimentary peanuts at the neighbouring table, who were snickering. “You wasted perfectly good tea when the British East India Company had a rightful monopoly over the imports!”

“You were overtaxing us with the introduction of the Townshend acts, wouldn’t you protest too?” the bartender yelled back.
Pete tried to grab Roger’s arm. “Rog, sit down, please—“

“It was our historic right to exert our authority over our colonies,” Roger slurred. “And plus, Charles Townshend did nothing wrong by sponsoring those acts. There hasn’t been a Townshend who has ever done anything wrong in British history ever. In fact, my friend Pete here is a Townshend too. He was probably related to the guy.”

“Haha, no I wasn’t,” Pete awkwardly tried to reassure the angry Americans.

“Pete Townshend happens to be the best man I know, and I’m in love with him, and we have a band —”

Pete stumbled onto his feet and yanked Roger back down. He tried desperately to laugh it off as the whole bar stared them down. “We’re not in love, because that would be gay, which we are not, haha. Oh, Roger, you’re so drunk. Let’s get you back to the hotel room. I have a separate room of course, and a separate bed, because I only have sexual relations with women.”

Pete wrapped an arm around Roger, quickly ushering him out of the bar before they got deported just hours after arriving in America. Roger struggled, waving his fists at the Americans in the bar and shouting, “God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble Queen! God save the Queen!”

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John and Jonesy found themselves blinded by the lights at the bottom of the stage, almost enough to distract them from the distinctly all-male audience. The dancers in the rows in front of them sashayed, kicked, can-canned, and jazz-handed their way through boisterous and flamboyant songs, like chorus dancers but more manly and more gay. The bassists had the advantage of automatically tuning in to the bass rhythm from the band playing at the bottom of the stage for them. They could at least keep rhythm and move on the right beats. They just didn’t know the moves at all. If they tried to make it up, they would stand out and make the whole thing look bad. If they hardly moved, they would still stand out. Silently amongst themselves, the two Englishmen co-ordinated neutral, supportive dance moves that complimented the more talented dancers in front of them. That way, it looked like it made sense that they weren’t dancing like the rest of the dancers.

In the second song, they managed to adapt to swaying gracefully with their arms in the air like palm trees. Sometimes they twirled, and if they felt ambitious they would try and do jazz hands. By the third song, that routine wouldn’t cut it. They watched the dancers in front of them subtly start to dance more provocatively, and even pulling down the corner of their small shorts and teasing the audience with a flash of their hipbones or bum.

John looked over at Jonesy quickly. Jonesy was screaming internally the whole time.

Jonesy gave him a look that said, we’ve got to get out of here.

John shot him back a look that said, buddy, there’s literally no way to exit without being seen, trust me cause I already thought of every option we have.

They both looked offstage, where stagehands and the scary velour tracksuit lady were waiting, arms folded threateningly. They looked to the audience, who were all collectively enamoured with the beautiful dancing men. Jonesy gave John a look that said, I wish for the sweet embrace of death.

The song ended abruptly, catching them off guard as they were distracted with their escape plan. The men dancing in front of them ended the dance with splits or kicks or poses. John and Jonesy struck the first model poses that came to their minds, their improvisation skills were naturally sharp even if
they weren’t paying attention. Surprisingly enough, the audience was in such a good mood that they got a laugh out of it.

“Let’s have a big round of applause for the opening number!” a host offstage announced into a microphone. Thankfully, the two bassists scurried offstage in their skimpy shorts with the rest of the dancers. Two stagehands pulled them aside, quickly dressing them in white button-up shirts and black trousers.

“Thank you so much for helping us!” Jonesy innocently thought they were getting free clothes so they could go home.

Another set of stagehands helped them into bowties, suit jackets, and put silly top hats on them.

“But we know what you dirty boys are really here to see!” the host announced over the microphone. “Without any further ado, let’s welcome two new dancers with us tonight, Alex and Derek. They came all the way from New York to dance with us this week!”

The stagehands pushed John and Jonesy, the imposters, back onstage. The two of them stumbled out into the hot spotlight, all alone.

The audience burst into applause and whistles. They didn’t even have time to catch their breaths before big, swelling, sexy music started up again. Jonesy wasn’t dumb. This was undoubtedly striptease music.

The crowd was warmed up and encouraging, which helped. Jonesy gave John a panicked look. John plastered a big, cheesy smile on his face and started to shuffle and sway his hips a bit.

“Just…fucking…dance…” John whispered through his smile. He was right, there was no time to panic. They were artists, and they were performers. They knew how to please an audience. It was their calling.

Jonesy put on his best dazzling smile, and fell into step with John, following his simple moves from the corner of his eye. They got a feel for the music, which was a long vamp being improvised and repeated as long as they needed. John figured he may as well get it over with, so he reached over with goofy, flirtatious gestures and tugged at one end of Jonesy’s bowtie, pulling it undone and off his neck, then into the audience for a lucky guy to grab. Jonesy pretended to be coy and blushing. They were no Laurence Oliviers, but if they acted goofy and over-exaggerated, the audience actually found it really funny. John got rather swept up in the excitement, getting bolder, and reaching farther to make the audience laugh, or thinking of movements that were more suggestive and daring. As long as Jonesy played off of his lead, they fell into an interesting tango together.

And tango they did—John got extra ambitious with all the adrenaline running through him. He grabbed Jonesy and guided him into an over-the-top rendering of the tango, making the audience laugh. John twirled his friend around the stage, and dipped him. When he brought Jonesy back on his feet, he knelt down in front of him, eliciting an excited reaction from the crowd. John gave Jonesy’s trousers a tug and pantsed him. Jonesy gasped and covered himself, making the audience laugh.

Jonesy kicked his trousers off to the side, and then snuck behind John to help take his suit jacket off as slow and sensual as he could manage, which the crowd liked. He yanked the jacket past his wrists and off completely on the flourish in the music, proud of himself for staying in tune. Jonesy’s suit jacket came off the same way. They both went to unbuckle their own shirts, which wasn’t incredibly sexy. John quickly thought of ways to make such a menial task more alluring. He thought of the most sensual man he knew, which was Robert Plant and his onstage presence.
They both didn’t have much to lose, anyways. John tried to channel Robert’s characteristic commanding and powerful presence onstage. His nimble fingers undid a button, then another, slowly teasing the audience with a flash of more skin. His chest was getting irritated by the scratchy shirt mixed with the sweat on his freshly-shaved skin, so no clothes was good for once.

There was something about the way the audience cheered for them that boosted their self-esteem tremendously. They definitely felt an improvement from their brief venture to the pool that day. Jonesy even traced a finger around one of his freakishly small nipples, which got everyone excited. By now, Jonesy was just in the sequin shorts and that stupid top hat, and John only had the added benefit of his trousers. Jonesy imitated him earlier and knelt down in front of John suggestively, his back to the audience.

I’M NOT GAY, Jonesy mouthed up at his friend as he unbuttoned his trousers and slowly pulled down the zipper. Above him, John acted delighted and grabbed the back of Jonesy’s head, pretending to push his face against his cock. The audience cheered.

Now they only had those ridiculous shorts and the hats. John was just about to burst out of the tiny shorts. The adrenaline and the sexiness of it all made things a little more interesting for both men. The audience was buzzing with excitement, getting ready for the big finale. It was unavoidable, and strangely more exciting than it was daunting. It wasn’t as if they had lost their dignity by doing this, but instead became more empowered with their sexualities. Stripping was, in hindsight, a wonderful and spiritual experience for them both.

The band picked up tempo. Some excited audience members came closer to the stage, waving dollar bills around and cheering. More adrenaline kicked in.

“We’ve gotta do the full monty,” John whispered through his teeth.

Jonesy smiled. “Let’s do this.”

It took some co-ordination, but now they were more confident than ever. First, they teased the audience with some more hip shaking and groping each other. They batted their eyelashes and Jonesy stuck a finger in his mouth suggestively. Albeit a bit awkwardly, they even held each other close, touching each other’s chests. Jonesy even stuck his leg up and John held his thigh, and the audience went wild.

“I’m still not gay,” Jonesy whispered quickly.

“Me neither,” John handled him a bit more because the audience liked it, and Jonesy went along with the whole thing. American money was already being thrown onstage. “I think it’s time.”

They turned their backs to the audience, and slowly shimmied off the scratchy sequined shorts once and for all. They teased the crowd with their arses, and John even reached over and pinched Jonesy’s to get a reaction from the crowd. They finally took off the stupid top hats and covered the most important bits, and turned back to their audience.

The excited energy was palpable now. They had the crowd all wound up. The band went back to that slow, flirtatious vamp. Covering themselves with the hats, Jonesy and John wrapped an arm around each other’s waists and danced their way back down to the very front of the stage, the audience vying for the big reveal.

Jonesy held John pressed against his side. Through his smile, he whispered, “On the count of three. One, two, three…”
With a big musical flourish from the band, the two tossed their hats into the crowd and the audience went wild. Sure, having a room full of gay men paying money to cheer for your cock was a pretty nice experience. The audience loved them. John continued to pose for them, more than proud to show himself off. Jonesy bent down, quickly picking up the handfuls of money tossed at them.

They both bowed. John grabbed Jonesy’s hand and they ran offstage, totally naked and full of energy. They ran past the stage hands and the other dancers and the velour suit lady yelling at them. The next performer was wearing a hideous star spangled banner outfit. John snatched the full sized American flags he was going to use as props and they continued to run out of the theatre and back into the hotel lobby.

“Here, take this,” John tossed him one flag, and wrapped the other around his waist.

Jonesy held the flag around his waist with one hand, and the impressive wad of money in the other. The two naked men ran through the crowded hotel lobby, dodging angry staff and patrons alike.

“What just happened?” Jonesy cried, laughing.

“I LOVE YOU AMERICAAAAAAAA,” John shouted at the top of his lungs all the way until they got back to their hotel room.

--
good vibrations

Chapter Summary

i'm pickin' up good vibrations, she's givin' me excitations...mmm bop bop....

Chapter Notes

this was a beast to write for some reason, i'm sorry it took so long to post!! as always, your comments mean so so so so so much to me, thank you for being so supportive even though this is the most ridiculous shit i've ever written in my life i love you all <3

Keith narrowed his eyes, carefully observing the players around the table. Eric tightened his jaw. Patrick blinked six times in one minute. Carla, the woman in the red dress, flicked the ashes off the end of her cigarette. Brianna, the blonde woman, gave Keith a hard glare.

Bonzo caught a glimpse of Keith’s cards, and tried to subliminally convince his friend to bet more. Bonzo had been counting cards the past few rounds, and was almost positive Keith had the winning hand. He was standing behind Keith, and discreetly bumped his knee into the back of his chair. With that hint, Keith silently slid five black chips into the middle of the table, which heightened the tension among the players.

Brianna folded, scraped her chair back, and stormed out of the basement in an angry huff.

Patrick sighed and showed his cards. He had a pair of aces.

Eric put his three of a kind down on the table, and took off his hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

Carla stamped out her cigarette on the wooden border of the table. She slid five black chips into the middle of the table to match Keith, raising an inviting eyebrow to him.

Keith swallowed quickly, but kept his cool. “Ladies first.”

Bonzo broke out in a cold sweat. He watched Carla slowly fan out her cards for everyone to see. She had a beautiful flush of five spades and a cocky smile to match.

Everyone slowly turned back to Keith. They had gotten overly-ambitious with their betting as the night went on, and there was enough chips in the middle to make Bonzo nervous just looking at. Losing that much money would seriously damage your self-worth. Carla couldn’t fathom losing all that money to a newcomer who looked like he was twelve years old. Keith couldn’t fathom losing all that money that he earned over the course of the night in front of all those condescending professionals, period.

“Well, here we go,” Keith shook his head, then laid his cards out. Everyone craned their necks to see. Keith had a 3 of hearts, and a 7 of each suit. It was a four of a kind hand, which made him the
Bonzo cheered for his friend. Eric and Patrick looked dismayed, then very angry. Carla’s face turned hard and stony. Keith and Bonzo started laughing like maniacs as they raked in all the chips they had won.

Bruce came over and started counting all the chips so he could cash them in for Keith, who was going to make the smart decision to take his money and run. Keith stood up and hugged Bonzo appreciatively. Carla stood up and reached out her hand. Keith slipped back into his fake accent and shook her hand sincerely.

“Congratulations, Carla. You played beautifully.”

She nodded, her handshake frighteningly firm. “Thank you, Mr. Theodore Barrington. I hope to see you play again soon?”

“I most certainly hope so.” Keith looked back at Bonzo, who was collecting their prize money from Bruce. He checked his watch quickly. “Holy fuck, it’s late. Are you staying here tonight? May I walk you back to your room?”

Carla looked him up and down, then elegantly pulled out another cigarette to light. “Not tonight. Sleep comfortably for now, because I’ll be winning that money back the next time I see you around here.”

Keith hadn’t had a chance to respond as Bonzo came up to him, struggling to carry the overwhelming stacks of American money they had won. “Keith. Holy shit.”

“Holy shit, mate!” Keith started laughing, taking half of it, surprised at the weight. He looked back over to find Carla had disappeared, her blue cloud of smoke was the only trace she had ever been there.

Bonzo ushered Keith back upstairs. They had stayed in that dark basement for hours, and needed to get back to the room so they wouldn’t frighten their friends with their disappearance, again. They took turns stuffing wads of the foreign green bills in every one of their pockets so they wouldn’t look suspicious.

The Vegas strip never slept, which also threw off their sense of time. The two drummers walked back to their hotel again, all hyped up in their glory of their winnings and the exciting new people and sights all around them.

“Someone call the police, cause my friend Keith Moon just fuckin’ murdered some pros playing cards!” Bonzo pretended to hold a microphone out to Keith. “Mr. Moon, to whom do you owe your success?”

“I owe my talents to the aliens, for sending radio frequencies into my brain and telling me how to play poker.”

“And Mr. Moon, what do you plan on spending all that money on?”

“Dude,” Keith’s eyes went wide. “I hadn’t even thought of it. I kinda want to do something stupid with it, because money is just a government conspiracy to keep us all working like slaves, right?”

“Right.”

“So, I dunno, we could blow this all on drugs, booze, and strippers?”
Bonzo scratched his chin. “We could use half of it on strippers, and half of it building schools in rural African countries? Then we don’t have to feel guilty about the strippers.”

“Hell, half of this money can end poverty in some countries.”

“Okay, how about a third of the money on drugs and strippers, a third to buy books for blind children in the slums of India, and a third to buy Robert a really nice birthday gift?”

“Fuck, I forgot I was going to buy him a gift once we got here!” Keith slapped a hand to his forehead.

“I was going to offer going halfsies on the macaroni picture frame I made him,” Bonzo nodded at the doorman for their hotel who opened the front doors for them. “But we can buy him, like, anything he wants now.”

They walked through the lobby together, which was still buzzing with guests despite the late hour. The two walked to the elevator and went up to their room which they hadn’t actually seen yet.

“What does Robert even like? I mean, I know he likes sex, but I don’t think that’s the kind of thing you buy someone as a birthday gift,” Keith wondered, then winced as the elevator creaked and groaned, the lights flickering.

“And he sings, so it’s not like he needs any equipment either,” Bonzo sighed. “I mean, he has a harmonica, right? We could get him one of those mouthpieces so he doesn’t have to hold it up to his mouth.”

“Then what’ll he do with his hands the whole time?” Keith groaned.

When the elevator stopped at their floor, they wandered down the hall on the plush carpets until they found their room. Bonzo pulled out his key and unlocked the door, and they entered the suite for the first time.

They were amazed at how big and elegant everything was, and Keith and Bonzo later swore to each other that they wouldn’t destroy anything in their room so Jimmy wouldn’t have to pay for it, because they were good people.

Speaking of, they were chuffed to find Jimmy and Robert sitting upside down on the nice couches in the common area, with their bare feet up against the wall.

“Are you two having fun?” Keith asked.

“Oh, we’re having a delightful time,” Robert drawled lazily. Okay, so they were baked. That explains a lot. Bonzo discreetly gestured to their bulging pockets, secretly reminding Keith of their money.

“What beds haven’t you two fucked in yet?” Bonzo asked, peering down the hall. Robert and Jimmy started giggling like loons.

“The second room hasn’t been used yet, go ahead,” Jimmy told them. Keith and Bonzo meandered down to the second bedroom, then were surprised to discover that it was the second room of a grand total of only two rooms for a grand total of eight people.

“Are you fucking kidding me? Only two beds?” Keith shut the door behind them. Their luggage had been brought in already, thankfully.
“I swear, other groups of friends aren’t this close with each other, normally,” Bonzo sat on the edge of the bed.

Keith started pulling the money out of his pockets and spreading it on the bed, counting carefully. Bonzo did the same.

“Fuck. That’s a lot of money,” Bonzo whispered.

Keith chewed on a hangnail, thinking hard. “We need to keep this a secret. No one else can know about it. They’ll want a share of our winnings.”

“Where do you want to hide it?”

Hiding spots in common areas were more likely to get discovered by hotel staff or nosy friends, but hiding it in their luggage or socks would be extra suspicious as well. Keith dug around for his backpack, hunting for a roll of tape.

“Why did you bring a roll of tape?” Bonzo asked.

Keith took off his shirt, and then started taping wads of money to his stomach. “I always bring duct tape with me any time I leave the house. It usually comes in handy.”

“Don’t you think you’re being a little paranoid?” Bonzo winced, thinking about having to remove that tape later.

“I’m being safe, Bonham,” Keith said a little too seriously, and then put his shirt back on again. His stomach looked suspiciously lumpy, so Bonzo gave him his sweatshirt to wear over top.

They were interrupted by frantic knocking on the front door. The drummers left the bedroom to go unlock it. John and Jonesy pushed inside, naked and laughing. They were covered only by American flags wrapped around their waists.

Robert sat up slowly, the blood rush making him dizzy. “Your makeup looks beautiful, boys.”

Bonzo looked closely and found the two bassists had their hair styled stiff with product, and their faces caked in stage makeup. “Should we even ask what happened?”

John and Jonesy looked at each other and started laughing all over again. Jimmy and Robert laughed too, in a drugged daze.

“Where did your clothes go?” Keith asked.

“We left everything in a locker at the pool, and it’s closed now” Jonesy winced.

“Must be some hell of a pool if they’re giving you makeovers and flags,” Jimmy remarked, sitting up as well.

Robert rested his chin on Jimmy’s shoulder. “Is that an American thing?”

A passionate rendition of the British national anthem was being belted from down the hall. A key was slid into the door and unlocked again, and Pete and Roger stumbled in, piss drunk and reeking of cheap beer. Robert’s eyes lit up. “Roger, darling, you’re back!”

Robert stood up and floated over to Roger, taking his hand and pulling him away from Pete. Roger was too drunk to remember he was pretending to be angry at Robert, and hugged him amorously. Pete frowned.
“There’s only two beds, by the way,” Keith informed the newcomers.


“I’m thinking, like, segregating rooms based on who we already know is sleeping with each other,” Bonzo gestured to the four in question. “And then the rest of us can platonically share the other bed.”

“I’m a heterosexual,” Jonesy blurted out.

John shrugged. “I don’t care. Just a warning, Keith likes to cuddle in his sleep even though he says he doesn’t.”

“Because I don’t!” Keith whined.

Jonesy tightened the flag around his waist, shivering slightly. He addressed the other seven men. “Now that we’re all here, can we make a rule? Like, no sex when we’re in the room next to you guys. Just wait until the daytime when everyone’s out of the hotel.”

There was a bit of grumbling but everyone otherwise agreed. Everyone was pretty easy going, considering they were all jet-lagged and getting tired, and half of their group was intoxicated.

“Nice flags, by the way,” Pete teased the bassists, since he had been abandoned.

“Thanks, mate. It’s designer.” John wiped a frightening gob of makeup off of his cheek and cringed. “Fuck, I gotta wash this off.”

Jonesy patted his hair, which was rock hard with hair products. “Ew, I’m right there with you.”

Keith and Bonzo wandered over to the kitchenette and started boiling water for a pot of tea, Keith folding his arms over his stomach to hide the bulging. John and Jonesy walked over to their bedroom, remarking at how gorgeous the decorating was. Jonesy stuffed the wad of money they earned into a sock in his bag. The two walked into the bathroom and closed the door, both heading for the bath.

John hesitated. “Uh, wait.”

“Right, uh, sorry,” Jonesy stammered awkwardly. They both stared at each other, politely waiting for the other to leave first.

“I mean, I like you, but I’m not sharing a bath with you,” John teased, but Jonesy’s face burned red with embarrassment.

“Oh god, no, I wasn’t suggesting that at all,” he wailed. “I’m not g—“

“Alright, alright, go wait outside,” John laughed and opened the door to push the other bassist out. When he was finally alone, he drew a bath and folded the American flag respectfully. He sank into the warm water and enjoyed all the free soaps the hotel supplied them.

Outside, Jonesy dug through his bag and changed into pyjama trousers. He relaxed on the bed until Bonzo and Keith came in later with cups of tea. They all sat together and chatted, but kept their earlier pursuits a secret from each other. This meant keeping conversation very vague and mysterious. Don’t ask, don’t tell.

In the other bedroom, the two blondes were already cuddling in bed in their boxers. Robert had an arm around Roger, playing with strands of his hair, the simple pleasure being heightened now that he
was stoned after the special dinner and dessert arranged by Jimmy. Roger was drunk and feeling warm and cozy. He snuggled into Robert’s bare chest.

Pete was still drunk and feeling rather broody, especially grumpy since Roger had spent the past few weeks reminding everyone how much he despised Robert, and was now embracing him like they were full time lovers. Pete busied himself with unpacking some things from his bag, and changing into his pyjamas. Jimmy wasn’t even paying attention to him either, as he was busy unpacking for Robert and fussing over him. Pete sloppily brushed his teeth and crawled into bed, sinking into the incredibly comfy mattress next to Roger. Jimmy joined them after he turned off all the lights, curling up next to Robert. Pete grumpily rolled over and wrapped an arm around Roger’s waist, now slipping back to being the fourth wheel.

Later on, Jonesy emerged from the steamy bathroom after taking his bath. He had changed into a t-shirt and pyjamas, and awkwardly took the edge of the mattress next to John. Keith looked warm and cozy in his sweatshirt, lodged safely in between John and Bonzo.

All four men stared at the ceiling as their conversation dwindled off. Every time John tried to move and he accidentally brushed Jonesy, Jonesy seized up and inched away awkwardly until half of his body was hanging off the side of the bed. John wasn’t particularly offended, but he felt Jonesy was being silly, and they both just wanted to relax and sleep.

Keith turned onto his side, shaking the bed and ruining their comfortable arrangement again.

“Bonzo,” he whispered.

“Yes, Keith?” Bonzo turned onto his side and faced Keith.

“You know the place we went to? And the thing we did at that certain place?”

“Yes?”

“Um, I think we should go again and do it some more.”

“I was thinking the exact same thing, especially considering the…uh, reward.”

John rolled on his side, poking Keith in the back. “Literally what the fuck are you talking about?”

“Nothing,” the two drummers whispered back.

“It sounds rather…”

Keith wriggled onto his other side to face John. “We didn’t do anything illegal, shut up.”

“That just makes it sound like you did something illegal.”

Bonzo sat up. “Please, don’t say anything, John.”

“I don’t actually—“

Jonesy, who suffered terribly under a guilty conscience, sat up suddenly too. “Also, please don’t look in my bags, specifically my socks, not that I’m hiding anything in there but I’d like if my privacy was respected—“

Keith sat up too. “I won’t look in your socks if you don’t say anything about my sweatshirt.”

“What are you guys—” John asked.
“It’s a deal,” Jonesy reached over and shook hands with Keith and Bonzo, sealing their business deal. They all lay back down and got comfy again, the three curling up together and Jonesy laying as far away from John as possible to avoid accidental homosexual touching.

But now it was John’s turn to roll over, his knee accidentally grazing Jonesy’s leg, making him shiver. “Hey, Jones?”

“Yeah?”

“You know the thing we did at that place earlier?”

“Yeah?”

“Would you…ever do it again?”

Keith rolled over, resting his head on John’s shoulder. “Yeah, okay, that sounds kinda gay when you say it like that.”

“I’m not gay,” Jonesy reminded everyone.

“But really, would you?” John prodded.

Jonesy went quiet. He totally would. But only if it was with John. All that cash they got for simply taking their clothes off was remarkable. And thinking about the way they danced together… “Would you?”

“I enjoyed it far more than I should have. I’d totally keep doing it.”

Jonesy tried to hide his grin. “I’d keep doing it, only if we did it together, though.”

Keith rolled over to whisper to Bonzo. “Dude, I think they had sex!”

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Pete woke up to an empty bed the next morning, and shouting coming from the common area. He had a dull headache from drinking too much, and rubbed his face until he felt more alive. Eventually he rolled out of bed and went outside to see what all the commotion was about.

Jonesy, Keith, Bonzo and John were all sitting on the couches with coffee. John patted the spot on the couch next to him, and Pete sat beside him, gratefully accepting a mug of warm coffee. The five of them sat back and watched the soap opera unfold in front of them.

Robert reached across the island counter, desperately trying to grab Roger’s hands, but Roger refused. “Please, what can I do to make you love me?”

Roger turned away quickly. “How can I love you if I can’t even trust you?”

“I beg you to give me a chance,” Robert pleaded.

“I don’t even know who you are anymore!”

“Your words are like a thousand knives stabbing my heart,” Robert slapped a wrist to his forehead. “You know me better than anyone, because our love is cosmic, our stardust intermingled, we were driven together by every force of nature…”
Roger turned and threw his teacup at the wall dramatically, the tiny cup smashing into smithereens. “Why didn’t you love me before, if you think we’re soul mates?”

“Oh, dear…” Jimmy worriedly rushed to sweep up the broken cup.

Robert collapsed across the counter with a great sob. “I was seduced by another man. My lust clouded my heart’s true calling. I was naïve, and terrible to you.”

John nudged Pete, whispering, “That was you! You homewrecker!”

“Like I told you before, I moved on,” Roger spat.

“I beg of you to forgive me for being so involved in folly with what’s his face—“ Robert gestured vaguely to Pete, who frowned. “—and I’ll forgive you for giving yourself away to that terrible, horrible man.”

“Wait, I think I lost track,” Bonzo whispered to them. “Who did Roger move on to after Robert?”

“Oh, fuck, I nearly forgot,” Pete informed them under his breath. “Roger made up a fake fiancé to make Robert jealous.”

Keith pulled out his wallet from his trouser pocket. “I bet five pounds that he’s going to crack and tell the truth about the fake fiancé by the end of this trip.”

“Oh, god, no. Rog is going to hold that over his head forever,” Pete shook his head. Keith collected bet money from the five of them.

“How do I know you’re going to take care of me?” Roger cried. “How do I know you’re going to be the perfect partner for me, in sickness and in health?”

Robert climbed onto the counter and grabbed Roger’s face. Jimmy fretted anxiously, standing behind Robert in case he fell. “I promise to you right now, I will do whatever it takes to prove my love to you, day after day, night after night. I will feed you soup when you’re sick. I will brush your teeth for you. I will send your mother a birthday card when you forget. I will turn the pages in your magazine for you when you are tired. I will make sweet, passionate love to you every night until we die.”

Their audience cringed.

Roger looked up at Robert, his eyes big and moony and shiny with crocodile tears. “How do I know you won’t get distracted and leave me for someone else?”

“Please, just one kiss,” Robert whispered. “Just one kiss to prove those fireworks were real. If we feel them again, that’s all the proof you need that I’ll be yours forever. I’ll give up your guitarist and live only for you.”

Robert leaned in. Roger leaned in. Their faces rested just an inch away from each other.

Jimmy chewed his fingernails. The five other men sat on the edge of the couch.

Roger turned away suddenly. “I’m just…not ready. My heart hasn’t healed yet.”

Everyone let out a collective sigh of defeat.

Robert looked like he was ready to cry again. He took Roger’s hand gently. “I will wait as long as you need. I will wait seventy years for that kiss, if you need me too.”
Roger smiled tenderly. “Thank you, Robert.” With that, he peeled away from Robert and exited their stage. Robert sank onto a counter stool and Jimmy poured him a glass of water and fanned him. The other five applauded their performance.

“Fuck, that was intimate. I need a cigarette,” Pete stood up and took the pack of cigarettes and matches from the coffee table, and slid open the glass door to the little balcony they had. He was a little put off, to be quite honest.

It was painfully bright, and the air was dry, but the view was incredibly peaceful. Pete stuck a cigarette between his lips and lit it with a match. He took a drag, and John slid open the door and joined him on the balcony a moment later.

Wordlessly, Pete offered the cigarette to John, who accepted it and took a long pull before handing it back, just like old times. His oldest friend patted him on the shoulder. “How’re you feeling, mate?”

Pete was trying to keep optimistic and have fun on their trip, but there was the nagging disappointment in his chest nonetheless. “Just like you’d imagine. I’m a little jealous that Roger’s the centre of attention again.”

“Is jealous really the right word?”

Pete shook his head. “No, but you know what I mean. I kind of liked being adored by the two of them, you know?”

John bobbed his head, then reached for the cigarette again. “I know what you mean. I really hope it works out, mate. I know how hard it is watching your friends get whisked off like that.”

Pete winced. “Yeah. I’m really sorry about that, by the way.”

John shrugged, letting the cigarette dangle from his lips. “At least we can count on you to come back the morning after. Keith hangs out with Bonham more than me nowadays. I guess it’s cause they have more in common, anyways.”

“Oh, don’t say that. You two have been friends for ages. You know he still loves you.”

“So, without you two, that leaves me to watching crap telly with Roger all day, or being intellectual with Jonesy. It’s still nice, but it’s not the same, eh?”

“But at least you have someone who knows all about the bass like you, right?” Pete offered. “What were you two up to yesterday, anyways?”

John cracked a grin, and Pete knew that he was up to no good. “I really can’t tell you.”

“Oh, come on!” Pete laughed. “I can tell it was something downright terrible.”

“I’ll tell you when you’re older,” John teased. “It was absolutely filthy.”

“Wait, I thought Jonesy kept saying he wasn’t…?”

John laughed and shook his head. “Never mind that. I will tell you sometime, though. But not now.”

The two leaned on the railing, admiring the cityscape below them. Their shoulders brushed and there was a comfortable silence between them, albeit a nostalgic tension. Pete lit another cigarette and passed it to John just so they could enjoy the moment longer.

“Let’s make sure we hang out sometime this weekend, just the two of us, yeah?” Pete said quietly
after a while. “We need to goof off again, just like old times.”

John blew smoke out of the corner of his mouth, and passed the cigarette back to Pete, looking at him closely. “Yeah. Just like old times.”

The sound of the glass door sliding broke their moment. Bonzo stuck his head out. “Hey, Pete? Jimmy’s looking for you.”

Pete instinctively went to run to Jimmy’s beckoning, but turned back and rested a hand on John’s shoulder, the touch lingering far longer than necessary. “You don’t mind, do you?”

John took the cigarette back. “Go on ahead.”

“I’ll talk to you later, yeah?” Pete promised. He wandered back inside, finding Jimmy gesturing him to the bedroom. He followed the other guitarist and shut the bedroom door behind him. In the common area, Jonesy and Bonzo ventured to go downstairs for the hotel’s complimentary breakfast, and to get Jonesy’s backpack from the pool locker room. At the last minute, Robert and Keith decided to tag along with them.

Pete sat on the bed, feeling rather needy for attention, moreso now in the privacy of their own room where Jimmy had no other distractions.

Pete watched as Jimmy scrambled around the room, continuing to fret over the littlest things. He sat on the bed with Pete, and showed him five homemade birthday cards for Robert.

“Give these a look and tell me which one you think he’ll like best,” Jimmy chewed on a hangnail. “I got worried that the original wasn’t good enough, so I woke up in the middle of the night and made four more just in case…”

Pete examined each lovingly made card, careful not to damage the thin paper cut outs glued on, or the glitter, or the stickers, or smudge the intricately drawn pictures. All of the cards were downright adorable. Two had horrific puns, which wouldn’t be any good. One card had a beautiful love poem that Jimmy wrote on the inside, but the sensual implications were a little out of place on a birthday card. The fourth card was a little generic, but Pete much preferred the fifth card, where Jimmy took up every available space on the card to fill with anecdotes and declaration of love and friendship. It was moving, really. Pete suddenly felt dirty for trying to get in the middle of the two of them, even though their sexual gallivanting was unanimously agreed upon and sought out.

Pete gave Jimmy a soft smile and handed him the fifth card. “This one is perfect. He’ll treasure it forever.”

Jimmy smiled back, and momentarily he was relieved of some birthday planning stress. Pete was surprised when Jimmy went to lay his head on Pete’s lap, and even more surprised when it was a sweet gesture unlike the other times he usually placed his head anywhere near Pete’s lap. Pete sat patiently, and stroked Jimmy’s hair while the other man relaxed with a yawn.

Jimmy hadn’t been paying attention to him as much since they had got off the plane. Up until that point, a lot had been different, come to think of it. It was like America was some upside down universe. Pete cleared his throat gently. “What do you say we go get something to eat, just you and I? You can properly relax for a bit and we can spend time together.”

Jimmy pondered for a moment. “But what if Robert needs something?”

“He’ll be just fine, you don’t need to worry.”
The other man slowly sat up with a smile. “Yeah, okay. Let’s do it.”

Pete leaned in and kissed Jimmy, and strangely, they kept it slow and sweet. Pete traced his hands all over Jimmy’s thin body, pulling him closer. He felt his way down to Jimmy’s jeans and went to unbutton them, but Jimmy took his hands instead and held them, lacing their fingers together. It was all very loving, which felt rather foreign between the two of them, as if they were coy lovers.

Jimmy gently pulled away, and Pete saw that his cheeks were all rosy. With a shy smile, Jimmy told him, “Let’s go, shall we? I’m starving.”

They got their shoes on and left the hotel room, waving goodbye to everyone. Pete and Jimmy even held hands when they walked through the empty hallways and down the shaky and creaky elevator, although they did separate when they crossed the busy lobby. They walked, shoulder to shoulder, down the strip until they found a place with a menu they liked, and were seated shortly. Usually, when Jimmy would normally try and grope him under the table or trace a hand slowly up Pete’s thigh to send him wild, he instead shyly held Pete’s hand more under the table, gently brushing his thumb over Pete’s knuckles. It was all very strange, indeed.

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John stamped his cigarette out on the balcony railing, and carelessly tossed it away, letting the small paper bundle fall down dozens of storeys to the ground. He walked back inside and spotted Roger at the kitchenette counter, drinking a glass of water.

“Rog. Let’s go out and do something,” John declared.

“Like what?”

“Well, what about that bucket list?”

Roger grinned and pulled the list from the back of his jeans pocket. “Last night, Pete and I crossed off numbers one and three.”

John took the list from him, reading over it. “’Have an American cheeseburger’ and ‘Yell about the Boston Tea Party’? Man you guys did all the fun stuff. Let’s see here…”try lobster’? Sure, I’ll do that with you. As your friend, I just want to support you, of course.” John skimmed down to the second half of the list, which was far more exciting. “’Get a lap dance’? Yeah, ask Pete for that one. ‘Try drugs’? You mean you’ve lived through the sixties and never tried drugs?”

“I’m a good kid,” Roger protested.

“Fucking geek. Let’s see…number eight, ‘steal something expensive’. Could you be a little more specific?”

“I was thinking like, silverware from a fancy restaurant or a cool looking vase or something. Just as long as no one gets hurt.”

“Fun shouldn’t be ethical,” John muttered. “Fuck, wait. Number nine, ‘punch Robert Plant’?”

“I was very angry at him when I wrote this.”

“Jesus Christ. Number ten? Are you serious?”

Roger crossed his arms over his chest. “Don’t be judgemental. I hear orgies are very wholesome and welcoming, despite the bad rep they usually get.”
“Rog, I don’t think you want to mess around with the people who come to seedy Las Vegas hotels for orgies.”

“I can decide that for myself!”

John folded the list up and gave it back. “Alright, let’s kill two birds with one stone. Jimmy had one leftover pot brownie that you can eat, then we’ll go downstairs and order lobster from the hotel restaurant. When the weed hits, that lobster will taste so damn good, I swear.”

Roger gave him an optimistic grin. “I trust you, John. I’m truly going to seize the day!”

John rubbed his hands together as they went to the designated gay room to rifle through Jimmy’s bags. They found some fucked up stuff in there, but nothing that truly surprised them. John retrieved the cellophane wrapped brownie, which was as big as his hand. For virgin Roger’s safety, John only gave him half, and he helped himself to the rest.

Roger was practically bouncing with excitement as they took the creaky elevator downstairs to the restaurant. “Is this it? Am I high yet?”

John looked him over quickly. “Not yet. I think you’re just happy.”

“Okay, wait, I think I’m high now.”

“You’ll know, trust me.”

They got a seat pretty quickly, and ordered before they even got a menu.

“Two of your finest lobsters, please, good sir,” Roger declared, full of carpe-fucking-diem enthusiasm.

“Oh, and bill Mr. Jimmy Page’s room, if you will,” John added in quickly. He swore he’d pay him back with his secret earnings. When the waiter left, John leaned in to whisper, “Quick, see how many of these fancy golden forks you can fit in your pockets. Fuck, wait, I was teasing, don’t actually—“

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At the restaurant, Bonzo and Keith had been giving each other secret looks and whispering discreetly. Once the bill was paid, the two drummers stood up quickly and said hasty goodbyes.

“Yep, we’re off, no need to follow us,” Keith said. Jonesy gave them a suspicious look.

“We had a great time but we’re going to do other completely normal and legal things,” Bonzo added in.

“We’ll see you all later,” Keith grinned and they practically ran off. Left side of the street, six buildings down from their own. Across the lobby. Down three flights of stairs. The doorman recognized them immediately.

“Oh, it’s you two again!” He sounded excited. “Well, you’ve made quite the impression already. People can’t stop talking about Barrington and Sullivan, the English poker pros.”

“Holy shit,” Bonzo whispered to Keith.

“Please, on behalf of our little establishment, enjoy your time here. Do let us know if you need anything. And we mean anything.” The doorman lead the two of them over to an empty chair at a
poker table which was otherwise surrounded with players who seemed to be waiting for them. As they walked by, people stared. The two drummers stood a little taller.

“We know it does get a little chilly down here,” the doorman and another staff member helped Keith put on a gigantic fur coat, which was probably worth a zillion pounds. “Compliments of the establishment.”

“Thank you very much, good sir,” Keith slipped back into his posh British persona.

A waiter handed Keith a fancy Cuban cigar. Bonzo lit it for him, and they exchanged astounded glances. While the cards were being shuffled, waiters handed the two of them drinks on a silver tray. Bonzo carefully tested each drink before Keith took it, just in case.

The other four players at the table waited expectantly, trying to hold their ground and look professional, but scoped out the new fame anyways. There were two women and two men also playing, but none of them players that they recognized.

Bonzo rubbed Keith’s shoulders and hyped him up to play. Keith downed a shot of whiskey and cracked his knuckles, then rubbed his temples to get into the right mindset. He scoped out the players. One man was already rubbing the back of his neck. The man closest to him was jiggling his leg under the table and Keith could see ripples in his drink because of it. One woman stayed as still and frigid as possible, her neutral stance meant laying her hands out flat on the table, arms perfectly straight and parallel to each other. The second woman chewed on a toothpick in between her plush, pink lips. Keith wanted to play against Carla again.

Keith exchanged a simple $100 bill for poker chips to start off, which was hardly a fraction of what they had won yesterday. Keith bet $50 for the first round, setting the bar high for the rest of the players. The other four players bet high as well to show they weren’t scared. The cards were dealt. Keith won. Everyone looked envious, as if he were a master of strategy and artful playing. Keith leaned back in his chair and puffed on his cigar with a smirk. Truth be told, he had no clue what he was doing. He knew enough of the rules to make educated guesses, and how to pin the nervous habits of the other players, and the rest was pure luck.

Bonzo watched faithfully from his post behind Keith’s chair, remarking how Keith was actually winning more rounds than yesterday. He started to get nervous as Keith became bolder as he played, betting bigger and taking more risks. At one brief interval, they both decided to wear their matching sunglasses. Keith thought he looked more badass with the sunglasses, the cigar, and the big fur coat. Bonzo looked like a hulking bodyguard standing behind him, and also now his eyes were hidden so he could look at whoever, and examine everyone all at once. Throughout the game, Bonzo kept ‘accidentally’ nudging the back of Keith’s chair with his knee when his odds weren’t looking high, and coughing when his bets should be higher. When Bonzo could see that another player was bluffing or looked particularly nervous, Bonzo would pass Keith a drink, holding the cup over the rim, his fingers casually pointing towards whichever player it was. Nobody even noticed, since all eyes were on Keith.

As Keith’s winning chips kept piling up, more people in the smoky basement abandoned watching other games, and came to spectate their own game. More specifically, girls abandoned watching their boyfriends play, and wandered over to ogle Keith and try and get his attention.

And Keith loved the attention. He flirted with the girls in the middle of the otherwise high tension game, and he even tried to give one young woman a chip as a gift, trying to show off how much money he had and could afford to give away. Bonzo intercepted that, of course, because they were still damn poor musicians back home.

When Keith lost a round, he could at least joke about it, being a good sport. Bonzo really admired
that in his friend. Although, the surrounding gaggle of his female fans cooed over him and patted his hair sympathetically.

“Hands off the player please, ladies.” Bonzo blocked them off from Keith, who was starting to get too cocky, and more interested in the girls and his money, than the high stakes game.

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Roger was thankfully distracted with his salad, which took his mind off of the over-eager anticipation of getting high.

“So, what’s the deal with you and Robert?” John asked casually, truly a messy bitch who loves drama.

Roger blushed and poked around at his salad with his fork. “To be quite honest, I’m nervous. It seems everyone’s involved in this now. And we’re putting all this pressure on one silly kiss that I’m not even ready for.”

“Robert seems pretty keen on jumping right to big conclusions. If the kiss works, you’re soul mates. There’s not really an in-between.”

“Yeah, it’s freaking me out,” Roger frowned. “But, I mean, I really fancy him. He’s doing everything he can to impress me just to get that kiss. I’m worried that he’ll stop giving me all that attention when the stakes stop being so high, you know?”

John nodded sympathetically. “Interesting how eager he was to toss Pete aside just to prove himself to you. I sure hope that doesn’t happen to you.”

Roger started to get very worried, and John felt sorta bad, so he gave Roger the bun that came with his soup to distract him. The band learned that you could always pull Roger out of a mood with food and candy, bless him.

The giant lobsters finally arrived, and the platters were placed in front of them with a dramatic flourish.

“I feel like the Queen of England!” Roger whispered to John.

“God bless.”

They were having a proper laugh trying to figure out how to get the damn lobster open so they could finally eat. The whole process was like a sport in itself.

“How’s Pete doing?” Roger also asked casually.

“I’m sure you’d know just as much as me,” John was struggling with the tiny-ass fork in his gigantic fingers. “He’s still following Jimmy around like a puppy, running over whenever he calls, that sort of thing.”

Roger looked at him carefully. “I’m sorry mate, that must be tough.”

“Why do you say that?” John asked a little defensively as he dipped the lobster meat in the butter.

“Um, well, I mean, I know you two—“

“There’s nothing going on.”
“Oh,” Roger scrunched his eyebrows together. “Because you and Jonesy, right…?”

“Why? What did you hear?” John cracked the lobster’s arm open rather violently.

“Nothing, nothing, I’m sorry,” Roger flinched. “I just noticed he hangs around you a lot. It’s sweet. But you guys are just friends. Your friendship is beautiful. I wish you both the best friendship imaginable.”

“Thanks,” John stuffed his mouth with more lobster. They were halfway through their dramatic lobster-surgery, when suddenly Roger’s fork clattered to the table. John looked up at him, and saw that Roger’s eyes had blown right open, pupils unfocused and staring off into the distance. His mouth hung open, in the middle of chewing.

John waved a hand in front of his face. “Rog? You there?”

Roger stayed frozen, as if he had suddenly turned catatonic. John started laughing. “Oh my god, it hit, didn’t it?”

Silence.

“Haha, alright man,” John picked up Roger’s hand and high-fived it.

John kept eating, suddenly feeling awkward. He wondered if anyone at any other tables noticed.

“Rog, it’s like you’re bloody deaf,” John joked. “And dumb.” Roger hadn’t blinked in minutes. “And blind.”

Half of a weed brownie was nothing compared to the amount of drugs he and Pete used to do when they were schoolboys. John felt the familiar feeling shortly after, starting in his feet, and that lovely relief radiated all the way up to the tips of his ears. He devoured the rest of his plate and Roger’s too, certainly he would forgive him later.

John pulled Roger up and dragged him out of the restaurant, across the lobby, and down the hallway. It was then that John discovered the hotel fixtures were changing colours. Roger had clued in enough to start grappling around like he really was blind. In a daze, John kept pushing him over to the elevator, when he noticed the carpet was like a treadmill rolling them backwards. “What the fuck….”

Roger became really heavy and John couldn’t figure out which direction the elevator was in. He started staring at the swirls of ivy printed on the wallpaper in the hallway. He thought if he found the end of one rope of ivy it would point him in the direction but they just kept swirling everywhere, so John traced it with his finger.

“John,” Roger said very long and drawn out, like he was in slow motion.

“Justasec,” John squinted, and he kept tracing the pattern on the wallpaper. He got distracted when he noticed his finger was, like, really big. Should he go to the doctor’s for that? He’d never met someone else with fingers that big. They were like five giant baguettes sticking out of his palm. Would he rather have baguette fingers or microscopic raisin nipples?

He was so preoccupied thinking about the utility of nipples that he hadn’t noticed Roger steal an expensive looking dolphin sculpture made of glass and hide it under his shirt.

--

“So, I have two things I’ve been meaning to ask you,” Jimmy told Pete shyly. He was pushing a few
French fries around on his plate with his fork, avoiding eye contact.

Pete swallowed quickly. He ran through a mental checklist. This degree of seriousness could either mean Jimmy was going to propose, announce he had gotten someone pregnant, or confess he had gonorrhea. Pete was definitely not prepared. “Uh, yeah, go ahead.”

“Robert had a certain something planned for his birthday…” Jimmy started, and Pete was instantly relieved. “And he was hoping you and Roger would join me and him.”

Pete tilted his head. “Yeah? Like dinner or something? I don’t see—“

“Well, not quite dinner.”

Pete sipped his drink through the straw. “Dessert?”

“Even better.”

“Wait, is it—“

“Yeah.”

Pete paused. “Oh my.”

Jimmy smiled. “There’s absolutely no pressure whatsoever. I’ll take care of him in that regard no matter what. But it could be fun.”

“And he wants me and Roger to join you guys?”

“Oh, it would be an absolute dream come true for him. He loves you two to bits.”

Pete blushed for a multitude of reasons, but mainly happy knowing that he was back in the ring of affection. “Speaking for myself only, I certainly don’t see a problem with it. I think it would be a lot of fun. You two obviously know what you’re doing.”

“It wouldn’t be our first time, so we recommend it. We like to keep it casual and friendly. And with lots of wine.”

Pete chewed on his bottom lip. It was like a whole new world of opportunities was opening up in front of him. He can’t say he’s never thought about it himself, but now that this wild dream seemed so attainable… “I’m down. I’d love to do it.”

“Oh, brilliant!” Jimmy gave him a warm smile, holding his hand across the table. “I’m so happy.”

“Me too,” Pete smiled back, but his mind was definitely in the gutter at this point. “Have you asked Roger yet?”

“Well, we were hoping you might be able to talk to him about it. You know him best.” Jimmy nodded. “Just remind him that it’s totally fine if he’s not comfortable with the idea.”

“Absolutely,” Pete grinned devilishly. “Oh, god, I’m really looking forward to this.”

“So are we!” Jimmy said, then got quiet again. Pete watched him closely as Jimmy went back to absentmindedly brushing his thumb gently across Pete’s knuckles.

“What was the other thing you were going to ask?” Pete asked cautiously, praying it would also be sexual.
“I’m sorry I’ve been so preoccupied lately, this trip has been a beast to organize,” Jimmy blushed. “But I figure now’s a better time than ever to ask.”

“Well, go on,” Pete encouraged, really hoping it would be a sex thing.

“When we get back home in London and we’re all settled back in and everything, I was sort of hoping…” Jimmy laughed nervously. “I mean, maybe you’d like to go on a date? With me?”

Oh fuck. Pete forced out a nervous laugh to fill the expectant silence. Oh god. Jimmy was giving him the most beautiful smile and his eyes were all big and hopeful… “I mean, we already do dates, sort of, right? I come over all the time.”

“Oh, but I mean a proper date! A romantic one.” Jimmy laughed. “Instead of beer, pizza, guitars, and sex, we could try wine, and go to nice restaurants, and walk through the park, or catch a movie, and really get to know each other…”

Pete kept laughing nervously. Beer, pizza, guitars and sex were his favourite things. Why give that up? “I mean, ah, I guess, uh…”

“This whole time I’ve wanted to take you out and absolutely spoil you,” Jimmy confessed. “Pete, I’m quite fond of you.”

“Oh, come on. You already spoil me as it is.” With your giant dick. “And you know I like you too.”

“Just let me take you out, at least once,” Jimmy squeezed his hand, and he kept smiling, and Pete kept laughing nervously, and Jimmy looked so happy and Pete felt so goddamn awkward.

“Haha, okay, sure, let’s do it, haha,” Pete kept laughing, and Jimmy kept smiling, and Pete frantically flagged the waiter down for the cheque.

--

John and Roger decided it would be best to take a nap in the hallway real quick, because eating and thinking had been really exhausting. Roger sprawled out on his stomach, clutching his stolen statue to his chest. John curled up in a small ball so no one would see him or trip over him in the hallway. He held one of Roger’s feet so he wouldn’t get away without John knowing.

Roger remembered Robert’s face appearing like the light at the end of a tunnel. He might have been dreaming, but Robert looked all white and glowy like an angel—his guardian angel? Roger was helped to his feet and he and John flew up to their hotel room to sleep some more. Roger had an intense and vivid dream about being stuck in a pinball machine, and when he woke up, his mouth felt like it had been full of cotton balls, and he was resting on Robert’s chest. Robert even stroked his hair soothingly.

Roger sat up slowly, feeling a dull headache appear out of nowhere. Robert gave him some water. “You saved me.”

“I would do anything to protect you,” Robert kissed him on the forehead, and Roger swooned.

John had been dumped unceremoniously on the carpet in their front room. He felt like he had gone through a trip and a half. Miraculously, it appeared that only an hour had passed. He sat up slowly, rubbing the imprint of the carpet off of his cheek. Jonesy placed a cup of coffee on the coffee table in front of him.

“Ah, you’re brilliant,” John smiled appreciatively. He climbed onto the couch and Jonesy sat next to
him. Already, John felt less groggy and more human. He even remembered an idea he had before they left the restaurant.

“So.” John said as he blew on the cup of steaming coffee, a mischievous grin on his face.

“So.” Jonesy absentmindedly fiddled with a sugar packet, raising an equally mischievous eyebrow.

“I hear there’s a theatre here.”

“Oh, is there?” Jonesy acted very surprised. “We certainly knew nothing of a theatre before this moment.”

“Certainly not, dear friend.”

“As an artist,” Jonesy smiled. “I do enjoy watching, even participating in different artistic performances. Specifically, dance.”

“Dance, eh? I never would have thought you were the type.”

“I do love to open up and share myself with the audience.”


“Pardon me, my mind is in the gutter.”

They giggled like children as they made their way down the hallway and down the incredibly sketchy elevator with the flickering light. It was thrilling to be sharing such a terrible secret with a friend like that. In a silent moment between the two as they made their way down to the front entrance of the theatre, they suddenly didn’t feel so bad about being abandoned by the rest of their friends, because they had each other. You do a striptease with a guy in a gay cabaret, and before you know it, you’re best friends. Life is grand.

The two bassists snuck in through the front where the bar and the audience were. There was already a show going on, which seemed to be the same dancers as last night. John and Jonesy sat at the bar watching, this time purely studying.

“So that’s how the dance is supposed to go,” Jonesy whispered. He felt delighted when he made John laugh again.

They recognized the part of the routine where they were included, and watched until the bitchy dancer and the bleach blond man came out in the same stupid top hats and suits like they wore. And to their surprise, the dancers gratuitously stole their whole schtick as well, which kept the audience laughing. Being able to watch as an audience member this time around, Jonesy thought it looked rather hot. He felt proud of how well they managed to improvise.
“I wish they had the same guys from yesterday,” they heard the bartender remark as he poured the bloke beside them another drink. “I swear they made up the whole thing on the spot, but it was sexy as hell.”

This was too good. John and Jonesy exchanged coy glances, and turned around casually to face the bartender.

“They were great, weren’t they?” John grinned.

The bartender did a double take. “Wait a second, was that you guys?”

A man beside them got really damn excited. “It totally is! The guy with the weird teeth and the guy with the small nipples!”

The others at the bar looked over. Jonesy blushed, and John shrugged casually as if they were seasoned professionals. The bartender laughed, incredulously. “Why the hell aren’t you guys up there now? Everyone loved you!”

“It’s our day off,” John bullshitted.

“Oh my god, they’re British, I’m gonna cum,” one guy at the end of the bar fanned himself with a menu.

“Which one is Alex and which one is Derek?” another guy asked.

“I’m Alex, and that’s, uh, Derek,” John jerked a thumb towards Jonesy, trying to remember the bios of the actual dancers they were impersonating. “Straight from New York, where we live, as dancers, that’s us.”

“Can you believe these guys have been touring for over ten years?” one guy told the bartender. “I did a little digging around after I saw them last night. Alex and Derek are the only married strippers who’ve toured at every major venue in North America. They’re huge in Canada, I hear.”

Jonesy covered his mouth casually before he burst out laughing. John was being a total ham, taking questions and supplying answers with his perfect poker face.

“Yes, me and my loving domestic partner here have been lucky enough to make a living following our childhood dreams,” John placed a loving hand on Jonesy’s shoulder. “We’re still fighting for the right to get married, though. We won’t marry until everyone else has that right.”

The guy who was going to cum in his pants swooned from the end of the bar. “Oh my god, they’re martyrs for our cause, true political rebels, I’m in love—"

“We live very simply,” John reassured his disciples. “Most of our money goes to charity, so that’s why we ask people to give us more, you see.”

Jonesy struggled very hard to keep a straight face. He wasn’t as good as John was.

“What amazing, kind-hearted, sexy gay talent,” the bartender shook his head in disbelief. “Let’s have a round for everyone, on the house.”

The drinks were poured and everyone took their shot glasses and toasted John and Jonesy, who had never bullshitted so much in their entire lives. It was a true learning curve, really.

The huge group of dancers came onstage again, grabbing everyone’s attention at the bar. A man took that opportunity to sneak into the empty seat next to Jonesy and get their attention.
“Hello, gentlemen,” they were shocked to see this ancient, wrinkled old man slink their way up to them. “I really enjoyed your show last night.”

“T-thanks,” Jonesy thought that if he spoke too loudly, the poor old guy might have a heart attack and die in front of them.

“I was wondering if you two did…private shows?” his small, gross old man lips curled into a generous smile. “The owner of the club couldn’t seem to contact you when I asked earlier.”

Jonesy turned to John, giving a panicked look. Instead of sweet-talking themselves out of the situation, John leaned in. “That depends. How much?”

The old man ushered him in closer, and whispered into John’s ear. John almost choked on his drink. “Yes. Absolutely.”

“I’ll give you two the second key to my room, and you can come up in an hour or so?” the old man folded his hands together, looking eager. “I’m usually asleep by 8 pm.”

“Me and my husband need to talk really quickly, one moment,” Jonesy smiled at the crypt-keeper and grabbed John’s arm, dragging him over to a quiet corner of the room. “We are absolutely not doing this.”

“Jonesy, do you know what we could do with that much money?”

“I don’t care. That horny old man would probably need it for a hip replacement or something.”

“Think of it this way,” John grabbed his shoulders. “That horny old man is going to die any day now. Your freakishly tiny nipples are probably going to make his life complete. You’re going to bring the last bit of joy to his quickly diminishing life. You’d be helping him, mate.”

Jonesy wrinkled his nose. “John, he’s going to, you know, get off. Watching us. His wrinkly old man wiener is—”


“I don’t know,” Jonesy sighed.

“Come on, tell me what’s making you anxious,” John tried to be more sympathetic. He checked over his shoulder quickly, making sure their first private client didn’t die while waiting for them.

“Going to a strange man’s hotel room? Alone? Strippers get murdered all the time doing that, regardless of gender.”

“There’ll be two of us to protect each other. Plus, the wind could probably knock him over. Self defense won’t be hard.”

“What if he pops a massive boner and then has a heart attack and dies?”

“We dial 911 from his room telephone and then ditch that bitch the moment it starts ringing.”

“What if he tries to touch us or whatever?”

“Then we leave.”

Jonesy frowned. “You seem really eager to do naked gay stuff for an old man.”
John shrugged. “I have an old gay man fetish.”

“John!”

“I’m kidding, I’m kidding.”

“Geez.”

“I only have a tiny nipple fetish.”

“I’m going to punch you.”

“Please, daddy.”

John got punched in the gut but it was worth it for the horrified look on Jonesy’s face. He was still snickering when they walked back to their client, shook hands, and sealed the deal. The two bassists-turned-professional-strippers scurried back up to their room to get ready.

“It’ll be fun trying to see how far we can get away with this,” John reassured his friend as they went up the creaky, rickety elevator. “This is so fucking wild, man.”

--

“Are you even shuffling the damn cards?” one woman growled at the card dealer.

Keith was stacking all the chips he won into a pyramid to occupy himself. The other four players were pissed off, and getting more vicious against him and Bonzo. Both of them downed another drink. It was getting sort of boring. Keith didn’t seemed to be challenged. The only thing keeping it interesting was thinking of ways to use all the money they were going to win.

Suddenly, a sleek silhouette appeared in the basement doorway, and slowly slunk its way over to Keith’s table. Only when the figure appeared close enough to get under the light over their table, Keith’s jaw hung open.

Carla’s red manicured fingers snaked their way around one man’s shoulder, then shoved him out of his chair. She took his seat. “Bruce. Hit me.”

Keith sat up straight again. “Carla! You’re back to play.”

Bruce dealt the cards again. Carla placed a hefty bet that only Keith could match. “I’m here to win my money back.”

With a sophisticated fury, she won the next three rounds, the equivalent of hitting Keith with a one-two punch, plus one more.

“Geez, Keith, slow down,” Bonzo warned under his breath. Keith was astounded, but slightly in love with how Carla managed to knock him right back into his place, then light a cigarette like it was nothing. Keith swallowed quickly.

Carla kept betting high and Keith had no choice to match. This started putting a dent in his earnings, which made Bonzo nervous. Carla played fast, and she played dirty. She starved out one of the men, until he had nothing left to bet and then had to forfeit. A few rounds after that, another woman lost everything and walked out in shame.

Some of their avid female fans started drifting over to Carla’s side, lighting cigarettes for her, or brushing the hair off of her shoulders. But Carla kept staring Keith down, making him feel rather
Bonzo thought fast. He snapped his fingers at one of their waiters. “Garçon, get her a drink. Make sure she’s taken care of too.”

Carla ordered straight bourbon, and downed it without batting an eye. The drinks didn’t even seem to affect her all night, but at least it showed fellowship, right?

There was a particularly tense round and Keith was pinned under Carla’s intense gaze. She broke the look only to briefly shift her eyes to the other woman at their table. Keith didn’t get it. Carla shifted her eyes again, and then Keith thought to look over. The woman remained icy looking, but only subtly could you notice her grinding her teeth. Keith looked back at Carla and added more poker chips to the betting pot. Carla matched his addition, and Keith won. She somehow knew he had the winning hand and made sure he won more money. The whole thing was making Keith sweat.

Bonzo wasn’t happy about this either. He thought Keith was too blindly trusting of her. How did Keith know if she wasn’t going to just turn on them quickly and wipe them out? Bonzo crossed his arms and watched the game intently. He kept trying to give Keith hints, but now it seemed he only listened when Carla tapped her long red nails in Morse code, or wiggled her eyebrows or shifted her eyes. She was a trained cheater, that’s for sure. Within five rounds, she had helped Keith double his winnings. On the sixth round, she managed to convince Keith to bet half of his money. Not surprisingly, Carla won that round. And the next one. And the next one. She had starved out the other remaining players, and left Keith with only one quarter of his night’s earnings, swiftly, and with a self-satisfied smirk on her cherry red lips.

“Fuck!” Bonzo buried his face in his hands. “Keith, what the hell, man?”

Keith stammered, dumbfounded. “I—I don’t—how—“

“Alright, that’s enough,” Bonzo pulled Keith up roughly by the shoulder. His fancy coat was revoked, and all their free drinks and cigars were taken away. All their spectators were equally shocked. Bonzo took their remaining poker chips and cashed them in, playing it safe before they formally lost their reputation. Keith hung his head as they marched over to the men’s washroom. Bonzo left briefly to get their jackets, and just as he left the bathroom, Carla slunk in and locked the door behind her.

“Carla, this is the men’s—“

Carla moved in closer, her dark hair falling in waves over one eye. She looked really mysterious and sexy, and Keith was so distracted that he let her wrap an arm around his waist and pull him in closer. Her cold, hard fingernails slipped under his shirt and traced around his skin. Keith shivered.

The woman pulled up his shirt with a dramatic flourish. She quickly counted the stacks of money taped to his skin. “My, my, Mr. Barrington. Who knew you were packing that much?”

Keith swallowed quickly. “Yeah, that’s usually what girls tell me.”

Carla wrinkled her nose distastefully, but slid a teasing hand over his stomach and chest to distract him anyways. She purred, her thick Spanish accent making Keith weak in the knees. “I have a bit of a…desire.”

Keith nodded eagerly.

“You…and me…” she smiled, tracing a red fingernail down his jaw. “Tomorrow. Here. One last
game, just us. Double—“she slid a hand back down to the money “—or nothing.”

Keith stared, mouth agape. Carla leaned in to whisper in his ear, her hand sliding lower, past his stomach, past his belt, further down… “What do you say?”

“Yes. Of course.” He swallowed a few times, his mouth having suddenly gone dry.

“Good boy…” she cooed, giving him a bit of a squeeze. Bonzo came back with their jackets, knocking at the locked door.

“Keith, it’s me. Let me in.”

Carla unlocked the door, greeting Bonzo with a smile, and slinking out past him as if nothing had happened. But Bonzo saw Keith all red in the face and dumb looking. “Keith? Are you fucking kidding me?”

Keith combed the hair out of his eyes, clearing his throat quickly. He snatched his jacket back from Bonzo and they left discreetly, not wanting to confront their disappointed fans.

“Bonzo, we need to come back tomorrow,” Keith told him quietly as they jogged back up the three flights of stairs.

“Keith, I don’t know. I think your luck is starting to run out.”

“I need to, just one last game,” Keith pleaded.

“Did Carla sharing the bathroom with you have anything to do with this recent decision?”

“Oh, fuck off,” Keith grumbled. They walked down the street to their hotel in a grumpy silence.

--

“Thank you for taking care of me,” Roger blushed in between chocolate covered strawberries that Robert was feeding him, courtesy of room service. On the nightstand, the stolen glass dolphins watched peacefully over them.

“Anything for you, my love,” Robert cooed. “More champagne?”

Roger reached over for his glass on the nightstand and let Robert pour more. Some of the golden bubbles dribbled over the rim of the glass, over Roger’s fingers, and onto the white duvet under them. Robert, world renowned cheeky bastard, leaned forward and licked the spilled champagne off of Roger’s fingers. Roger shivered.

Robert was treating him like a king which he loved, although Roger was nervous. They had the hotel suite to themselves, and Roger was worried he would have to kiss Robert and end the whole fantasy.

“You look worried, darling,” Robert pouted. “Shall I run you a bubble bath to relax you?”

Roger felt shy. “Oh, don’t worry about me.”

“Come, my love. Let me rub your shoulders,” Robert insisted. They moved the tray of food aside and Robert turned around. Robert’s dainty fingers delicately massaged his back and shoulders, and it felt pretty damn nice. “I have something to ask you, by the way…”

“Mmm?” Roger sighed, his eyes closed in bliss as Robert expertly massaged him.

“I have one small request for my birthday tomorrow,” Robert purred. “You’re under no obligation,
but I would love if you participated.”

“Oh yeah? What’s that?”

“Well, I was hoping you and Pete would join Jimmy and I.”

“For dinner?” Roger sipped at his champagne.

“For a foursome.”

Roger subsequently choked on his champagne. Robert patted his back sympathetically. “Oh, love, is it your first one?”

“Oh, yeah, it would be.”

“You have absolutely nothing to worry about. Jimmy and I will take good care of you,” Robert kissed Roger’s cheek, then his jaw, then down his neck. “And Pete will be there in case you get nervous.”

“Is Pete doing it too?”

“I assume so. He never says no to Jimmy.”

Roger bit his lip. Maybe this was the closest he’d ever get to an orgy.

“I’d love if you joined us,” Robert purred. “I want you so badly.”

Roger blushed. He wanted to be wanted. Robert was so sexy, and he’d have Pete there with him, and he wouldn’t even mind if Jimmy touched him like that. Roger wasn’t usually adventurous like this, but these were his friends, and he trusted them…

Okay. I’ll do it.”

--

John and Jonesy had hurried into the designated probably-not-gay bedroom and rifled through their bags. They hadn’t packed with the intention of becoming strippers, and only had casual wear.

“Do you have a button-up?” Jonesy asked. They agreed to match again so they could undress at the same pace.

“No,” John frowned. He tossed more clothes out of his bag. “How about longsleeves?”


“Jeans are good,” John pulled out his best pair. “What about a plain white t-shirt? We keep it simple, and put in as little effort as possible. He’s going to pay us up front, after all.”

Jonesy pulled out a plain white t-shirt. He kept digging through his bag. “Fuck, what kind of underwear?”

“Wear a thong.”

“Fuck off.”

“Just borrow one of Robert’s.”
“That’s gross!” Jonesy cried, and John laughed. He luckily found his black silk briefs, which he dubbed his ‘get lucky’ pants. “What about these?”

“Sexy, he’ll love it,” John grinned. He pulled out his own ‘get lucky’ pants, which were a novelty pair of union jack briefs. “You like mine?”

“Good Lord. Why do you even have those?”

“I figured some American babe would appreciate the foreign novelty.”

They changed quickly, politely—although ironically—not looking at each other.

“My stomach’s gone all stubbly, should I shave it again?” John worried, pulling his shirt up to show Jonesy.

Jonesy inspected his skin closely. “You can hardly tell. Plus, the guy probably doesn’t have the best eyesight anymore. What about music?”

They had a small radio on the nightstand, and it took cassette tapes. Neither of them thought to bring any music with them on the trip.

“I think playing the radio would be tacky. I refuse to strip to a toothpaste commercial,” Jonesy wrinkled his nose.

John went to Keith’s bag, unzipping it and digging through. “Just as I thought. Keith always brings the weirdest shit.”

He tossed the cassette to Jonesy. It was labelled ‘Keith’s Mix’, with no actual song names written on it. “Well, I’ll take the chance. It’s better than nothing.”

“It’s time for the best bullshitting of our careers, my dear friend,” John gave him that devilish grin, and Jonesy got excited all over again. Grabbing the radio, they walked back to the elevator, trying to act casual despite harbouring such a thrilling, sexy secret. They took the creaky, rickety elevator another three floors up to where the old geezer’s room was.

John checked that the coast was clear, then unlocked the door and ushered Jonesy inside before shutting the heavy door behind them. The old man was standing by the window in a robe, and his gross liver-spotted legs were poking out like toothpicks.

“Ah! Gentlemen! So nice to see you. I just finished my bath here, I’m all ready,” the weird old man chuckled to himself, trying to make conversation as if they were here selling girl scout cookies. Jonesy felt a little awkward, so he took the portable radio and searched for a socket to plug it in to, while also snooping around for anything that might indicate he got off from murdering strippers.

“Uh, evening sir,” John had no idea how friendly strippers were supposed to be to their clients before the actual show. The old man shuffled around so slow that they had no idea what direction he was going in. “Erm, do you have the money?”

“Oh, yes! I had it sitting over here, but I got distracted because my watch went off and I had to take my meds, but I couldn’t find my darn glasses, my Jeremy always used to tell me…” John tuned him out, watching as the frail old man reached under the bed and slid out a suspicious-looking silver briefcase. He placed it on the bed, unlocked it, and pulled out a few stacks of money. The sight alone of all that cash got John quite excited.

“Thanks, mate, it’ll be worth every dollar,” John grinned as their client’s leathery hands passed him
the stacks of money. John practically drooled. He went over to Jonesy and hid the money behind the radio. With their backs to the old geezer, he whispered to his fellow colleague, “You ready?”

“Uh…” Jonesy’s eyes blew wide when he saw all the money. “Yeah. Okay, I’m ready. What’s the gameplan?”

“Dance on beat I guess, act coy like last time because it was real cute, and when in doubt, just follow my lead, yeah?”

Jonesy slid the cassette into the radio. “Got it.”

“Let’s be as ridiculous as possible and see how much we can get away with,” John winked. He turned back to look at the old man, who had just settled down on his four poster bed, legs outstretched, hands folded neatly on his gross old lap. “You ready there, mate?”

“All set!” he gave them a thumbs up, which was really grandfatherly and weird, but uplifting nonetheless. He then ruined the mood with, “Let’s see you beautiful boys up close…”

Jonesy took a deep breath and pressed play. The familiar opening to ‘Good Vibrations’ by the Beach Boys started playing and it took Jonesy every muscle in his body not to burst out laughing. John silently cursed Keith.

“Aahhh, I love the colourful clothes she wears…”

How the fuck do you dance sexily to the Beach Boys? John took a deep breath and tried to be as over-the-top as possible, because whatever he did onstage last time sure worked well.

“I hear the sound of a gentle word…”

He slid his hands down over his chest and stomach slowly, trying his hardest to contrast the chipper and pristine sound of the Beach Boys with dirty dancing. Behind him, Jonesy, who was a little more shy, tried to be alluring by combing his long flowing hair and licking his lips seductively.

“I’m pickin’ up good vibrations, she’s giving me excitations…”

John gave Jonesy a playful slap on the arse, simultaneously getting him to step forward some more and not leave John on his own. The two did some awkward shuffle-dancing which the old man seemed delighted by.

The five-part Beach Boys chorus exploded. “Goooooood goooood GOOOOOOD GOOD VIBRATIONS MMM BOP BOPBOP SHE’S GIVING ME EXCITATIONsMMM BOPP BOPB OP gooooodGOOD GOOOOOD GOOD VIBRATIONS…”

John and Jonesy plastered on big cheesy Beach Boys smiles and danced through the cringiest moment of their lives. John tried to be a bit more exciting. He pulled off his shirt and tossed it to the side, then climbed onto the bed. He grabbed one of the bed posts and hooked a leg around it. He couldn’t quite swing around it like a pole dancer but he tried anyways, and he grinded against it a bit, then leaned back with a dramatic swing of his arm. The geezer was at least interested, as he watched now with a mouth agape. John’s foot on the bed was slowly slipping against the bedsheets and he was about to fall backwards. “Fuck, Jonesy, uh…”

“SHE’S GIVING ME EXCITATIONS, MMM BOP BOP…”

Jonesy hurried over and wrapped his arms around John’s middle and awkwardly helped him down. They quickly recovered into Jonesy giving John an erotic back hug and rubbing his hands over his
chest, then down his sides, and down John’s thighs. They noticed the old man liked it best when they interacted with each other.

There was a brief moment of relief when Good Vibrations died down and they anticipated a better song to follow next. Jonesy almost lost his shit when Good Vibrations started up again. ‘Keith’s Mix’ was literally just Good Vibrations repeating over and over again.

Jonesy tried to do that sexy guy thing where he effortlessly tugged his t-shirt off by the back of the neck, but his shirt was too fitted and he got stuck halfway, his face covered and his arms flailing. John had to intervene and free him in an even sexier way. John pulled his shirt off and tossed it aside, but held Jonesy close around the waist and even leaned in close to Jonesy’s face—to tease the old geezer, of course.

They danced through another round of Good Vibrations before they worked on their trousers. They reused some old moves, and Jonesy knelt down in front of John and unbuttoned his jeans for him. There was something about the way he looked up at John while he slowly pulled down his zipper that really, really distracted John. He forced himself to think of the Beach Boys to keep his mind clean.

The old man was really getting into it, too. He leaned forward, smiling so wide you could see the pinks of his dentures. Jonesy felt in charge, even on his knees. He slowly pulled John’s jeans down, locking eyes with him the whole time. He slid a hand up John’s thigh, boldly across the obvious bulge, and up his stomach again. John offered a hand and helped him stand up, then modelled the union jack cheekily for their client.

Good Vibrations died down and started up again. John hooked his fingers through the belt loops of Jonesy’s jeans and pulled his hips against John’s own. John slid his hands around Jonesy’s waist and down to his arse, giving it a squeeze. John forgot about the weird old pervert watching them the whole time and got a little carried away. But it was all pretend, right? Because John was a really good actor, he pushed Jonesy up against the wall and practically tore off his jeans. And Jonesy was so good at improvisation, he even arched his hips against John’s, surprising both of them with that damn good sensation.

John would have gone a bit too far if their client hadn’t distracted them by reaching into his bedside table. The old man cleared his throat, and offered a bottle of massage oil to them with a perverted smile. “Now, I want Alex to rub this on Derek.”

John took a moment to remember who was who. He looked over at Jonesy first to see if he was okay with it. Jonesy just looked like a deer in the headlights. But they were both in the moment, and it was getting sorta fun…

“Give us an extra fifty,” John ordered.

The old man reached back into his nightstand and took out a hundred dollar bill casually like it a tissue, and waved it at him. “Come and get it.”

John broke away from Jonesy and crawled onto the bed seductively, grabbing the hundred dollar bill from their client with his teeth. John took the bottle and waved Jonesy over, who crawled onto the bed with him. John stuffed the bill into his boxers, then sat back and pulled Jonesy on top of him to straddle his lap, like all platonic friends do. They sat at the foot of the bed, leaving a few feet of room between them and their client to feel comfortable.

Good Vibrations died away just as they were starting to enjoy it, but to everyone’s surprise, a shitty recording of Keith playing the drums started. John bit his tongue hard, trying not to laugh. The
seven-minute long erratic drum solo was even less erotic than the Beach Boys, oddly enough.

The old geezer didn’t seem to notice, thankfully. They didn’t want to get in trouble and lose their money. In fact, he was almost actually drooling in anticipation. Jonesy wondered if that was a symptom of a stroke.

John opened the bottle of oil and Jonesy got settled on his lap. They fit surprisingly well together like that. John let some pour slowly down Jonesy’s chest because he had no clue what he was doing but it sorta looked hot.

John gave his friend a look that said, sorry if this is awkward, but to be fair, he’s giving us enough money to buy a small country.

Jonesy gave him a look that said, whatever, I’m a martyr for my art. Do what you must.

John didn’t want to cross any boundaries, but he trusted Jonesy to let him know if he was uncomfortable. He reached out and slid his hands all over Jonesy’s chest. Was he supposed to massage the oil into his skin? Does it even work like that? Or was he supposed to be doing this on his back like a professional masseuse? He didn’t dare ask the old man what he wanted in case it got weirder, and he especially didn’t want to look unprofessional.

They politely ignored the old man starting to grope himself over his robe. John and Jonesy looked at each other the whole time, which was comforting. They were pretty smart not to do this shit alone. On the recording, Keith’s drumming stopped abruptly. Faintly, they heard Pete in the background yelling at Keith to stop recording a drum solo and wash the damn dishes. The recording stopped, and the tape started over again with Good Vibrations. Jonesy was going red in the face from trying so hard not to laugh.

The two were thankful that at least the old man wasn’t interested in them being fully naked, but it was getting kind of cold and John’s back was getting a bit stiff, and the oil was sticky, and John realized he didn’t even know when to end the session. They only had their underwear to strip out of and that was it.

“Good….” The old man’s raspy voice creaked from the other end of the bed. “Now, I want the pretty blond one to touch himself…”

Jonesy tensed up. “Uh, no thanks.”

“I’ll pay you another—“

“He said no,” John told him firmly, resting his hands on Jonesy’s thighs. They had to think of a way to get out of there.

“I didn’t pay you two that much just to dance around,” the old man’s face tightened up, and John got very worried. He slowly eased Jonesy off his lap in case they had to make a quick escape to save their lives.

At this point, John will always tell people this is the moment when he actually believed God existed. There was a rather violent knock at the door. The old man’s face drained, not because he was having a stroke, but because he was in trouble. Score.

Whoever was at the door knocked again, getting quite impatient. A gruff voice yelled, “Scott, open this fucking door. We’ve come to collect what you owe us.”

Jonesy froze, panicking already. John carefully watched as the old man slowly slid off the bed and shuffled to the door. John got off the bed too and stopped the music.
“Sorry, fellows, you’ve, um, got the wrong room,” the nasty old man called back.

“Shut the fuck up,” the other guy yelled back, and started kicking at the door. John took Jonesy’s hand and pulled him into the bathroom, locking the door behind them. They listened closely as the front door was broken open.

“Gentlemen, please, I said I’d pay you back next week,” the old man tried to bargain. It sounded like three men busted in the place and started tearing things apart, searching for something. Everyone was yelling back and forth, and luckily no one thought to check the bathroom.

“This is fucking wild,” John whispered, laughing at how incredulous the situation was. “It’s just like in the movies!”

Outside, the yelling continued. “Where’s the fucking coke, man? If you can’t pay us for it, we’re taking it all back.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I couldn’t find anyone to sell it to—“

“You’re in the middle of Las Vegas! People put that shit in their coffee every morning!”

John whispered back to Jonesy, a bit too excited considering the potential danger they were in. “Holy shit. This is the best moment of my life.”

There was more yelling about money and empty threats and broken promises. John puttered around the bathroom, finding a clean face cloth and getting it damp with warm water. He silently started dabbing it against Jonesy’s chest and back, cleaning that horrid smelling massage oil off of him. Jonesy was surprised by the gentle touch, which, considering the context, was unusually endearing. It was such a loving moment even if they were on a stranger’s bathroom floor in their underwear with a drugs bust going on outside. John taking care of him like that was so strangely intimate that it made Jonesy dizzy.

John draped one of the fuzzy hotel bath towels around Jonesy’s shoulders to keep him warm, and they pressed their ears against the door to listen to everything going on outside. They didn’t hear the telltale click of guns, or any punching, which was good. The weird old man tried really hard to save his own ass, which made the two bassists pity him a little more.

“Alright, you’re coming with us. You can apologize to the boss in person,” one gruff man said. They heard sounds of struggling, and John figured they were grabbing him and dragging him back over to the door.

“Please, no, I’m in my bathrobe!”

“Not my problem.”

They heard the deadbolt unlock and the front door open, and the clatter of that metallic suitcase clang against the door. The two of them waited a few seconds when the room was empty, then John slowly opened the bathroom door and pop his head out. The coast was clear. He ushered Jonesy out.

“Literally, holy fuck,” Jonesy whispered, still a bit paranoid that someone else was going to burst in.

John found their clothes and they got dressed quickly. “I would have never thought that an old geezer like that would, one, be that pervy, and two, sell cocaine in between private stripper shows.”

“Who gets off on rubbing slimy oil on people? What does that accomplish?” Jonesy frowned, slipping his shirt on. “One person is cold and sticky and one person has to sit there rubbing the oil
and everyone’s depressed.”

John unplugged the radio. “So I take it you won’t be getting oil rubbed on you again anytime soon?”

“Certainly not in a sexual context,” Jonesy put his shoes on. “And I’ll never listen to The Beach Boys the same ever again.”

John started laughing, and Jonesy laughed too, until they were practically in hysterics because the whole situation was so goddamn absurd. They collected their cash and made their way back to the creaky elevator. John didn’t even steal anything as a way of thanking God for that divine intervention.

John pressed the button for their floor and the lights flickered briefly before the elevator moved with a slow groan. “That was the easiest money I’ve ever made in my life. I think I’ll quit music and keep stripping in Las Vegas.”

Jonesy nodded. “I mean, we get undressed twice a day anyways, why not make some extra cash while doing it?”

“See? You get me.”

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That night progressed quickly. All eight of them went out to get shitty American fast food and prowled the nightlife scene together, but now there was more assorted tensions than before. Keith and Bonzo were sort of pissed at each other but respected one another too much to have a senseless fight over it, so Keith went back to John. John was happy to have his old friend back too goof around with, but that meant Jonesy was jealous for a reason he couldn’t quite pinpoint why. He tried to get some of John’s divided attention but otherwise brooded with Bonzo.

“John and I are much closer now than he is with Keith, this isn’t fair,” Jonesy muttered. “Why doesn’t he want to walk beside me on the sidewalk in the same general direction?”

“Yeah, well, Keith gets distracted any time someone prettier and more charming comes along,” Bonzo grumbled. “So I know how you feel. You do so much for men and they can’t even return that loyalty.”

“Men are terrible.”

“You can say that again.”

“I hate men. Mainly because I’m heterosexual.”

“I know you say that a lot, but I still need clarification,” Bonzo asked him. “Are you and John fucking?”

Jonesy sighed. “It’s so much more than that.”

Pete was now afraid that if he so much as looked at Jimmy, Jimmy would interpret that as love, and Pete didn’t want that. Probably. Maybe? So Pete stayed close to Roger, and Roger was glued to Robert’s side, and Robert kept a possessive arm around him all night, and Jimmy struggled to decide who he wanted to spend time with, Robert or Pete?

Robert wasn’t as paranoid about gay shit in public like everyone else was, and to be fair, they only got away with it because mostly everyone thought Roger and Robert were girls from behind. They even got catcalled on the streets, to which Robert interpreted it as his fans throwing praises, and Roger took it way too personally and thought it was a personalized and heartfelt compliment and not sexual harassment.

The eight of them decided to go to an infamous casino on the strip and play old fashioned slot machines. John and Keith flocked to the bar first, and Jonesy and Bonham went to go exchange suspicious amounts of money into change, neither of them asking nor telling where they got all that money from. Pete spotted a row of novelty pinball machines against the wall and got a boner. Jimmy, Roger, and Robert tried their luck at one machine.
Roger loved having the two other men dote on him. It was like he was in the middle of a big loving sandwich. If they were this kind to him now, he could hardly imagine what it would be like when they were fucking each other madly tomorrow.

“It’s on my bucket list to win money at one of these games,” Roger admitted shyly. He hoped they wouldn’t find him childish.

Robert stroked the hair away from his ear. “We’ll stay until you win, my love.”

“First round’s on me,” Jimmy smiled and slid a few coins into the machine. “Good luck.”

Roger pulled the ridiculous big lever and the numbers spun round and round wildly. For his first shot, he got pretty close to winning, but not quite. The three of them laughed anyways, and Jimmy placed a loving hand on Roger’s back which made him blush.

A few rows away, Jonesy frowned as he lost another ten dollars to the stupid goddamned machine. “It’s cursed, Bonzo. I swear.”

Bonzo was getting all his frustration out on kicking the machine before he got in trouble by a staff member. “This is just a government conspiracy.”

They decided to give it a break for a bit. Jonesy tried his luck again and went to go sit with John at the bar. Bonzo reluctantly sat next to Keith too, only because it was the one seat available.

John was already tipsy and feeling quite happy with how the events of the day came about. When he saw his pretty partner in crime appear beside him, he didn’t think twice about wrapping an arm around him and leaning in close to whisper in his ear, teasing. “My darling husband, Alex, how are you?”

Jonesy felt a nervous shiver go through him, but kept bantering nonetheless. “You’re Alex, I’m Derek.”

“Ah, fuck, forgive me, my love,” John gave him that cheeky grin. “I hardly know who I am anymore.”

“Your drinking is tearing this marriage apart,” Jonesy felt bold and took John’s glass from him, stealing a sip.

“Oi!” John grabbed it back and Jonesy laughed.

Keith cleared his throat. “Bonzo? Can I get you something to drink? I feel bad for snapping at you earlier.”

Bonzo frowned. “Yeah, alright. I’ll have what you’re having. I need to unwind a bit.”

“Are we good?”

“Yeah, I mean, I think you should ease off on the cards for a bit. I want to go home with some nice money, you know?”

“One more game, Bonzo, then I’m done,” Keith fretted. “I just need to go back one more time tomorrow.”

“Why do you trust her instead of me?” Bonzo asked quietly.

“Because she’s got tits, my friend, and I am weak,” Keith placed an arm on his shoulder
reassuringly. “I still trust you with my life, but I think she knows a bit more about cards than you do.”

“Men are despicable,” Bonzo muttered into the froth of his beer.

Across the room, Pete had his hands spread out over the glass of the pinball machine. He closed his eyes and felt the vibrations. The pinball machine was communicating to him. It called to him. And Pete answered. It was telling him filthy, unspeakable things.

Robert was extra delighted because he had won five dollars at a machine on his second try. Roger eventually won fifteen dollars after a million tries, and was rewarded with a kiss on the cheek from both boys. Jimmy insisted he didn’t want to try, and the three of them joined their friends at the bar.

There was a beautiful dark haired woman a few seats away giving Roger that familiar look, and Roger was elated. Now there were a grand total of four people who wanted to have sex with him. Maybe America wasn’t so bad after all!

Roger wouldn’t have pursued the woman because he was remaining faithful to Robert who was probably his soulmate, but when Robert and Jimmy were distracted, Roger gestured her over and they started chatting. She was very forward and very flirtatious with him, and Roger just basked in the attention.

Pete found himself wandering in a daze through all the rows of bright flashing machines, emotionally shaken by his experience with the novelty pinball machine in the back corner. He found his friends and oriented himself, shaking off the hazy feeling in his mind that no other drug could give him.

He noticed Roger talking to a woman and winced inwardly. He hated to be that guy, but went over to cockblock the whole situation.

“Hey, Rog,” Pete slid right in between the two, patting his friend on the shoulder. “It’s time to take your gonorrhea medicine there, pal.”

The woman nearly choked on her drink. She gave Roger a dirty look, picked up her purse, and left.

“Pete, what the hell?” Roger wailed. “We were having a nice conversation! She seemed to genuinely like me.”

“Roger, that was a prostitute.”

“No she wasn’t! She was just very friendly and confident in her sexuality.”

“Roger, that was literally a prostitute, I could tell from a mile away,” Pete pat him on the shoulder, then stole a sip of his beer. “I’m sorry, mate.”

Roger frowned. “I thought she actually liked me. But I guess that explains why she kept telling me ‘two hundred’.”

“She was telling you ‘two hundred’ and you didn’t even connect the dots?” Pete asked.

“It’s a free country. I’m not one to judge, Pete.”

The group didn’t stay very late, and Robert kept insisting that he had a lot of fun planned for his birthday tomorrow. Pete and Roger exchanged knowing looks. They walked in a clump back to their hotel, the raw desert heat turned into a cool, stale night. Robert was being affectionate and kept kissing everyone on the cheek, and always begging Roger for their special kiss. Even Jimmy felt
bold and held hands with Pete as they walked back through the dark night, and Pete didn’t even mind.

Jonesy and John walked side by side, still a little nervous and modest respectively. John slowed down for a moment, and pointed to a raccoon crawling quickly across some grass on the sidewalk beside them with a French fry in his mouth. “Hey, Keith, look! It’s your son!”


Everyone else burst out laughing, scaring the poor raccoon off. Pete hooked an arm around Keith’s shoulders. “Oh, you poor thing, having to watch yet another raccoon scurry off to a better place…”

The eight of them were giddy with laughter as they made their way back to the relieving warmth of their hotel and jammed in to the rickety elevator. Jimmy and Pete used the kitchenette to make tea for everyone. Pete was relaxing around him again as Jimmy went back to being flirtatious in anticipation for the next day. Roger relaxed on the couch in the common area, not yet ready to retire for the night. Robert joined him as well, pointing to Roger’s bulge. “Is this seat taken?”

In the second bedroom, John and Jonesy changed into their pyjamas, and went into the bathroom to brush their teeth together. John kept staring at Jonesy in the mirror and Jonesy would catch his eye then look away quickly. While he was brushing, John started humming the bassline to Good Vibrations.

“Don’t you dare…” Jonesy warned with a mouthful of froth.

John spit into the sink and rinsed his mouth. “I’m pickin’ up good vibrations, she’s givin’ me excitations…”

“Stop!” Jonesy was giggling.

On the other side of the bathroom door, Bonzo picked up with the ‘mmm bop bop bop’. Like a screeching cat, Keith belted out, “Goooooooood gooooood GOOD good VIBRATIONS.”

“MMM BOP BOP, MMM BOP BOP.”

“She’s givin’ me excitations,” John winked at Jonesy. Jonesy pretended to seductively pull up his shirt, and the two bassists dissolved into giggles all over again.

In the common area, Jimmy, Roger, Robert and Pete curled up together on the couch with their warm cups of tea. Robert leaned against Pete and had his legs in Roger’s lap. Jimmy had an arm around Roger and Roger could see why Pete liked him so much—he had a very calming and caring presence to him. Robert was being warm and affectionate to Pete, giving him little kisses on the cheek and holding his hand. Who knew that a foursome could bring them all together to live in harmony? The competition had dissipated and everyone could relax again. World peace could be achieved.

In the second bedroom, Keith curled up in bed, wearing the big sweatshirt to hide the bulginess of the money he was hiding. He kept his arms folded over his stomach, starting to get very paranoid that his friends would notice and get him in trouble, or try and steal his money, or even worse...

Bonzo tried to get Keith to relax so the both of them could rest, and slept next to him again to reassure him that he was protected. John stretched out next to Keith, not suspecting a thing, and feeling quite satisfied every time he remembered the cash they earned today kept safely in Jonesy’s bag. And Jonesy felt satisfied about a lot of things, and a lot more confident, too. They had basically
cheated an old perverted man out of a ton of cash and left him to be busted for cocaine. He felt a little bold, so he moved in once inch closer to John than he did the night before.

In the designated openly-gay room, Robert flopped on his back in the middle of the mattress, stretched out in his t-shirt and pyjama trousers like he was doing snow angels. Roger changed into his pyjamas as well and leapt on the bed, curling right up against Robert. Jimmy took his other side, and Pete climbed on next to Roger and wrapped his arm around them all as much as he could. It didn’t stay cute for long, and they all got a little handsy instead of settling in to sleep.

“I really can’t wait until tomorrow,” Pete murmured, stroking a lazy hand along Roger’s thigh. “I just want to fast forward to when we wake up and we get the other four out of here.”

Robert slipped a hand under Roger’s shirt, making him giggle. “There’s no way I can focus on sleeping right now.”

Jimmy curled around Robert, spooning him. “Just a few more hours, love.”

On the other side of the wall, Jonesy and John were whispering to each other quietly, as the drummers had already fallen asleep.

“We’re going to get kicked out of the room tomorrow anyways, let’s have one last dance,” John whispered.

“I didn’t realize how well Alex and Daniel were received,” Jonesy whispered back. “We’re like celebrities, just for being a little naked.”

“My name is Derek, you bitch.”

“Wait, I thought you were Alex?”

“Oh, right,” the two struggled to keep their laughter in. John grinned. “If we do another show tomorrow, we’ll probably have enough money to buy our own island or something.”

Jonesy rolled on his back, putting an arm behind his head. “I’ve always wanted an island.”

“What would you name it?” John asked. “Probably something about being heterosexual, I assume?”

Jonesy started giggling. “‘Ladies and gentlemen, the plane will now be making its descent onto ‘I’m Probably Not Gay’ Island, please stow away all your personal belongings…”’

John snorted.

Beside them, Keith’s eyes popped open and he woke up in a cold sweat. “Bonzo…Bonzo!”

“What?” Bonzo whispered back, still half asleep.

“I need to go back. We need to try again.”

“Keith, no one will be there. Go to sleep.”

“I could just make a few extra hundred dollars, and those spectators would know we’re back in power again, and…”

Bonzo popped one eye open. “Look, we’ll go back tomorrow night, but you know the focus is going to be on Robert tomorrow. We need to be good friends to him and celebrate all day.”
Keith sighed, trying to relax himself. “Right. You’re right. Friends first. And then money.”

—

At six in the morning, John nudged everyone awake. Their suite was dead quiet and they could be sure no gay shit was going on in the other room. The two bassists and the two drummers crept over to the other bedroom. On a silent count of three, Keith kicked the door open, and they all burst in.

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY ROBERT!” They all shouted, and Keith ran and jumped on the bed, the others piling on top after him.

“Good Lord—“ Robert jolted upright at all the commotion but burst out laughing when Keith landed on top of him. Roger was startled and Pete groggily woke up, laughing as John jumped on the bed and their heads collided. Little Jonesy bounced and nearly fell off, but Jimmy hooked an arm around his waist and saved him. All eight grown men rearranged themselves to fit side by side on one single bed, with Keith insisting that they all cuddle. John and Jonesy were on either end of the bed, practically slipping off the mattress. They caught each other’s eye and started laughing.

“Well, thank you everyone,” Robert smiled dreamily, snuggling in to his friends. “That was a nice surprise.”

John reached over and found all the hotel leaflets in the bedside drawer, among other shocking personal items. He pulled the room phone into his lap and browsed the room service menu. “What do you guys want for breakfast? Jonesy and I will pay.”

“You sound like you’re a married couple,” Pete teased, and John elbowed him in the side.

“Are you sure?” Jimmy asked, looking concerned. “I can split the cost, it’s no problem.”

“We’ll take care of it, don’t worry,” Jonesy reassured him.

“I just want, like, a big fucking plate of bacon and nothing else,” Keith mumbled, half asleep.

“Make that two big fucking plates of bacon,” Bonzo chimed in.

“Could you see if they have chocolate milk, please?” Roger asked John quietly, tugging at his sleeves.

“No one is getting an entire plate of bacon, that’s ungodly,” Pete rolled his eyes. “I would like eggs, though.”

“Let them eat bacon!” Robert declared. “Today is a national celebration and all rules go out the window. Anything goes.”

”’Bout time, we can finally murder Pete,” John muttered. Everyone laughed, Jonesy a bit too loudly.

“Pass the menu here,” Jimmy asked, and John reached over to hand it to him. Jimmy opened it and he and Robert looked through.

“This one says its fit for a king,” Robert’s eyes widened. “That’s me!”

“We’ll share that, then,” Jimmy smiled and handed the menu back.

“Shall I ring the order in?” John asked. “We can get it delivered in a few hours. I want to go back to sleep.”
It was unanimously agreed on. John placed the order, and all eight of them struggled to get comfy and go back to sleep.

“It’s…ah, a bit cozy with all eight of us, isn’t it?” Jimmy said quietly.

“We’re not leaving,” Keith said.

“Yeah, I thought so,” Jimmy chuckled and closed his eyes again.

Room service woke them up a few hours later at a normal functioning human time. Everyone’s favourite bassists left the cozy warmth of the bed to go get the food and pay for it with the secret money they earned. They decided that they should all sit cross legged on the bed and keep the plates of food in the middle of the mattress, and everyone just have at it.

“So, what’s the plan for today?” Keith asked between mouthfuls of bacon.

“Well,” Robert sipped on some tea. “Jimmy, Roger, Pete and I are going to stay behind and—“

Jonesy held up a hand. “Please spare us all of that mental image and skip that part.”

Pete snickered.

“I don’t get it,” Bonzo said quietly.

John leaned over. “Well son, when four men love each other very much…”

Jimmy continued. “I made reservations for a dinner theatre thing downstairs, Robert is going through a bit of a dinner theatre phase.”

“It’s just so magical!” Robert’s eyes went all big and dreamy. “The thrill of the theatre mixed with the mystery of eating in a dark room…where’s your fork? What kind of salad is this? Who murdered who onstage? It’s the epitome of excitement.”

“And then?” Keith asked, sincerely hoping there would be alcohol or strippers somewhere in this plan.

Robert paused, chewing on a strawberry thoughtfully. “To be quiet honest, I didn’t plan that far. I was sort of only focused on getting laid.”

Everyone nodded, understanding.

“We’ll see where things go after dinner,” Jimmy smiled.

To Pete, the morning was dragging on, and his mind was definitely not on breakfast. He was enjoying his time with his friends, but he really wanted to enjoy his time with his friends. He ate a banana to pass the time, but he’d much rather eat a different kind of banana. You get the idea.

The other four took their sweet time, knowing exactly what they were delaying.

Keith rolled on his back, regretting eating a big fucking plate of bacon already. Robert stroked his hair comfortably. Pete and Roger cleaned up all dishes and wheeled the cart back out into the hallway. Everyone else was vegged out on the bed, lazily digesting and enjoying their lie-in.

Pete and Roger came back in, standing awkwardly by the bed.

“So, um…” Pete scratched the back of his head.
“John, didn’t you say you were going to, uh, leave?” Roger offered politely. “Like, now?”

John scrunched his eyebrows together, playing dumb. “Wait, did I say that? Jonesy, do you remember me saying that?”

“Quite the opposite, actually,” Jonesy played along. “You said you were going to stay inside all day and talk to Robert.”

“Oh no, no thanks,” Robert said, and everyone laughed.

Keith slowly sat up, a hand over his stomach. “I have so many regrets.”

Bonzo helped Keith up, wrapping an arm around his shoulders as they hobbled out of the room. “I feel like we need to eat seven million raw vegetables to even out all that bacon.”

John and Jonesy eventually left as well to get dressed. Pete claimed the shower first, then Roger took his, then Robert and Jimmy shared to ‘save water’. While they were waiting, Pete and Roger got dressed and wandered to the kitchenette to make tea to pass some time.

John and Jonesy emerged, heading for the door. John waved goodbye. “We’re going to go to the… yeah. Bye.”

“That sounds suspicious,” Pete gave John a look.

“Have fun, you two!” Roger beamed.

Keith and Bonzo came out a few minutes after. Keith threw a handful of condoms at Pete, laughing. “Have fuuuuuun, be saaaaaafe, leave room for Jeeeesuuuuuuus…”

“Get outta here,” Pete swatted Keith away, the two of them laughing. The two drummers took their leave, going for a much-needed digestive stroll.

Roger and Pete leaned against the counter, less than patiently waiting for the others to finish in the shower.

“Are you nervous?” Roger asked Pete quietly.

“Only a little bit, but I’m more excited than anything,” Pete admitted, sipping his tea. “It’s almost too good to be true.”

“I feel a little shy just thinking about it,” Roger blushed. “I’ve never done anything that… unconventional.”

“I was genuinely surprised you agreed to do this,” Pete poked Roger in the side. “Aren’t you a little too vanilla for this?”

“Aren’t you a little…dumb? To open your mouth? Ever?” Roger retorted.

“Nice one.”

“Really?”

“No. Not at all.”

They held a straight face for a few seconds before bursting into laughter, getting all their nervous giggles out. Pete put his tea cup aside and buried his face in his hands, blushing. “I’m about to get
fucked by my three favourite people at the same time. Dreams really do come true.”

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Keith and Bonzo walked through the hotel for a while, exploring. Bonzo wanted to keep Keith distracted so he wouldn’t think about going back to playing cards. Keith absentmindedly clutched at the wads of money taped to his stomach, which was irritating his skin, but he was increasingly paranoid that someone was going to suspect something amiss and get him in trouble.

Off of the lobby, they discovered a whole other section of the hotel they had never noticed before. They found where the pool was, and a big ballroom, and a theatre.

“Oh, neat,” Bonzo looked over the event listings. “Do you think this is where we’re having dinner tonight?”

Keith walked around the doorman and found a sign that advertised the show coming up:

HOT BLONDS THIS WAY!
$5 COVER
TOPLESS DANCING AND CABARET SHOW
CHEAP DRINKS, $3 BEER

Bonzo joined him. “Holy shit.”

“My dear friend, do you fancy contributing to the local economy?” Keith asked, slipping into his posh accent.

“Oh, I’d love to support local artists,” Bonzo grinned.

Keith turned to the wall and awkwardly tried to get a wad of money unstuck from under his shirt. He gave Bonzo half and slipped the other half in his pocket. Without hesitation, they paid their cover and walked right in.

The theatre had a bar at the back, other tables and chairs up closer to the stage, and a small band at the corner by the stage. There was a band playing and a full audience of men, who were already getting excited. It seemed the show was about to start. The two drummers elbowed their way to the front, and managed to find two empty chairs close to the middle of the stage.

A waiter came by and took their drink order. Keith and Bonzo settled back and watched as the lights dimmed and the band started playing louder. The curtains were pulled open and the dancers came onstage and suddenly they realized they were in the absolutely wrongest place possible.

There were three lines of dancers that came out, except not the blonds they were expecting. The dancers were very clearly masculine men, dressed in goofy blond wigs, bedazzled costumes, stockings and high heels.

Bonzo and Keith started to laugh, because that shit was funny, right? Except all the other men around them were like, really into it. They were cheering and waving money around already.

The lines of dancers did big showy kicks and jazz hands and whatever, and then broke off to do sexier dancing with big feather boas. Keith had a ball watching all those men acting feminine. The dancers were quite handsome, even if they had makeup all over them. Although, one dancer caught his eye at the back of the stage.

Keith leaned over to shout to Bonzo over the music. “You know what’s hilarious? That guy in the
back row in the centre looks kinda like John, doesn’t it?”

Bonzo snorted. “I sort of see it, I think they have the same nose.”

“Oh, god, imagine if John actually had legs like that…” Keith laughed, and then took a sip of his drink. The music changed to something sexy and with more pomp.

There was a bit of a blunder onstage and one klutzy dancer accidentally collided with another one, and his goofy blond wig flew off.

Bonzo and Keith’s jaws dropped.

“There’s no fucking way.”

“Dude, it totally is.”

“I don’t believe it.”

“Oh my god.”

They watched as John Paul Jones quickly put his dumb wig back on and stepped back in line, exchanging a quick look with none other than the John Entwistle look alike…

A few of the dancers walked down the stairs at the centre of the stage and into the audience, taking money in exchange for a little dance. Keith took Bonzo’s hand and pulled him right to the front of the stage. They watched as the two dancers walked down into the audience. Up close, they realized it was undoubtedly their bassists.

Bonzo hunched over, laughing hysterically. Keith sat on an empty chair, legs splayed open.

“Yoohoo! Over here, boys!”

John and Jonesy recognized them instantly, looking absolutely horrified. Bonzo was laughing so hard that tears started welling up in his eyes.

Keith took out a few hundred dollar bills and held them between his teeth. John sauntered over, his legs looking a hundred times nicer in thigh high stockings and high heels (which surprisingly weren’t that hard to walk in). John leaned in and took the money from John’s mouth with his own, their lips briefly brushing. In exchange, John turned around and gave him a teasing lap dance. Everyone around them on the floor, especially his friends, were quite surprised with 1. How John was suspiciously good at giving lap dances and 2. How good John looked in women’s makeup.

Of all the lap dances Keith had received, this one was definitely noteworthy. He had a feeling John had done this before which was thrilling to think about. Keith gave John a smack on the ass and John gave him a big kiss on the cheek, then slipped his earnings in his top and moved on to the next eager audience member.

Jonesy felt bashful and shied away from his friends, but they watched as he teased other audience members, or kicked his stockinged legs up on the bar tables and let some lucky men touch. Easy as anything, they collected money simply for being sexy and flirty, then made their way back up onstage and then exited offstage. Keith and Bonzo clutched at each other, laughing like mad. The people beside them glared.

“But promise me we’ll never let them live this down,” Bonzo wiped tears from his eyes.

Keith clutched his stomach. “I swear on my life.”
the next chapter will be the foursome and nothing else, so skip it if that's not your thing, but i know you'll be there anyways >:^)
Pete tried to be casual as he casually walked into the bedroom to have casual sex casually with three of his friends, not like group sex was something wild he had been fantasizing about since he discovered what sex was as a teenager. It was all super casual. Even Roger was being casual. He wasn’t nervous one bit, and especially not nervous about messing up or saying something stupid or being generally terrible at sex, even though it was his second favourite activity in the world. Yeah, it was all very casual.

Robert was already relaxing on the bed. His hair, freshly washed, was tight with curls. He wore only a kimono style robe, the sash tied loosely over his flat stomach, and those distractingly tight jeans they were all so fond of. Jimmy put a bag on the bed, and was digging around through it. He frowned, unable to find what he was looking for. Pete watched as he started to pull out ties, ropes, a ball gag, a blindfold, a whip, a double-ended vibrating dildo, paddles, clamps, handcuffs, and various plugs.

Pete watched his life flash before his eyes. He cleared his throat quickly. “Um.”

“Ah, there it is,” Jimmy smiled. At the very bottom of the bag was a bottle of lube, which he put on the nightstand. He packed everything else back in, zipped up the bag, and put it away. Pete wiped the sweat from off his brow.

“Wine, gentlemen?” Robert smiled, reaching into the ice bucket sitting on the nightstand. He popped the bottle open with a corkscrew resting nearby, handed out glasses, and poured red wine for everyone. Pete and Roger sat at the foot of the bed.

“Thank you, darling,” Roger said, grateful for something to steady his nerves. He was a bit worried that he would do something wrong in front of everyone, or be too awkward, or…

Jimmy sat on the bed next to Robert. “Now, we’ll get the boring stuff out of the way first. There’s only one rule, and that’s to say something if you’re uncomfortable. There’ll be no hard feelings so you have nothing to worry about.”

Robert wrapped an arm around Jimmy, elegantly sipping at his wine. He grinned devilishly. “Actually, there’s a second rule. I get special priority because it’s my birthday.”

“We’ll spoil you rotten,” Pete assured him with a wink.

They chatted aimlessly, pulling jokes and sharing awkward sex stories they could all laugh about. The wine loosened everyone up and made them a bit more warm and affectionate. Eventually, they finished a few glasses of wine each and then put the glasses aside. Pete leaned back against the footboard, and let Roger sit between his legs and lean back against him. He knew the smaller man
was still a little nervous with performance anxiety, so Pete wrapped his arms around Roger’s stomach and cuddled him.

Jimmy started playfully kissing Robert’s neck. The two giggled, getting handsy like teenagers.

“Oh, Jim Jam…” Robert sighed as Jimmy started combing through his long, curly hair.

“My precious moon child,” Jimmy murmured.

“Oh, Jimbo, squeeze my lemon, I want you so badly…”

“Anything for you, my angel dust porcelain baby…”

“You beautiful cock demon…”

Fucking hippies. Pete nearly lost his shit. Roger turned to look at Pete, covering his mouth quickly before they both started laughing.

SHUT UP, Roger mouthed to him. Roger turned back around and Pete buried his face in the back of Roger’s curls, trying not to laugh. He couldn’t wait to tell John later.

After awkward pet names, and giddy fumbling, the mood in the room gradually shifted into something much more serious, and much more sensual. The two watched as Jimmy and Robert fluidly moved together. Jimmy pulled Robert into his lap, cupping his face and kissing him deeply. Robert draped his arms lazily over Jimmy’s shoulders and Jimmy wound his arms around Robert’s waist, and they melted together like they were born just to do this. Pete rested his chin on top of Roger’s curly head. There was something incredibly beautiful in the way Jimmy and Robert fit together perfectly, or touched each other, or looked at each other, or kissed languidly and beautifully; the two of them were lost in their own universe, oblivious to everything else. Yet there was nothing shameful about sitting back and watching them, as it was a sensual performance just for Pete and Roger. Pete felt no guilt for intruding, and couldn’t help but love the way the other two loved each other. He felt that familiar stir within him, and leaned forward to place small kisses down the side of Roger’s neck.

Roger was completely enamoured with the intimacy of it all. Pete’s warm mouth on him felt familiar, and seeing Robert’s arousal grow from under those tight jeans sent a thrill through both of them. Roger turned around and knelt in front of Pete and started kissing him deeply. Pete’s hands travelled over his skin eagerly, and things heated up between them quite quickly. Roger couldn’t help but tug impatiently at Pete’s t-shirt, and they struggled to pull it off while still kissing sloppily.

Robert and Jimmy slowly broke apart, delighted to watch their friends go at each other so eagerly already. Robert came up behind Roger, helping brush his wild curls away from his face and stroke his thigh. Roger smelled faintly of cheap hotel soap. Roger stopped kissing Pete long enough to look back at Robert with lust-hooded eyes.

“You still owe me a kiss,” Robert murmured.

Roger bit his bottom lip, smiling. “Not yet. I’m saving it.”

“You’re such a tease,” Robert pouted. “Jimmy, you know all about teasing. Go ahead and show him how we do it.”

Jimmy grinned. He grabbed Roger’s hips and gently helped him to lie backwards against him, like he had been resting with Pete earlier. Jimmy tugged Roger’s shirt off, leaving him bare chested and exposed. He grabbed both of Roger’s wrists and kept them pinned down on the mattress beside him
while Roger’s head rested in Jimmy’s lap. Robert straddled Roger’s hips and kissed him everywhere but his lips. He left a love bite on his chest, licked a nipple teasingly, and then trailed kisses down his rib cage. Robert moved his way further down, and Pete helped him unbutton Roger’s jeans and tug them off.

Roger was completely hard already. Robert pulled off Roger’s boxers and tossed them aside carelessly, then spread Roger’s legs open for everyone to see. Robert kissed the inside of his knee, then slowly down the inside of his thigh. Roger got a thrill from the way he was naked and exposed in front of everyone like that. The way he was pinned down meant anyone could take advantage and do anything they wanted to him. Roger bit his bottom lip to hide his eager grin, blushing furiously.

“Doesn’t he look so pretty when he blushes like that, Jimmy?” Robert murmured.

“Oh, he’s absolutely gorgeous,” Jimmy purred, his voice gone suddenly low and husky. Pete thought it was the sexiest thing ever. Jimmy brushed his knuckles affectionately against Roger’s flushed cheek, down his jaw, then placed a teasing hand over Roger’s neck. Robert looked back up at Jimmy, his blue eyes wide and expecting, lips parted. Jimmy gave him a sweet smile and tightened his hold against Roger’s throat, making him gasp.

Robert teased Roger with a long lick from the base of his cock to the very top, eliciting a moan from the smallest man. Pete moved over to cup Jimmy’s face in his hands and they started a filthy kiss, all tongues and moans and bites. Roger looked up and watched it all, his breath hitching. He wanted to reach out and touch Pete, but Jimmy moved both hands back to his wrists, pinning them down harder. Below, Robert continued teasing with small flicks of his tongue over the head of Roger’s cock, before wrapping his pretty lips around him and slowly swallowing him down, inch by aching inch.

“Robert, you’re lovely, oh god,” Roger panted, arching his hips up into Robert’s mouth. He needed more already, but Robert pinned his hips down too and moved even slower. Being restrained and used by Robert and Jimmy like that was so fucking hot. He was going to go completely mad.

Robert slowly pulled his mouth off and smirked. “You’re so impatient,” he cooed, his hand replacing his mouth and stroking him lazily.

“Please,” Roger whined. “You’re so good, use your mouth again, please please please…”

“He seems to really want it, what a slut,” Pete smirked, leaning down to give Roger a quick kiss.

“Oh, fine,” Robert teased. “But you need to occupy that mouth with something else.”

Robert put his head back down between Roger’s legs and started working on him again, expertly swallowing him down to the very base this time, Robert’s nose poking into the freshly shaven skin above his cock. Roger watched him, astounded by the sight and even more by the feeling. His jaw dropped when Robert flattened his tongue against him, sucking hard. Pete took the opportunity to slip two long fingers into Roger’s open mouth.

Roger looked up at Pete with those innocent blue eyes and sucked on his fingers, hollowing his cheeks and moving his tongue around him. Pete stroked his hair lovingly. Robert started stroking Roger’s base in perfect rhythm as he moved his mouth, which made Roger gasp.

“Oh my god, you’re so good,” he moaned. Robert gave Jimmy a nod, and Jimmy released his grip on his wrists. Jimmy went back to snogging Pete. Roger sat up and stroked the back of Robert’s head, slowly coaxing him down further. Pete and Jimmy wrapped themselves around each other, mutually stuffing their hands down each other’s trousers. They stroked each other fervently, their
moans smothered by their kissing.

Roger groaned in frustration again as Robert slowly drew his mouth off of Roger, then sat back and watched his friends, an elegant finger against his swollen red lips contemplatively. “Oh, damn. I can’t decide who I want to get fucked by first.”

Pete pulled away quickly. “Oh god, me, please…”

“No wait, me!” Jimmy teased, covering Pete’s mouth. Laughing, the two moved over to lay Robert down on his back. Robert slipped off his kimono and Pete unbuttoned Robert’s jeans and tugged them off along with his briefs, and Jimmy didn’t even wait until he was done to put his mouth on Robert’s cock. Pete joined him too, and he and Jimmy both alternated licking and sucking him eagerly. It was like the two men were hungry for it, and it was the hottest thing Roger had ever seen. Robert propped himself up on his elbows and locked eyes with Roger the whole time. Under Robert’s sultry gaze, Roger swallowed quickly and started stroking himself again, he couldn’t help himself.

Jimmy was the first one to move, reaching over to the nightstand and grabbing the brand new bottle of lube. He tossed the lube to Pete, who used it to coat his fingers. Pete teasingly traced the entrance between Robert’s legs, slowly sliding one finger in, gently working Robert to stretch him to eventually fit two fingers.

Roger let go of his own cock, and helped Jimmy unbutton his shirt. Jimmy surprised him with a kiss. Jimmy’s mouth was small, but he worked expertly with his tongue. Knowing that his mouth had been on Robert’s cock just prior made Roger blush all over again. He fumbled to pull Jimmy’s shirt off, then worked to unbutton his jeans. Jimmy wore nothing underneath, and Roger was delighted to find his thick cock bursting out of his jeans just as he opened them up. Roger couldn’t help but wrap his hand around him, giving him a few quick strokes, his mouth watering as he thought about how Jimmy’s cock would stretch him so wide if he ever got the chance...

Robert was writhing with frustration under Pete. He sat up to kiss Pete roughly, stroking Pete’s cock to occupy himself with something. Pete managed to fit a third finger inside of him, and Robert needed to get fucked immediately or else he’d explode with anticipation. He broke away from Pete’s mouth.


Jimmy abandoned everything when Robert called him, like the good boy he was. He retrieved the bottle of lube and covered himself with a few quick strokes, then wasted no time in taking his position between Robert’s legs. Robert wrapped his legs and arms around him. Pete and Roger watched as Jimmy positioned himself and slowly slid into Robert, both of them sighing with relief, as if every moment they had been apart was pure agony.

Roger fell into Pete’s arms, and they kissed again desperately. Roger pulled off Pete’s jeans as Pete left sloppy kisses down Roger’s chest. They both kept stealing glances of Jimmy and Robert perfectly intertwined. Watching them, you truly understood that they defined the act of making love. Every time Jimmy rolled his hips further into Robert, they moved together perfectly. And for every soft, pleading moan that Robert let out, Jimmy harmonized perfectly with a satisfied groan.

Pete pulled Roger down to lay with him, reaching down to stroke his aching cock. “How are you feeling?”

Roger wriggled, sliding himself further in Pete’s hand. “Incredibly, incredibly turned on.”
Pete smiled, and gave him another kiss. He bit the bottom of Roger’s lip, lovingly. “Good. What do you want now?”

For the first time in a long time, Roger couldn’t decide if he wanted to give or receive more. His cock was aching and dripping, still yearning for that feeling of Robert’s expert mouth on him. He was about to go mad with anticipation. Roger reached over for the lube, and coated his fingers.

Pete gave him the most devilish smile, and sprawled back on the bed, stark naked and happy. Roger was comforted by the sense of ritual as he gently coaxed his fingers into Pete, massaging and relaxing his muscles, preparing for the familiar things they did all the time back home. Within minutes, Pete was squirming and begging for Roger, which drove him even crazier.

Pete looked absolutely gorgeous all spread out like that, a pink flush on his cheeks and cock were the only colour on his otherwise long and beautiful pale limbs. Roger eased his cock inside nice and slow, giving Pete time to adjust and get comfortable. Roger pushed Pete’s knees up to his chest, one of the positions he was most fond of, and lay against him as he slowly rocked inside of him.

“Pete,” Roger groaned his name softly, over and over again. He was so warm and tight against Roger’s cock, it was like a dream to be in him again. “I can’t get enough of you. I never will.”

Pete started moving his hips along with Roger, stroking his hands along Roger’s sides. His skin, tan and soft over his muscles, was so warm and inviting to Pete. “Fuck. You feel so damn good. Don’t ever stop.”

Roger kissed Pete’s neck, whispering breathlessly into his ear. “Love you, Petey.”


Roger looked over at Robert, and how intensely he and Jimmy were going at each other. Jimmy was fucking Robert roughly now, his hips snapping violently against Robert and shaking the bed frame. Jimmy dipped his head down to bite at Robert’s neck. Robert looked over and locked eyes with Roger, giving him a look full of powerful lust. Roger swallowed quickly, feeling rather jealous that someone else was having Robert and not him. Roger kept looking over at Robert and he started fucking Pete harder, Pete’s cries and moans filling the air around them. He was always so wonderfully noisy.

Roger reached forward and wrapped a hand around Pete’s throat, which made him moan loudly, his mouth hanging open. Roger watched as Robert tilted his head back, arms stretched back over his head, blissfully in love with every minute of getting fucked like that. Roger pressed down harder on Pete’s throat, and Pete let out a cry of pleasure. Robert smiled at him with approval, and Roger wanted to fuck him so badly.

Robert got that familiar scheming look in his eye, and he caught his breath long enough to say, “Jimmy, sweetheart, slow down.”

Jimmy forced himself to slow down, nearly sobbing with frustration. He loved the feeling of fucking Robert like that. Robert kissed him appreciatively and they regretfully parted. Jimmy leaned on his side, catching his breath, his cock still throbbing. Robert stretched out, a beautiful flush on his face. He smiled. “I want to fuck Roger now.”

Roger slowed down his pace too. Pete raised his eyebrows. Roger almost never got fucked, and even at that, it was only by Pete.

“D’you mind?” Roger asked Pete quickly.
“By all means, I’d love to watch this,” Pete grinned devilishly. There was a twinge of jealousy because he was letting his Roger be used by someone else, but there was something hypnotizing about the way the two blonds were drawn together, and it was quite sexy watching Robert handle people like that. Roger kissed him and slowly slid out. He was pulled to Robert with that sexy, commanding look of his, and he crawled into Robert’s lap. He surrendered himself entirely to the other man, for once feeling vulnerable and submissive. Robert wrapped his arms around him protectively, and reached for the bottle of lube to prepare Roger.

Jimmy couldn’t wait any longer. He crossed the mattress to get to Pete. “On your knees, slut.”

“Oh, god yes,” Pete obeyed, quickly rolling over onto his hands and knees, smiling gratefully.

Jimmy slapped his ass sharply, and Pete groaned. Jimmy slid himself in right away and started fucking him roughly without warning.

“Fuck, oh god, yes Jimmy—” Pete cried out with pure joy. He had to lean forward on his elbows to gain a sense of stability. Jimmy was so rough with him and each thrust shook his small body. He grabbed desperately on to the comforter while Jimmy fucked him hard and raw, his second favourite way to be fucked.

Roger sighed, trying to still that thrill of nerves under his skin, but to no avail. There was something in the way that Robert wrapped an arm around his hips possessively while he fingered him that made Roger feel so small, something he wasn’t used to. Robert stared him down with that commanding look, his grey eyes silently ordering him to obey and focus only on him. Robert moved his fingers in him, drawing sighs and moans out of Roger like he was working his own personal toy. Roger’s cock twitched against his will.

Roger swallowed quickly. He whispered, as if asking for permission for something dirty and shameful. “Robert, please, I want you to fuck me...”

Robert inhaled deeply, as if that sentence was the most satisfying thing he had ever heard. He slipped a third finger in, letting Roger adjust another minute longer. They looked over at the two other boys, who were going at it so roughly, they were bound to break something.

Pete was getting fucked within an inch of his life. The added audience members drove out that same animalistic force in Jimmy that otherwise only came out onstage, where he needed to be bigger and better than ever. There were tears in Pete’s eyes and he was gasping for breath as he clutched onto the foot board of the bed for dear life.

“Fuck, Jimmy, yes, yes, yes...” Pete was loud enough for the neighbours to hear. Jimmy had Pete flipped on his back now, and he leaned forward to smash their mouths together violently. Jimmy reached down to stroke Pete with his rough, dry hand in time with his thrusting. Robert wound a hand around Roger’s cock and stroked him slowly as they watched the other two unravel completely.

Jimmy bit down on Pete’s shoulder hard enough to draw blood, and Pete came with a sharp cry all over Jimmy’s hands, his small hips stuttering. Jimmy came a few seconds later with a deep groan, spilling into Pete. They clung to each other desperately, utterly worn and covered in sweat, gasping for breath.

Robert took Roger’s chin and turned his head back to him. “Look at me.”

Roger obeyed. Robert repositioned the smaller man on his lap, and Robert guided his cock into him, sliding himself inside in one single motion.
Roger gasped out, desperately needing something to grab onto to steady himself. Robert moved his hips under Roger, fucking him with a steady pace. He grabbed Roger’s hips and guided him in time with his own movements. Roger’s legs were shaking, the sensation still unfamiliar, exciting, scary, wonderful, amazing, fucking great. He was surrounded by the smell of Robert’s musk and his shampoo, the sight of his naked and strong body beneath him, the sound of the hitches in his breath, and the feeling of his cock stretching and filling him to the brim. Roger lost control and started moving his hips faster, and Robert let him. It was all too new and exciting.

“You’re beautiful, darling,” Robert moaned. Roger leaned forward and grabbed onto the headboard for more support. Robert reached up and touched his chest and stomach all over. “I want to have you every day for the rest of my life.”

“Fuck me harder,” Roger managed to grit through his teeth. He was starting to lose all coherency and his brain reverted back to animalistic instinct. “Harder.”

Robert slipped two fingers into Roger’s mouth, making him suck at them so beautifully like he had done for Pete earlier. He rewarded Roger with rougher thrusts, picking up his pace. “You’re going to be my slut, won’t you, darling?”

Roger tossed his head back, his hair sticking to the sweat on his face and neck. “God, fuck, yes, I’ll do anything for you. I need you, I want you.”

Robert was slowly losing control too. His thrusts had fallen out of rhythm, and he desperately needed to finish inside Roger. Robert grabbed Roger, rolling him onto his back so he could get between his legs and pin him down. Robert let loose, fucking Roger erratically until they were both sobbing with pleasure. He hit Roger’s prostate every other thrust, dragging him to the brink of orgasm. Robert groaned Roger’s name, his voice heavy with lust.

The last thing Roger was capable of doing was reaching up to grab Robert’s face and kissing him deeply. They were both surprised by the feeling of fireworks, just like the first time. Robert’s mouth fell open with a gasp, which turned into a moan as he came suddenly, filling Roger with his come. The sensation of Robert’s pulsing cock inside of him, the warm come dripping from him, and the feeling of the fireworks from their kiss plunged Roger over the edge. He came with a cry much louder than he intended.

They collapsed in a tangled, sweaty mess together. Roger looked at Robert. Robert looked at Roger. Not only was that an amazing fuck, but they were duly astounded with what they had discovered. That kiss was real. The fireworks were real. Everything Robert thought was true—they must certainly be soul mates, because they still felt the thrill of those fireworks. Robert drew the small man into his arms and they floated down from that brilliant high together, eager with a new kind of excitement. Roger felt coy again, blushing as Robert lazily stroked his back.

Pete and Jimmy dragged themselves back over to join them, both sore and exhausted. Pete curled up behind Roger, kissing his shoulder. Jimmy lit a cigarette, and the four of them shared it. Robert wrapped a possessive arm around Jimmy and held him against his chest as well.

“That was fucking brilliant,” Pete sighed with a devilish smile, his eyes already slipping closed for a quick rest. “I love you all.”

“And we all love you,” Jimmy murmured, taking the cigarette from Roger and taking a long drag. He yawned. “Happy birthday, Robert.”

“A truly happy birthday, indeed,” Robert smiled lazily, as Roger looked up at him with those innocent blue eyes. “My best one yet, probably.”
Chapter End Notes

ok i need to go to church now, drop a comment if u liked it
The bassists were the first ones to show up at the dinner theatre place that night. They went in under Jimmy’s reservation and sat beside each other.

“Don’t you think we should have wrapped it?” John frowned. Just prior, they went to a high end store on the strip and bought the first thing they saw as a birthday gift for Robert. John found a three-bottle set of unnecessarily fancy shampoos or whatever, probably made from baby tears or the Pope’s sweat or something. Jonesy nearly fainted when he saw the price tag, but they were even more astounded to find out that it hardly made a dent in the money they earned earlier. John got a kick out of sauntering up to the cash register, fanning out all that money, and buying something so ridiculously overpriced without any guilt. Afterwards, Jonesy had to sit on a bench outside and have some quiet breathing time, the event too overwhelming for his simple lifestyle habits.

The sales lady wrapped the bottles nicely but kept it in a store bag, and they didn’t even have a birthday card. Jonesy waved a dismissive hand. “He’ll be in love with the high end label more than the actual gift itself.”

“If you say so,” John shrugged. Obviously Jonesy would know Robert best. “Then again, if their gallivanting went well this morning, I’m sure our gift won’t be anywhere near as important to him at the moment.”

“Please don’t remind me,” Jonesy shuddered. “I don’t want to think about Townshend having sex.”

“There was four of them there, and the first person you think of is Pete?”

“I just don’t want to think of him that way, is all. Shut up.”

Keith and Bonzo wandered in with their gift and found their friends, sitting with them at the large table. There was a horrendously long and awkward silence, none of them knowing what to say after their chance encounter that afternoon. Jonesy stabbed the lemon slice with his straw at the bottom of his water glass. Bonzo folded his napkin into an origami crane. John scratched the back of his neck, avoiding everyone’s eye. Keith cleared his throat.

“I can’t believe you guys are, like, strippers,” Keith said after a while.

John shrugged. “Yeah, well, the money’s good. And it’s kinda fun.”

“How long have you guys been…?” Bonzo asked.

“Only since we got here. Our first show was by accident, but it’s a long story,” Jonesy told them. “The second one was a private show that went awry, and then there was today.”
“Jesus,” Keith looked rather impressed. “I mean, you guys are good. Suspiciously good, even.”

John and Jonesy exchanged sly smiles.

“We’ve got a stash of money too,” Bonzo said, hoping to ease some of Keith’s guilty conscience. “We used a bit of our new savings to get Robert a super expensive gift.”

“Oh yeah? So did we. What did you get him?” John asked. Bonzo reached under the table and showed them the bag, from the same store they had went to earlier.

“It’s, like, super fancy hair conditioners,” Keith told them.

“Holy shit, we got him those super fancy shampoos,” John said.

Keith took his hand. “You complete me.”

Speaking of completing each other, the rest of their party arrived in the dining room. Robert and Roger were like a walking Shakespearean play. They walked together with their arms wrapped around each other, and they wouldn’t stop gazing lovingly at one another all starry-eyed, or blushing and sighing longingly.

John leaned over to whisper to Jonesy. “Must have been some damn good sex.”

Pete and Jimmy trailed behind them. They didn’t want to be physically affectionate in public, but you could personally feel the sexual tension a mile away. The four of them, freshly washed up and rested, joined their friends at the table. Once more, there was a bit of an awkward silence as no one knew if they could address the fact that half of them recently participated in a kinky foursome with each other just before this. The others got enough details of the story just by watching who winced when they first sat down.

“Erm, happy birthday, Robert,” John cleared the tension by handing over their gift. “It’s from me and Jonesy.”

Robert turned away from Roger just long enough to be showered in gifts, his second favourite activity in the world. Keith handed over their gift as well. Robert unwrapped his gifts with one hand (the other one being held firmly by the ever-devout Roger), and he smiled, delighted.

“Oh, this is just perfect!” Robert smiled warmly, reading the labels on the fancy-ass bottles. “How did you know this was the other thing I wanted really badly for my birthday?”

“We just love and care about you sooo much!” Keith said.

Eventually, a waiter came by to take everyone’s order. Bonzo looked over, just in time to notice the people sitting down at the table next to them.

“Keith,” he whispered. “Very subtly, look at who just sat down beside us.”

Keith casually stuck his elbow on the back of the chair and slowly peeked over his shoulder, before snapping his head back. “Shit. Shit. Fuck.”

Patrick, Eric, and Brianna, the professionals whom Keith and Bonzo previously slaughtered at poker, were all sitting together to see the show. And yes, they noticed. Eric and Brianna whispered to each other. Patrick cracked his knuckles and was about to stand up, but thankfully a waiter came by with drinks and distracted them.
“Maybe there were no hard feelings?” Keith wondered.

Bonzo checked over his shoulder. “No, yeah, they definitely hate you.”

“Hell hath no fury like a scorned gambler.”

The food was delivered quickly enough, and the lights were dimmed halfway to warn everyone that the show was about to begin. Keith and Bonzo broke out in a cold sweat, paranoid to turn their backs to people they knew hated them and also had steak knives in a room that would be completely dark soon. Robert and Roger completely entwined their arms and legs together until they were glued side by side. Pete snuck his hand up Jimmy’s thigh under the table. Jonesy shifted his chair one inch closer to John. John shifted his chair one inch closer to Jonesy. The lights faded to black and the curtain opened up onstage.

“Everyone, shh! It’s starting!” Robert was buzzing with excitement. Dinner theatre really got him going.

Two actors came out onstage and started a snappy, funny dialogue. It was setting up your average murder mystery dinner party, but the characters were what really made it interesting. Robert was having the time of his life, and he couldn’t take his eyes off the stage as he tried to grope around the table for his fork. Keith ate the whole plate of food without being quite positive as to what it actually was. As Pete’s hand travelled higher up Jimmy’s thigh, he was once more blocked by romance. Jimmy threaded their fingers together and even put his head on Pete’s shoulder. Oh, yikes.

John felt self-conscious about chewing too loudly and distracting everyone. He had only been to a proper play once as a kid, and he distinctly remembered nearly getting his head chopped off by an old lady for being too noisy and squirming too much. Instead, John chewed extremely slowly so no one would hear him. He carefully reached for his glass of water in the dark and accidentally brushed Jonesy’s hand.

“Fuck, sorry,” he whispered quickly.

“It’s okay,” Jonesy whispered back as if it were nothing, even though he broke a sweat. It was the most intimate exchange he had ever had in his entire life ever.

Onstage, the old racist military general keeled over in the drawing room, and the beautiful flapper fainted, and the handsome retired detective had to brush up on his old interrogation skills with the help of his equally handsome best friend, the host. The curtains closed and the house lights came up again, breaking for intermission. The waiters came by and whisked away their dinner dishes and replaced them with exquisite desserts. Robert applauded the actors and the waiters and the desserts and the front of house manager announcing the ten minute intermission.

“Robert, are you enjoying yourself? I can’t tell,” Pete teased.

Jonesy elbowed John. “Dude, we’re so dead.”

“What? Why?”

“Guess who I just saw across the room.”

John looked around, and accidentally caught the eye of the old cocaine slinging geezer who hired them yesterday. The old man recognized the both of them, and looked angry. He started to stand up and John pushed his fork off the table.

“Oops, I dropped my fork, help me find it,” he said quickly, grabbing Jonesy’s arm and pulling him
under the table. They crawled to safety, hunched awkwardly under the large table, carefully avoiding
the hardened gum stuck on the wood above them. “What if he asks for his money back? He paid us
to do more than take our clothes off and then we stole his money and let him get kidnapped by
cocaine guys.”

“I don’t think they’re called ‘cocaine guys’.”

“You know what I mean. Should we just deny everything? Pretend we don’t speak English?”

“I mean, maybe he won’t recognize us with our clothes on.”

“Seriously, mate.”

“John, what’s he going to do?” Jonesy flinched as Keith accidentally kicked him under the table.
“Call the police on us being strippers when he owns and sells cocaine?”

Keith kicked Jonesy again. Jonesy was about to move but John put a hand on his shoulder to stop
him. Under the table, they saw a foreign pair of feet approach their table, and Keith talking to the
owner of those feet.

“Alex? Derek? Nah, mate, we don’t know any handsome British strippers. I think you’ve wandered
too far from your convalescent home. Yeah, waiter? This old man is harassing us. He tried to stab us
with his butter knife, my friend Bonzo here is crying and getting war flashbacks, we’ll sue if you
don’t get him away from here…”

They heard the old man protest, denying anything of the sort, as the waiter ushered him away from
their table. Keith kicked Jonesy again when the coast was clear, and they crawled out from under the
table.

Across the table, Pete raised an eyebrow as the two emerged. “What, you couldn’t wait until we got
back up to the room?”

John ignored Pete, climbing back onto his chair. “You’re a lifesaver, Keith Moon.”

Jonesy wiped the shoe marks off of his sweater. “Seriously, thank you. We sort of stole a ton of
money from him accidentally.”

Keith shrugged, stealing a spoonful of John’s chocolate mousse. “It happens.”

“Can you return the favour for us eventually?” Bonzo whispered, nervously checking over his
shoulder again. “We illegally won a couple thousand dollars from each person at that table behind us
and they most likely hate us a lot.”

Jonesy winced. “We’ll watch your back.”

John checked over his shoulder at the table in question. They weren’t looking at them at the moment,
but the three of them seemed like they could send people to fuck you up just by snapping their
perfectly manicured fingers.

“Do you guys want to place bets on who the murderer is?” Keith asked everyone at their table. No
one hesitated on pulling out their wallets.

Soon, the houselights dimmed. Pete looked uncomfortable as Jimmy lovingly held his hand again,
and Roger and Robert were already making out. Onstage, the swooning flapper woke up in the arms
of the handsome detective and he seduced a confession out of her. The worried housewife
accidentally drank the poisoned wine and collapsed in the library, thus throwing off one solid lead. The electricity in the mansion flickered and the lights went out, and the quick flash of lightening showed the dead maid’s body on the stairs. Pete had a hard time trying to follow the plot and all of his favourite characters were dying.

The play ended with an amateur deus ex machina, which threw everyone off, and meant that everyone lost the bet on who the murderer was. Pete was personally offended by the poor excuse of an ending and the horrible musical number that came afterwards for the bows. The house lights came on and Robert was on his feet, clapping as hard as he could, tears streaming down his cheeks. “Bravo! Bravo!”

Robert loved it, so Roger loved it, and he jumped on his feet to cheer with him.

Jimmy left to go pay the bill and Pete followed him, because watching Jimmy write a cheque and flaunting all his money was legitimately arousing. Keith and Bonzo stood up to stretch, just as Patrick, Eric, and Brianna approached them menacingly. Bonzo guided them away from the table so their friends didn’t see.

“We heard Carla stole half of your money,” Brianna folded her arms over her chest, being unnecessarily bitchy. Bonzo frowned.

“Actually, she stole, like, half of one third of our money,” Keith said nonchalantly, but had to work out the math in his head. “Yeah, because we only brought about a third of what we had previously won to be safe, and she made us bet almost half and then she won that… so we still have a ton of money, fuck you.”

Patrick squinted. “Wait, what?”

“Anyways, we heard about the big game tonight,” Eric was also unnecessarily bitchy. “Carla’s waiting to play you. Every professional we know is coming to watch.”

Keith swallowed quickly. Bonzo put an arm on his shoulder. “Come on, he’s just trying to taunt you.”

“I’m flattered that you’re all going to watch me win,” Keith told them nonchalantly. “I’m looking forward to doubling all my piles of money.”

“As if.” Brianna snorted. “Carla’s going to destroy you. She’s not a poseur, like you two.”

“He’s the real deal, you big meanie.” Bonzo tried to be threatening.

“Well, you’ve already forgotten that posh accent, Mr. Barrington,” Eric wrinkled his nose. “We all know you’re a fake who just got a little lucky.”

Keith looked at Bonzo quickly. “Fuck.”

“If you had any actual skill, you can show us all tonight,” Patrick said.

“I’ll show you all,” Keith puffed out his chest. “Tell Carla I’ll be over later tonight. We’re conveniently celebrating our friend’s birthday today, even though that sounds like a lie, but that’s the real reason why we’re in America anyways.”

“Oh, really?” Brianna rolled her eyes.

“No, really. It’s that guy’s birthday,” Bonzo pointed at Robert.
“Which one? The handsome one?” Patrick craned his neck to see.

“All of my friends are handsome and I love them, you’ll have to be more specific.” Keith high-fived Bonzo.

“Never mind that,” Eric rolled his eyes. “What time should she be expecting you to show up? If you don’t chicken out, that is.”

Bonzo whispered to Keith. Keith told them dramatically, “At the stroke of midnight. Tell her to prepare to lose.”

“That’s cute,” Brianna gave him a patronizing smile.

“Also, maybe you should give me her phone number, just in case—“

“No.”

“Yeah, okay. Tell her midnight though. We genuinely do have plans.”

Brianna sighed. “I seriously hate this guy. Let’s go.” And with that, all three of them turned dramatically on their heels and stalked off. Keith and Bonzo wiped imaginary sweat off their brows.

The rest of their group joined them, and they left to go to one of many bars in the hotel. All eight of them found a booth at the back, and finally they could be comfortable in an environment that was more their style. They all ordered a ton of fancy drinks, which John would later use some of their earnings to pay for. The money seemed to be indispensable at this point.

Robert and Roger got drunk off of an embarrassingly small amount of fruity cocktails. Roger was practically sitting in Robert’s lap, and they kept touching each other’s faces, elbowing everyone sitting beside them.

“I’m going to fucking marry you,” Roger slurred.

“Do it, wife me up,” Robert drawled. He then leaned in to whisper his plan for their honeymoon night in Roger’s ear.

Keith and John were trying to see who could chug a pint of beer fastest, and Bonzo was timing them on his watch. Jonesy felt a little out of place, and he was hanging off the edge of the bench because there wasn’t enough room for him. He frowned.

“I’m, uh, going to get up and stretch my legs,” he told them, but it was a bit too noisy in the bar. He stood up anyways. “If anyone is, um, wondering.”

John gave him a quick thumbs up as he struggled to finish before Keith, but Keith was winning by a landslide, so John tipped the bottom of Keith’s glass so it spilled all over him. Keith was about to punch him, but in a friendly way, and Bonzo held his arm just in case and told him not to drink anymore so he could keep his mind clear for the game in a few hours.

Jimmy and Pete politely ignored Roger and Robert sticking their tongues down each other’s throats right next to them.

“So,” Jimmy smiled shyly.

“So,” Pete tried desperately to think of something to say to distract them from the whole dating thing hanging over his head. He knew Jimmy didn’t like talking about sex stuff in public but he tried
anyways. “This morning was, like, really cool.”

“Yeah, I enjoyed myself,” Jimmy smiled, and Pete smiled harder, and he wracked his brain for something interesting to say before Jimmy got affectionate.

“Did you see the new Marshall amps coming out soon? I saved the clipping from the catalogue. It’s like, really sexy, um, and by sexy I mean innovative, haha,” Pete quickly swallowed more beer.

“Oh, Pete,” Jimmy smiled and his eyes crinkled and he looked really cute and Pete felt overwhelmed. “Let’s forget about shop talk for a bit and enjoy ourselves. I want to know more about you.”

Pete liked talking about music the best, even more than he liked sex, and Jimmy was good at both those things and now he wanted neither. This wasn’t fair. “There isn’t really much to know.”

“Of course there is,” Jimmy reassured him. He went to grab and Pete’s hand again and Pete broke out in a nervous sweat. “Tell me about your family, or school, or the books you read, something like that.”

“Uh,” Pete fidgeted. He needed something to occupy himself with, moreso now that his other hand was being held hostage. He patted his pockets, trying to feel for the familiar cigarette pack, but luckily couldn’t find it. “Oh, damn, I can’t find my cigarettes. Do you want one? Yes? Okay, I’ll be right back.”

Pete patted Jimmy’s hand and peeled away. Jimmy called out, “I’ll miss you! Be safe!”

Pete escaped the bar and the tense awkwardness, immediately overthinking everything. Maybe a little walk would clear his mind. He found his way back to the elevator, where Jonesy was already waiting.

“Uh, hey,” Pete tried to sound casual as he waited in the empty hallway next to him.

Jonesy looked him over quickly, and Pete felt like he was being incredibly judged. “Hello.”

Pete cleared his throat awkwardly. “What did you, uh, think of the ending? Of the play? That we just saw?”

Jonesy sighed. “It was good.”

“Yeah, um, I thought so too,” Pete mumbled. The elevator came down with a wheeze and a groan, and the doors opened up. They both tried to go in at once, but Pete let Jonesy in first so maybe he wouldn’t hate him as much.

Jonesy stabbed the button for their floor, and the brittle doors slid shut again. They went up in awkward silence, with only the rickety creaking of the elevator to fill the void. They had only been moving a few seconds when the elevator gave up and stopped with a violent jolt, all the lights going out.

Pete stumbled a little, regaining his balance by holding onto the wall. “Holy shit. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Jonesy snapped, not sounding very fine.

“Is it… broken? Did we break it?”

“No, dummy, the elevator is just taking a little nap.”
Pete frowned. “It’s that or the power went out.”

He moved to press all the emergency buttons, but nothing lit up. He jammed his thumb on the doors open button but to no avail. They were trapped in the dark elevator until the power came back on, or whatever voodoo curse that was put on them was lifted.

“God is dead—” Pete and Jonesy instinctively said at the same time, then glared at each other in the dark.

After a long silence, Jonesy sat down at one corner of the elevator. “This is it. I’m going to die here. All my life has built up to this one pathetic, anti-climactic moment.”

“Oh, don’t say that,” Pete tried to sit down next to him to reassure him, but Jonesy spread his arms out quickly.

“Don’t. This is my corner.”

“Okay, okay.” Pete traveled half a step over to the other side of the elevator and sat down. “I’m sure someone will notice that the elevator isn’t working and they’ll get help within ten minutes, tops.”

“I didn’t ask,” Jonesy huffed. “And stop talking so much. Your big nose is going to take up all the oxygen and I’m going to choke and die.”

“What the fuck is your problem?” Pete snapped. “Did I do something to offend you? Or are you weirdly jealous of me or something?”

“Oh my god, you’re so egotistical you think I’m jealous of you.”

“Well, yeah, I can be sympathetic to that, I’m fucking your best friends—”

“Stop—”

“We have passionate sex all the time, and they put their penises in my—”

“I swear to god—”

“And afterwards I guzzle all their cu—”

“STOP—”

“And you’re just stuck listening to us through the wall, is that it? Is that why you’re so bitchy? Cause you’re jealous of me?”

Jonesy crawled over and grabbed the collar of Pete’s shirt and punched him blindly in the dark. Pete hit him back, flailing his skinny arms around without being able to see his target. Like effeminate boys raised in hyper-masculine social groups, they pretended to solve all their problems with their fists. They didn’t do much damage but it felt good to get out all their pent up stress on each other.

Jonesy moved too suddenly and Pete elbowed him in the eye, which genuinely was an accident. “Fuck, I’m so sorry—”

“Fuck you.” Jonesy clutched his eye and crawled back to his corner.

“I didn’t mean that one, I swear,” Pete sighed, because it didn’t do that much use. “Seriously though, I’m sorry for whatever I did to piss you off. I’m just doing my thing and you’re doing yours. I don’t want to be enemies for no reason.”
Jonesy stayed quiet, but aggressively quiet.

“You there?”

More silence.

“Like, did you pass out or something? I literally can’t tell.”

“Can you stop talking? Ever?”

“Sorry.”

“Stop.”

More awkward silence.

Pete twiddled his thumbs. Jonesy waited until his eye stopped throbbing, then he spoke quietly.

“You came in and messed up our perfect harmony. They never shut up about you or your stupid band. And when we’re not working, you always show up at our flat to get penetrated and my band never gets to hang out as friends anymore.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. Fuck you.”

“Hey man, I understand. I’m sorry about that.”

“Whatever.”

“If it helps, I’m kind of getting cold feet. Jimmy just told me he wants to properly date when we get home and I’m not really looking forward to long walks on the beach and candlelight dinners and all that.”

“Wait,” Jonesy paused. “Are you implying that you didn’t already know Jimmy fancies you?”

“I mean, yeah. It came out of nowhere.”

“You idiot, everyone on the planet knows he fancies you, he has right from day one.”

“What? Really?”

“He adores you. Don’t you dare break his heart, or I swear to god I’ll—“

“So now you want me to come back to your flat all the time to get penetrated?”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“Oh, you meant getting penetrated, but like, in my heart. Got it.”

Jonesy started laughing, but quickly covered it up with a cough. “Fuck you, Townshend.”

More silence.

Pete scratched the back of his head, trying to wrap his mind around it all. “But hey, on the bright side, at least you get to spend more time with John, right?”

“What are you implying? What have you heard?”
Pete winced. “…that you’re friends?”

“Oh. Yeah, we’re friends. Real good friends.”

“I’m sensing some subtext there.”

“It’s none of your business.”

“Come on, tell me. Do you fancy him?”

“I’m not a homosexual like you, Townshend.”

“Stop calling me that, I have a first name for a reason. Also I’m probably bisexual.”

Jonesy paused, thinking. “I mean, I can’t be gay, it doesn’t make sense. I look at you and I know I would never have sex with you as long as I lived. Like, you couldn’t even pay me to do it. I’d rather kill myself than be intimate with you.”

“Thanks.”

“But John and I…I mean, we have this…hobby, right? And sometimes it gets a little. Um. Like, sexy.”

“What the hell kind of hobby—“

“Stop being so nosy.”

“Alright, so you guys play Scrabble or something and things get a little homoerotic?”

“Sure, let’s say that. Anyways, it gets a little sexy, and I’m curious as to why I find it sexy. Like, it’s only sexy when I do that stuff with him. I didn’t think I was wired to feel that way.”

Pete felt a little unsettled, although one might call it jealousy. He suspected John was fond of Jonesy, but now that it was mutual, something might actually come of it. He didn’t like thinking that his John was going to get cozy with some other guy for the first time since—

“Who knows,” Pete shrugged nonchalantly. “I mean, in my expert queer opinion, maybe you just think you have a crush on him just because you’re fond of him as a friend—“

“I know what you’re doing,” Jonesy said. “You can’t have everyone, Pete. Just pick one person.”

“I wasn’t, um,” Pete cleared his throat, thrown off guard at how quickly he was psychoanalyzed and dragged. “Well, if you’re curious, maybe you could—“

Jonesy wasn’t done with him yet. “I’m not going to experiment with my sexuality with you in this broken elevator, Pete Townshend.”

“Ew, I wasn’t suggesting—“

“I know you broke this elevator purposely just so you could penetrate me—“

“Holy fuck, I most certainly did not—“

Jonesy started shouting now, and Pete was pretty sure he was having some claustrophobic anxiety that he was projecting onto his sexuality.
“I am a classy, traditional man,” Jonesy declared louder than necessary. “I’m going to do the proper, mature thing. I’m going to get drunk with John and then try and kiss him, and then if it doesn’t work I’ll blame it all on the alcohol and then go throw myself off of a bridge and die.”

Jesus Christ. “I mean, yeah, that sounds like a solid plan.”

Jonesy started hyperventilating, and he started kicking the elevator door. “SOMEONE LET US OUT, I’M TRAPPED ALONE WITH MY THOUGHTS AND I CAN’T ACCEPT CERTAIN TRUTHS ABOUT MYSELF.”

“Alright, alright, take it easy,” Pete stood up, his first instinct being to comfort him. Pete put an arm around Jonesy and surprisingly, Jonesy turned and hugged him. Pete patted his head until he calmed down a little, and then Jonesy pushed him away.


They took turns knocking on the elevator doors and trying to call out to someone passing by in the hallway. Jonesy even tried to pry the doors open because it was silently agreed that he was stronger than Pete. Pete figured they were caught between floors and that’s why no one could hear them.

“Here, help me pull the other door, will you?” Jonesy asked. The two of them pried their fingers in between the doors and tried to pull it apart. Much like in the grander scheme of life, sometimes you have to team up with the person who’s having sex with your best friends and work together through your problems. When you do, you truly can open any kind of door, like a perfectly executed metaphor in a story.

It was a struggle to open the door the first few inches, but after that, some sort of gear gave up and the doors slid apart easily. They were in fact between floors, only a foot above the next floor. The doors on the floor above them had already opened, and there was a young man who knelt down to peer inside.

“Oh, dear, are you guys okay?” the young man called down to them.

“Overall, yes. Emotionally, no.” Pete called back.

“Alright, I’ll try and find someone to help, stay right there,” the young man stood back up and left.

“Don’t worry, we won’t go anywhere,” Jonesy muttered, and Pete couldn’t help but laugh. Things eased up between them after that.

The young man came back a few minutes later with a hotel staff member and a maintenance worker who manually drew the elevator back up, then took the circuit board apart and started fiddling with it.

The hotel worker helped them out and apologized a lot. “Please, sirs, accept our apologies. May we offer you some vouchers for our restaurant to, perhaps, encourage you not to mention this to anyone ever?”

“How much are the vouchers?” Pete asked.

“Would…$50 each would suffice?”

“Make it $100 each,” Jonesy told him, sticking up for himself for once. “My fragile, bisexual friend here suffered a nervous breakdown and he has really good lawyers and—“
“$100 is perfectly reasonable,” the man laughed nervously. He dug around in his pockets and scribbled a note on some vouchers. The fact that he carried them around everywhere he went said a lot about the hotel establishment as a whole. “Here you go. Please enjoy the rest of your stay. Silence is golden, remember!”

Pete handed his voucher over to Jonesy. “Here. Take John out to dinner. He loves that shit.”

Pete and Jonesy walked away, side by side, like proper friends. They took the stairs six flights down, abandoning their original excuses to leave the bar and desperately needing to go back and see their friends and regain a sense of normality.

They reappeared at the table in the back. John and Keith were a bit sloshed but had been worse. Bonzo and Jimmy were sharing a plate of French fries.

“Where were you two?” John scrunched his eyebrows together.

Pete rolled his eyes. “Jonesy was off confessing his love to me and begging to same-sex experiment with me, it was so embarrassing…”

Jonesy punched Pete in the stomach. “I hate you, Townshend.” But we all know he didn’t mean it this time.

John scooched over so Jonesy could sit beside him again, and Jonesy whispered that he had something hilarious to tell him later.

Pete frowned. “Wait, where are Robert and Roger?”

Jimmy shrugged. “I just came back from the loo a few minutes ago and they had disappeared.”

“Actually,” Bonzo wiped his hands on a stray napkin. “While Jimmy was gone and Keith and John were busy ordering another pint, I heard them talk about finding the hotel wedding chapel, then Roger carried Robert out of the bar, bridal style. I don’t know what that could have meant, though.”

Pete’s eyebrows shot up. “Please tell me you’re joking.”

“No, why?”

“Oh, shit.” Pete and John looked at each other, the panic setting in. Pete buried his face in his hands. Today was just really, really goddamn eventful. “This isn’t good. We need to stop them.”

“Wait, you actually think they’re trying to get married?” Keith slurred.

Pete leaned on the table. “It’s Robert and Roger. They legitimately would.”

“And they were drunk,” John sobered quickly. “Fuck.”

Jimmy suddenly looked very worried, and one might say there was a hint of jealousy there. “We need to stop them.”

“Alright, lads, let’s go be the biggest cockblocks in history,” Pete declared. He helped drunken John and Keith to their feet, and he and Jimmy dashed out of the bar. Bonzo wound an arm around Keith’s shoulders and kept him steady and they followed the action too, and John and Jonesy conveniently took their time, trailing behind everyone else.

Jimmy flagged a staff member down in the hallway as she was pushing a cart full of food. “Excuse me, miss, where’s the wedding chapel?”
The woman watched as Pete ran up behind him. She looked at them both rather judgementally.

“Why?”

Pete rolled his eyes into the back of his skull. “We need to stop a wedding. More people stop Vegas weddings than people who actually drunkenly elope here, haven’t you seen any of the movies? This isn’t entirely uncommon.”

The woman continued to look suspicious, so Pete gave up, took Jimmy’s arm, and they continued running. They ran across the lobby and back to where the theatre was. In that hallway, they managed to find the doors to the chapel, draped with strings of fake ivy and decorated with hearts and all that. It was incredibly tacky, Pete thought as he turned up his nose. There was a sign that said DO NOT DISTURB, but it was always his dream to crash a wedding, so he opened the door and ran right in anyways.

“STOP THE WEDDING!” he cried dramatically at the top of his lungs.

Down the aisle, the wedding officiator, who was dressed as Elvis, stopped reading and looked up. The bride and groom, who weren’t actually Robert and Roger, turned around too, distraught at being interrupted. Turns out, Robert and Roger were sitting in the pews, waiting for their turn with a few other couples.

“Fuck, sorry, wrong wedding,” Pete called to them across the room. “Go on.”

“Actually, no, you can stop there,” Jimmy appeared in the doorway behind him. “They look like they’re both 16 years old. Go home and do your homework or something.”

The bride, who did look incredibly underage, burst into tears. “Why do adults always ruin things for us? We’re in looooooooooooveeeeee…”

Her groom wrapped an arm around her and comforted her, and glared at Pete and Jimmy. “What the hell, man? Mind your own business. And get a haircut, you damn hippies.”

The young groom escorted his young bride out the back. The wedding officiator looked at a list on his bookstand. “Robert and Roger? You two are up next.”

Roger insisted on carrying Robert bridal style to the front of the room. I mean, you don’t work to get those muscles and never use them, right?

“Oh,” Pete hurried down the aisle awkwardly, followed by Jimmy. “Sorry everyone, this is the wedding we actually meant to crash.”

Roger was still drunk, probably even moreso than when Pete last saw him. “You came to watch us?”

Jimmy frowned. “We’re actually going to take you both back upstairs.”

“You’ll interrupt the wedding,” Robert pouted, also very, very drunk.

“Robert, love, I don’t think this is a good idea, you two haven’t really thought this through,” Jimmy pleaded.

“I think this is perfect,” Robert slurred. “Jimmy, you always said you’d be right up here with me on my wedding day.”

Jimmy’s face went red, and Pete had a feeling he hadn’t meant being Robert’s best man.
Pete tried to ease the tension. “Come on, Roger, you’re young, drunk and dipped in folly. You hated Robert a few days ago, and now you’re going to marry him. That isn’t right.”

“Do you guys mind?” the Elvis officiator butt in. “Either get married or move aside so someone else can.”

“Go away,” Jimmy pushed Elvis back, surprising them all with a flash of anger. “Robert, do you even know Roger’s middle name?”

Robert blinked. “Um…obviously I do. It’s, uh…”

Roger mouthed HARRY.

“His middle name is Barry, I knew it all along because we’re soul mates.”

Pete escorted Roger, who was still carrying Robert, down the aisle to give the next drunken couple a chance at marriage.

“Look, Robert,” Jimmy tried to hold one of his hands, but Robert draped his arms around Roger’s neck instead, naively choosing sides already. “Maybe you should go on a few dates first, yeah? Get to know your… ‘soul mate’ first. We can come back on your birthday next year and you can try again then.”

Robert glared at Jimmy, and Jimmy got weirdly desperate.

“Come on, love, don’t do it. You haven’t even got a nice suit,” Jimmy laughed weakly. “Remember your dream tux? We picked the clipping out of a catalogue together, and we put it on the fridge back home, remember?”

Robert turned his nose up, but his own drunken slur betrayed him. “I know what I want. Roger’s the one for me, forever and always, in sickness and not sickness.”

Pete started to feel all sorts of bad. He was also getting overtired from all the excitement of the day. He pulled everyone back outside and away from the epitome of commitment and everything he hated. Roger looked defeated as he carried Robert outside.

“I’ll never forgive you two for ruining my one chance at happiness,” Roger declared.

Pete rolled his eyes, trying not to take it as personally as Jimmy was. When Roger got drunk, he either got over-dramatic, over-aggressive, or over-romantic, thus earning his reputation for being a bad boy in bar brawls, or a total womanizer. Pete tried to accept the fact that he wasn’t Roger’s object of drunken affection for once. It was fine. He was totally, definitely, really fine. “Come on, let’s get you all back upstairs. We’re all tired, it’s time for bed.”

Like an exhausted babysitter, he herded the two blondes over to the stairs (most decidedly never using an elevator again) and they began the trek upstairs. Roger insisted on carrying Robert the whole time, and Jimmy trailed behind them, looking sullen. Pete didn’t want to deal with any of them right now.

Pete unlocked their hotel room door and pushed everyone inside. John and Jonesy’s shoes were by the door, but not Keith and Bonzo’s. Pete checked his watch. It was midnight already, where could they be?

Roger carried Robert to the bedroom, which now became a sad aborted honeymoon suite. Jimmy silently grabbed the package of cigarettes from the coffee table and went onto the balcony, sliding the
glass door shut angrily. Pete was grumpy and tired. He went into the bedroom, where Roger was gently tucking Robert into bed, and he went into the loo to draw a bath, even though he had showered twice today. Pete just wanted an excuse to be alone for a bit.

He took his time undressing and then sinking into the warm water. When he put his head under, it was very peaceful and quiet, which is what he needed. Eventually he couldn’t stop yawning, so Pete pulled the plug from the drain and stepped out, using a big fluffy towel to dry himself off. He tied the towel around his waist and stepped out of the bathroom again, carrying his clothes. He then stopped dead in his tracks in the doorway.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” Pete cried, back to being the epitome of frustration. He had only been gone for ten minutes, fifteen tops, and both of the singers were naked and Roger was literally riding Robert’s dick. Again.

“Don’t look!” Roger cried, as he continued to fuck himself anyways. Robert looked indifferent, rolling his hips lazily. “This is an act of love that should be enjoyed in privacy. Or do you want to ruin that too?”

Pete felt anger boiling inside of him all over again. He dug through his suitcase and dressed in his pyjamas with Roger moaning softly in the back. He left the bedroom, slamming the door behind him, and went to the designated hetero bedroom.

Pete slipped inside quietly. Jonesy was already askep on one side of the bed, and John was still awake, reading with the lamp on.

“You alright?” John whispered.

“No. I’m going to sleep in your bathtub, if you don’t mind.” Pete whispered back. Bonzo and Keith weren’t back yet, but Pete wouldn’t take their spots away like a dick.

John calmly closed his book and shut off the lamp. He tossed one of the pillows at Pete, and pulled the giant comforter gently off the bed, leaving Jonesy with the other layers of thinner blankets. John and Pete tiptoed to the bathroom, shut the door, and turned on the light.

“What happened?” John asked quietly, spreading the comforter on the bottom of the bathtub that was big enough to swim laps in. He took the pillow from Pete and tossed it in as well. Pete turned off the light and the two of them stepped into the bathtub, laying down together and sharing the pillow, side by side. Just like old times.

Pete sighed, closing his eyes. “Long story short—we tried to stop the wedding, they both got pissed at us, Jimmy got really emotional, understandably. Roger and Robert hate us now, or until they sober up tomorrow morning. I left them in the bedroom for ten minutes and I walked in on them fucking. And you know what Roger said? He said, ‘don’t look’.”

“Jesus.” John rolled onto his side, facing Pete in the dark. “Those two are just non-stop drama generators."

“I think I’ve had my fill, to be quite honest,” Pete said. “Maybe I’ll join you and Jonesy in your new hobby. He told me about it earlier.”

John went quiet. “What exactly did he tell you?”

Pete chuckled. “Only that it gets a little gay. I’m still curious as to what you guys actually do when you disappear all day.”
John chewed his thumb nail. “What else did he say?”

“You’ll have to ask him yourself, John,” Pete reassured his friend.

John got quiet again, but smiled to himself anyways. Pete yawned again and tried to get comfortable, already starting to drift off. After all these years, the two of them still ended up sharing beds together. That familiar nostalgic tension set in again—it was always John coming to his rescue, after all. Slowly, and a bit hesitantly, Pete reached out and put a hand on John’s arm, brushing his thumb over John’s skin gently.

“Pete,” John said quietly. He was still awake, too.

“I know, I know, just…” Pete said softly. “Thanks, by the way.”

“It’s no problem.” John reached up and gently grabbed Pete’s hand, holding it for a few seconds before taking his hand off of his arm. “Pete, we agreed…”

“Yeah, yeah.”

“Don’t make it harder than it needs to be,” John said softly, then teased Pete by poking him in the side.

“Was that a double entendre?”

“Obviously.”

They giggled like teenagers again, then Pete resigned and rolled over, facing away from John. Maybe Jonesy was right, and he was being a little greedy. Pete just wanted some love, but he couldn’t decide on a lot of things at the moment. John inched closer to Pete, his big toe poking into the back of Pete’s calf, a silent apology. At least he’d always have John.

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To be fair, Pete and Jimmy could handle the situation perfectly fine after the incident at the bar, so the two drummers split. Bonzo kept reminding Keith that they had fifteen minutes until midnight, and Keith was still drunk as hell. So instead of crashing a wedding, Bonzo kept Keith on a tight schedule to de-drunk himself and get down the street to meet Carla.

11:46—The two of them jog up the stairs all the way to their hotel room to get Keith’s blood pumping.
11:52—Keith digs through their bags for every last dollar of their earnings while Bonzo makes a shitty cup of coffee, increasingly worried for the future of their finances.
11:54—Bonzo takes the money and puts it in a few envelopes and into his jacket pockets. Keith swallows all the coffee in one go, scalding hot, and almost throws up. Almost.
11:56—More running down the stairs, across the lobby out the hotel, across the street, down the block, into the other hotel, across the lobby, down three flights of stairs.
12:03—They knock on the heavy metal door, waiting to be let in.

The giant door was opened by the same doorman as always. Bonzo was out of breath and Keith looked pretty fucked up from all the booze and running and caffeine. They could tell by the look that they were getting as they walked into the smoky basement that the odds were against them.

“I have a bad feeling about this, man,” Bonzo whispered. Keith accepted his destiny nonetheless. He walked to the card table set out in the middle of the room for them, where an uncomfortable amount of people were standing, waiting for them. Keith slid out his chair and took a seat, feeling unprepared
and very outnumbered. Across from him, Carla sat—red nails, red dress, and a cigarette. She didn’t hide behind glasses or a scarf or a hat like other players did. Her long, dark hair was collected on one side, displaying her neck and chest for everyone to see her potential nervous tics. Her dress even had a deep plunging neckline, being generous with showing off, but Keith literally couldn’t afford to be distracted by the best breasts on the planet right now.

Bonzo was about to take his usual post behind Keith’s chair like he usually did, but someone pulled him away by the elbow. “Hey, back here with the rest of us. There’s no cheatin’ here.”

“Are you ready, Mr. Barrington?” the young card dealer, Bruce, asked rather pityingly, like he were catering to the whimsy of a child.

Keith tried to stick his chin up and look a little more confident, but the nervousness in his voice gave him away. “Yes, I’m ready.”

He maintained steady eye contact with Carla, trying hard to intimidate her, but the woman was smiling as though she had already won and this was a simple handover of the money.

“So, my dear Mr. Barrington,” Carla purred, resting her chin in her elegant hand. “Are you still willing to play our double-or-nothing bet?”

“Of course,” he tried to shrug casually.

“You’re so lionhearted, it’s sexy.”

Quite frankly, her seduction technique was a bit overused, and very unfitting for her true capabilities. But Keith would never say that in case she still wanted to sleep with him after. Instead, he snapped his fingers and Bonzo handed him all their money, which was stuffed into a few envelopes. Keith counted every dollar, placing it onto stacks on the table. Keith had the sinking realization of how much money he could potentially lose, and was about to shit himself with fear. Why, oh why did his pride get in the way of things?

“One round and you could lose all of that money,” Carla pouted. “You’re positive you want to do it, sweetie?”

What a bitch. “Of course I want to double my money, because I’m going to win.”

“Objection!” Bonzo cried from the audience, the only one responsible for thinking for Keith when he was busy trying to be cocky. “Best two out of three rounds wins the bet.”

Carla checked her gold watch. “Oh, I suppose I have the time...”

Keith nodded eagerly. “Alright. Let’s do it. Bruce, hit me.”

Bruce shook his head sadly, then finished shuffling the cards and dealt to the two of them. Carla showed her straight hand. Keith only got a measly two pair.

“That’s one win for me,” Carla smiled. “You don’t want to back out, do you?”

Keith felt sick already, and Bonzo was trying to make amends with God so his prayers would go through, but Keith hated being condescended more than anything. “Carla, shut up for once. Bruce, deal again.”

Bruce re-shuffled and dealt the cards again with a little more sass than needed. Carla showed her three of a kind, and Keith proudly showed off his flush.
“And there you go,” he smiled.

“So we’re one for one. Are you ready for the last round then?” Carla smiled back sweetly.

Keith stared at the money—his money—in the middle of the table. Visions of fancy new cars and boats and drum kits danced in his mind. He should just be a coward and take his money and run. But doubling that money would mean owning mansions and throwing parties every weekend and maybe even a yacht or two…

Keith nodded at Carla, then nodded at Bruce.

Bruce reshuffled the cards. Carla slid her red high heeled shoe up Keith’s leg, teasingly. Bonzo chewed his fingernails right to the nub. The cards were dealt, and it was entirely up to fate now.

Keith broke into another nervous sweat and his stomach tightened. Please, oh please, can some higher power have pity on him right now?

Carla picked up her cards, looked at them with a magnificent poker face, then set them back down on the table. “You first, my dear.”

Keith looked over at Bonzo quickly, who was screaming on the inside but gave him a reassuring nod on the outside.

Surely Carla wanted him to go first for a reason. Keith slowly picked up one card. Then another. Then another. He started panicking. None of his cards matched up. They weren’t in any order and he didn’t even have any doubles. He reordered his cards, and reordered them again, his face going white. A snicker rolled through the audience. Keith laid his cards out flat on the table, sincerely praying Carla somehow had a worse hand. “I…I don’t have anything.”

The corner of Carla’s mouth twitched as she tried not to laugh. She slowly turned over her hand of cards, which included three 6’s. She won all of Keith’s money with a three of a kind hand.

And just like that, he was flat broke.

The room burst into applause for Carla as she reached over to shake Keith’s hand. Keith felt like he had been hit by a train. He raised a limp and clammy hand to shake hers.

Carla walked around the table, all poise and elegance, and took an agonizingly slow time counting out every dollar and storing it neatly in her red leather purse. Keith just sat there in shock, watching as his luxurious fantasies slipped away from him. He was totally humiliated.

“Don’t worry, darling,” Carla bent down to whisper in his ear, strategically rewarding a portion of the hotel staff with an incredible view of her backside. “If it helps, I do this every week to men who vacation. I don’t plan on stopping until equal pay is legislated by the government.”

“Fair enough,” Keith swallowed and slowly stood up, feeling drained. “Is this it, then? Between us?”

“I’m afraid so,” she smiled, looking genuine for once. “It has been nice. You’re quite funny, you made it entertaining for once.”

“Thanks,” Keith snorted. It wasn’t much consolation.

“Now if you’ll excuse me,” she told him quietly. “I have to go home and pack. My wife and I are catching a flight to Paris tomorrow, and I need to exchange this money into francs.”
“Oh my god, you’ve been a crazy radical lesbian this whole time?”

“No, just a scheming bisexual. Spiting men is just a coincidence.”

“Wait, does that mean you and your wife would be interested in a thre—“

“Go home.”

“Yeah, alright.”

Carla shook hands with a few of her fans, and then hotel staff accompanied her out. She was back to being royalty. Keith squinted, and noticed Carla had left something behind for him on the card table—a $5 bill. As the rest of the room emptied out, Keith was left behind exactly how he started: with Bonzo and an American five dollar bill.

Bonzo rested a hand on his shoulder. “How’re you feeling?”

Keith turned to look up at him. “Wait, you’re not angry?”

Bonzo shook his head sadly. “No, but I will hold this over your head for the rest of our lives.”

“Fair enough,” Keith accepted his hand to help him stand up. “You’re a true friend, John Bonham. You stuck with me right to the end. How can I repay you?”

“Just let me say it.”

“Alright, just once.”

“Keith Moon, I fucking told you so, you dumbass.”

“You’re absolutely right. You’ve been right all along.”

The two wrapped their arms around each other’s shoulders and walked out, like two wounded soldiers walking away from the calm of a battlefield after the fight had been lost.

When they got back outside, the street was quiet and the stars were plentiful. The dark sky echoed their hearts, but the glimmer of the stars represented the optimism in their souls or some shit. Who knows. They were too distraught after their pitiful defeat to think of any good metaphors.

Keith stuffed his hands in his pockets as he and Bonzo took their time walking back to the hotel.

“Rich people suck,” he said.

“Rich people do suck,” Bonzo agreed, always loyal.

"I want to be rich."

"Me too."

“I want to spite them one last time,” Keith frowned, his scheming mind working already. “What if we crashed a rich people party tomorrow, and, like, destroyed a bunch of their shit? Then we catch our flight tomorrow night and no one can get us in trouble.”

“You know, it might just work.”

The two losers made their way into their hotel lobby and back up the elevator. Keith shook his head,
and started to laugh. “Five fucking dollars. We’re right back where we started.”

“Some higher power has one sick sense of humour,” Bonzo grinned. He unlocked the hotel room for them a few minutes later, and they quietly entered the suite, not to disturb their sleeping friends. Bonzo took off his jacket and tossed it aside. “I’m going to make a quick cup of tea and contemplate the hollowness of life, do you want a cup too?”

“No thanks, mate. But thank you. For everything.” Keith reached to hug him. “Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Keith.”

Keith tiptoed into the hetero bedroom and slipped off his shoes. He crept into the bathroom and shut the door quietly. He turned on the light, lifted up the toilet seat, and unzipped his jeans.

“Whoa, don’t—” Pete cried.

Keith leapt six feet in the air. “What the fuck?”

“Shh, you’ll wake Jonesy!” John whispered.

Keith clutched his chest. “You two scared the hell out of me! I was just trying to take a piss. Why are you two cuddling in the bathtub?”

“Life is exhausting,” Pete told him.

Keith nodded. “Life’s a bitch, man.”

Everyone else agreed, and Keith held in his pee until the morning. He turned off the bathroom light, stripped down to his boxers and his t-shirt, and crawled in to the bathtub with his friends, and they let him lie down in the middle. Pete and John wrapped around him like a sandwich, which was Keith’s second favourite thing in the world. Pete brushed his knuckles against the bare strip of skin where John’s t-shirt was riding up, and John let him, and the three fell asleep together.

Late the next morning, they were all woken up by Robert and Roger in the bathroom on the other side of the wall. Everyone eavesdropped as they flirted and brushed their teeth, washing up and whatnot. John was about to go back to sleep when they went suspiciously quiet in the next room. Then, softly but distinctly, they heard Robert moan, “Oh, god, yes…”

“For fuck’s sakes,” Keith groaned, irritable from his hangover and the memory of his loss. He covered his ears. “It’s too early for this.”

John and Pete sat uncomfortably through more moaning and wet noises, then the sound of Robert getting fucked, bent over the counter.

“I mean, it’s not as nice to listen to when you’re not part of it,” Pete frowned.

They cringed as Roger just kept going, and going, and going, and going. And then, Robert cried out, “Jimmy, yes, you’re so—oh fuck, I meant Roger, wait, I’m so sor—“

The three of their jaws dropped. Then, the sound of Roger screeching a string of curse words. The sound of Robert getting slapped in the face. The sound of Roger stomping out of the bathroom and next door to the hetero room.

“Oh, fuck,” John winced.

“We’re in here, Rog,” Pete called out. A few seconds later, Roger came in the bathroom, shut the
door behind him, and turned on the light. His face was all red and scrunched up.

“We heard the whole thing.” Keith frowned. “I’m sorry, Roger.”

“C’mere, love,” Pete outstretched his arms. Roger climbed into the bathtub, but there wasn’t enough room for a fourth person, so he lay on top of Pete. Keith stroked his hair, John held his hand, and Pete rubbed his back, initiating their group comforting protocols.

“Robert Plant is so stupid. And dumb.” Roger grumbled, face down on Pete’s chest.

“He is,” the three agreed.

“I hate him.”

“Yeah, we hate him too,” the three nodded.

“I’m never leaving this bathtub. I want to die here.”

“We’ll be here for you,” the three told him, patting him earnestly.

Roger did that thing where he internalized all his anger until he was absolutely still, which was terrifying if you were on his bad side. Pete kept stroking his hair to try and calm him down.

“America has changed us,” Pete said quietly.

“America is...not at all what I expected,” Keith agreed.

“I quite like this whole ‘land of the free’ thing,” John admitted.

“America is cursed and I hate it,” Roger grumbled.

“I’m definitely ready to go back home,” Keith sighed. “I can’t believe I’m saying this, but...I need to go back to actually working.”

“I’m going to miss the liberal values of this place,” John said quietly.

A little while later, Jonesy knocked and crept in the bathroom. “Hey, is it alright if I brush my teeth?”

“Go ahead,” John told him.

Jonesy went to the sink and grabbed his toothbrush. He gave Roger a sympathetic smile. “You okay, Roger?”

“I’m fine,” Roger grumbled. The three of them shook their heads violently.

Jonesy bobbed his head. “You, uh, look pretty comfortable in there.”

Pete and Keith looked at each other quickly. Keith grinned mischievously, and he stood up, climbing out of the tub. “It’s really comfy, you should try it out.”

Jonesy spit his toothpaste out and rinsed his mouth. “Oh, no, I couldn’t—“

“There’s plenty of room,” Pete grinned as well, as he and Roger stood up and climbed out of the tub too. “Go on, then.”

Pete, Keith, and Roger hurried out of the bathroom, shutting the door behind them, leaving the bassists alone together. Jonesy looked at John. John shrugged. “It’s comfier than it looks.”
Shyly, Jonesy stepped into the tub and lay down next to John. It was just the two of them now. All alone. Just them. Total privacy.

“Alright, with the comforter there, it is pretty nice,” Jonesy admitted, staring up at the ceiling. He was too nervous to even look over at John.

John rolled over on his side, looking at Jonesy anyways. “What do you want to do today?”

Jonesy swallowed quickly. “Um, I mean, it is our last day, after all…”

“Yeah, it is.”

“Do you, maybe, uh, want to get super drunk? It is our last chance until we get home and have to go back to work and stuff. And then we can sleep on the plane better, and—“

“Yeah, that sounds fun.”

“Oh. Okay, yeah, cool.”

“Cool.”

John smiled at Jonesy, and Jonesy smiled at John.

John swallowed quickly. “Do you want to, ah…?”

“Yes. I mean, what?”

“I meant, uh, get something to eat.”

“Oh. Yeah, of course. May I, uh, take you out? For food, I mean. I’ll pay. Don’t worry about it.”

John grinned. “Yeah, that sounds great. Thank you.”

“Okay, yeah, cool, no problem.”

John laughed and stood up, then offered his hand to help Jonesy up. They left to get dressed, awkwardly trying to get through the door at the same time. John, always a gentleman, let the younger man through first.

Chapter End Notes

sorry this took awhile. when i was editing, instead of writing 'pete', i noticed on one occasion i had accidentally written 'peat' and i was laughing for sixteen hundred years.
Bonzo popped his head through the bedroom door as Jonesy was buttoning up his shirt. “Uh, there’s an emergency Led Zeppelin meeting next door.”

In the designated drama bedroom, Robert was sitting on the bed doing deep breathing exercises. Jimmy sat behind him, fanning him with a newspaper. Bonzo sat and held his hand. Jonesy knelt down beside Robert and held his other hand. This was definitely not the first time they’ve had to do this.

“Relax your muscles, hold your breath for three seconds, breathe out for five seconds, there we go…” Bonzo coaxed him gently. It looked a bit like a birthing scene if you were unfamiliar with their group of friends.

“I fucked up so badly,” Robert sighed, dropping the f-bomb thoughtfully as if it were a delicately chosen, carefully pre-meditated choice of word.

“What a shame,” Jimmy didn’t sound sympathetic at all. Instead, he was smiling from ear to ear, with the glory of a true champion. “Too bad it’s all over now, finished forever, so sad…”

“This isn’t the end. I have until we catch our flight tonight to win him back,” Robert declared.

Jonesy caught himself thinking about Roger without Robert. He would obviously go back to Pete, which meant Pete would stay away from Jimmy, which meant he would stay away from their house, which meant he could hang out with his bandmates in peace… “I don’t know, Robert. He didn’t seem very keen on fixing things.”

Robert gave Jonesy a kind of scary look. “I will make him love me.”

Jimmy started combing Robert’s hair back, still smiling that self-satisfied grin. “I think you’ve already made it clear who you like best.”

Bonzo seemed to be the only one who was taking pity on Robert. He may as well indulge him for a bit longer, Robert preferred to lose on his own terms rather than someone else’s. “Okay, why don’t we see what Roger likes? You can try to spoil him and apologize again.”

“Try not to mix up my favourite things with his,” Jimmy grinned. Jonesy elbowed him.

“I’ll go next door and ask, hold on,” Jonesy stood up quickly and went into the other bedroom. John was sitting on the bed with a book, and he looked up and smiled when Jonesy came in.

“Ready to go?”

“Not quite,” he smiled apologetically. “What are some things Roger likes?”
John held up five fingers and counted them off. “Women, sex, food, fist fights, and lavender scented stuff.”

“Got it,” Jonesy gave him a thumbs up and dashed back next door. He announced to the others, “Women, sex, food, fist fights, and lavender scented stuff.”

Robert looked a little manic. He started barking orders like a military officer. “Bonzo, order a big fancy fruit basket from room service. If they don’t have it here in five minutes, threaten to sue the establishment. Jimmy, get my dress from the smallest suitcase. Not the red one, get the little black one, this is an emergency. Jonesy, make sure Roger doesn’t leave the hotel room under any circumstances.”

Everyone nodded and rushed off. Jonesy went into the common area just as Pete, Keith, and Roger were getting ready to leave.

“Hey, uh, don’t shoot the messenger,” Jonesy winced. “But Robert’s going to try and win your love one last time.”


“This will be quite entertaining,” Keith rubbed his hands together, and got comfy on the couch. He didn’t have anything to do until Bonzo was free, anyways.

Before Roger had time to protest, Robert marched out in a little black dress and matching high heels, and at this point, no one really questioned it. Robert, who also smelled like he had been drowned in lavender, posed glamorously for Roger and cut right to the chase. “Roger, I am going to win back your love.”

“No.” Roger crossed his arms over his chest.

“But I’m wearing lavender perfume.”

“No.”

“But I look like a woman.”

“No.”

“You can say whoever’s name you want during sex to get back at me.”

“No.”

There was a knock at the door. Pete answered it, and was handed a ridiculously large fruit basket. Robert pushed Pete over to Roger.

“Look, Roger, I got you food. You like food, right?” Robert started to look desperate. Roger gave it significant thought, but turned up his nose. “No.”

Robert dug through the basket, pulling out a bunch of green grapes. “Look, Roger, grapes! I can feed them to you sensually, like you’re my beautiful Egyptian queen, and—”

Roger turned his back to Robert dramatically. “Pete, tell him where he can stick his grapes.”

“In the fridge.”
“No, Pete.”

John, Bonzo, and Jimmy eventually joined Keith and Jonesy on the couches, Jimmy still looking delighted as ever. Pete was caught in the middle, acting as referee and fruit basket holder.

“If you take me back, I’ll even let you see Sky Biscotti on the side,” Robert pleaded.

“Wh—“ Pete elbowed Roger quickly, cutting him off.

“I can’t believe,” Pete tried to get Roger to clue in, “That Robert would let you see your fiancé whom you love so much? While still seeing Robert?”

It took Roger a few awkward seconds, then he remembered his own lie and started nodding. “Yeah, well, Sky Biscotti is still loyal to me and I’m going to go back to him and marry him in London, because he always says my name during sex. Also his dick is, like, ten feet longer than yours.”

“Roger!” Robert wailed. “Don’t marry him. Stay away from his monster penis and be with me instead.”

“No, you hurt my feelings,” Roger frowned.

Robert sighed. “Alright, fine. I want you to punch me.”

“What?” Roger exclaimed.

“You heard me. Punch me in the face. I know you love fist fights, and I deserve a punch.”

“I’m not hitting you, Robert.”

Robert started taunting him. “Do it, I’m man enough, I can take it. C’mon.”

“Robert, I swear…”

John cleared his throat, drawing attention to his spot on the couch. “Rog? Number nine on your bucket list?”

Pete nodded adamantly. “You’re basically getting a guilt-free pass here.”

Roger shifted, thinking it through in his head. He clenched and unclenched his fists. He looked at Pete, who made him not want to be violent and be gentle instead. He looked at Robert, who was begging for it, and definitely deserved it. He looked at his audience, expecting to be impressed. He looked back at Robert, who looked really good in a dress and it was confusing him a lot, then he thought about lifting up Robert’s dress and doing something quite inappropriate to him, and then he figured Robert would go ahead and moan a string of names of people he’d rather be fucking and humiliate him all over again.

Roger softened his knees, drawing his fists up, angling his body and sizing Robert up. “There’s one thing I do have on my mind.”

Robert braced himself, a devilish light flickering in his eyes. “If you can clarify, please do.”

The others sat on the edge of their seats. Pete hid behind the fruit basket.

“It’s the way you call me another guy's name when I try to make love to you.” Roger gritted behind clenched teeth, then broke his abstinence for fighting for the first time in years. He practically jumped to reach Robert’s face, his worn knuckles clipping Robert’s beautiful nose in a quick split second.
Robert cursed, a flurry of blond hair bouncing as he recoiled, covering his face. Everyone on the couch winced. Jimmy reached for a pen and paper, scribbling down what they just said because that could make some pretty damn good song lyrics.

Pete tossed the fruit basket on the counter and coaxed Robert to take his hands away from his face, revealing a steady stream of blood flowing from his nose. Robert otherwise seemed unaffected by the pain, and gave Roger a rather familiar look.

“Perfect hit, ten out of ten,” Jonesy noted.

“Very good execution,” Keith added.

“Brilliant technique, truly a master of his craft,” John agreed.

Roger looked at Robert, the adrenaline rushing through both of them. The tension was heightened, the blood dripping down Robert’s nose to his lips shouldn’t have looked that sexy, and he was still wearing that damn dress. Roger was very conflicted.

Roger swallowed quickly, then roughly grabbed Robert’s wrist. “Let me help you clean up.”

Robert, still clutching at his nose, finally did the right thing and shut up for once. The others helped themselves to the fruit basket.

Roger dragged him into the designated drama bedroom and inside the bathroom with him, and locked the door.

Robert leaned back against the counter, the blood dripping down his lips and steadily down his chin. He raised an eyebrow and purred. “I’ve been absolutely terrible, Roger.”

Roger said nothing, and instead folded up a square of toilet paper to gently dab at the blood on Robert’s face. It really, really shouldn’t have looked appealing in any way. “You’re no good.”

“You should treat me like I deserve to be treated,” Robert’s pink tongue escaped to quickly lick his lip.

Roger tossed the bloodied paper into the wastebasket. He stood Robert back up and pushed him back against the wall, one thigh between both of Robert’s legs, taking up his territory. Roger snaked a hand up around Robert’s neck, which made the taller man blush furiously.

“Say my fucking name,” Roger gritted into his ear, his voice going low and gravelly with all that pent up anger.

Robert shivered. “Roger.”

“And who do you want to fuck you?”

“You, Roger.”

“Who do you belong to?”

“I belong to you, Roger.” Robert bit his bottom lip, smiling in delight. Roger felt the other man’s hardness against his hip. Roger rewarded him by pressing harder against Robert’s throat.

“Are you going to disobey me again?”

“No, Roger.”
“Good.” Roger shifted his thigh, brushing against Robert’s arousal.

Robert’s breath hitched. “Oh, Roger, touch me please…”

Roger gave him a sweet smile. “No. You haven’t earned it.”

Robert’s eyebrows shot up. “But I want you so badly!”

“You’ll have to beg for it,” Roger told him. “Much better than that, now.”

Their friends in the common room were starting to get ready to go out again. Keith suggested they go out to eat first, so the six of them walked out in a clump and left their two singers, who had gone suspiciously quiet in the other room, to do their own thing.

Jimmy went back to being quiet and moody, and Pete trailed around the back with him, trying to get him to talk a bit. The bassists gravitated towards each other, talking in hushed voices in their own private world, and Keith and Bonzo lead their group downstairs, scheming loudly.

“How do we find a bleedin’ party around here?” Bonzo rubbed his hands together.

“Option one is to knock on every door until we find one,” Keith told his friend. “Option two, is we go to the lobby and you leave it to me.”

They ate at the restaurant in the hotel first. While they ate, Pete kept a hand on the inside of Jimmy’s thigh, hoping to inspire him in some way. Keith took everyone’s spoons and tried to balance as many as he could on his face. He only managed four (one on his nose, one on his chin, one horizontally on his eyebrows which John thought was cheating, and one on his cheekbone) before he sneezed and they all fell off.

As they waited for the cheque, Jonesy insisted on covering John’s bill, and Keith and Bonzo begged him to cover their cheque too, because they were suddenly reminded of how dirt poor they were now. Pete discreetly whispered the filthiest things he could think of into Jimmy’s ear, thankful that they were at the end of the table where no one could hear them. That seemed to get Jimmy out of his brooding mood. Their group prepared to leave, and Jimmy and Pete snuck off to the loo and the rest of them knew very well to leave them be.

“And then there were four,” John laughed. “Alright, Keith, you said something about a party?”

“And then there were four,” John laughed. “Alright, Keith, you said something about a party?”

“Ah yes, dear boy,” Keith pretended to stroke his non-existent beard. “Back to the lobby. I need to do a bit of canvassing first.”

Bonzo, John, and Jonesy sat on the big comfy chairs in the lobby and watched Keith work his magic. He drifted from cluster to cluster of people, chatting up only the poshest looking people. Eventually he found two smartly dressed men who looked very business-like, and seemed to hit things off quite well.

“Listen, chaps,” Keith told them in his swanky posh voice. “I’d love to come up and show you my wares. I can guarantee you’ll fall in love with my patent hairdryers. Everyone who’s anyone in Europe has them. I sold the Beatles ten boxes myself.”

John snorted. They watched the two business men actually contemplate his offer seriously. The older looking man of the two reached into his inside pocket and took out a business card, scratching something on the back of it with a silver pen. He handed it to Keith. “I’m afraid we have another
meeting to go to shortly, but feel free to come up for some drinks later tonight. We’d love to see your product.”

“Oh no, you’re leaving? What a shame!” Keith exclaimed. His friends high-fived each other. “I’ll be sure to drop by your room later, then. Thank you very much, good sirs.”

Keith shook hands with them professionally and they all parted their ways. Keith sauntered back to his friends, showing them the room number written on the back of the business card. “Alright, let’s split up through the hotel. Mention to everyone that there’s a party going on in room 1622. Pretty people and rich people only. Bring your own booze.”

The four of them broke apart and started working.

“I’m actually on my way to a party right now,” John told a gaggle of gorgeous women on a bachelorette party trip at the bar. “And I’d be delighted to accompany you beautiful ladies there.”

“It’s been going on for a while now,” Bonzo told some guys down by the hotel pool. “I just came down to get more beer. Some hot girls stole all mine and they’re totally drunk now. Taking their tops off and everything.”

“I heard some gay strippers from New York are dropping by,” Keith told a group of friends in the casino. The girls thought he meant gay guys, and the boys thought he meant gay girls. Everyone nodded, agreeing to check it out.

“He doesn’t deserve you,” Jonesy clasped a woman’s hands inside the hotel spa waiting room. “If he can’t treasure you for the strong, smart, independent woman you are, then you need to leave him behind. Be your own woman. Actually, that just reminded me. There’s a party going on in room 1622 right now, and there’s a total hunk up there that I think you’d like.”

And finally, Keith memorized the business card and marched up to the front desk, smiling apologetically. “I’m so sorry, I feel absolutely foolish. I seem to have lost my room key. My name is Hank Gaiman, in room 1622. I came from Los Angeles with my business partner, we booked our room under my company credit card, belonging to Oyster Industries…”

--

Pete pulled Jimmy into the bathroom stall, and Jimmy pushed him against the wall roughly. With one free hand, Pete fumbled to turn the lock, and then went back to grabbing desperately at Jimmy. He so badly needed Jimmy to take him and use him like he did on Robert’s birthday. It was one of the best fucks he’s ever had in his life.

It was definitely going to be sex this time. No more romantic interruptions. He finally had Jimmy all to himself and they were both fired up and ready to go. Pete moved things along quickly, touching all of Jimmy’s favourite spots and making the noises he liked. Jimmy responded positively, although a bit delayed.

Pete unbuttoned Jimmy’s trousers and dipped in to hold his cock, stroking him quickly. Jimmy hissed into his mouth, moving his hips in time with Pete’s wrist. He grabbed Pete’s arm tightly, burying his head in the crook of Pete’s neck.

Pete wrapped his other arm around Jimmy, holding him close as he stroked him. Pete even did the thing Jimmy liked where he twisted his wrist on the upstroke and, god, he knew Jimmy really well at this point, didn’t he? The two of them could already anticipate each other’s wants and needs. It was more than just casual sex now.
Pete lifted Jimmy’s chin so they could kiss again. Pete was all intensity but Jimmy was thoughtful. Damn. He knew Jimmy too well.
Pete broke the kiss and pulled away, slowing his hand down. He murmured gently, “You seem a bit distracted.”

Jimmy looked up at him with that worried look in his eye. “No, no, I’m fine. You’re doing great, I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay,” Pete said softly, letting go. Jimmy quickly zipped himself back up, and in his concern for him, Pete felt a wave of fondness for Jimmy that he hadn’t felt before. “What’s on your mind?”

Jimmy’s face went red. “I’m not…I mean, it wasn’t that I was thinking of someone else instead of you, but…”

“It’s fine, I understand.” Pete stroked his hair back, catching his breath. “Is it Robert?”

“It always is, isn’t it?” Jimmy bit his lip thoughtfully. “I’ve realized this is a kind of jealousy I’ve never felt before.”

Pete forced a reassuring smile. “I think you know what you need to do.”

“I need to eliminate Roger Daltrey.”

“Uh,” Pete winced. “Roger’s not the problem, you need to talk to Robert about how you feel.”

Jimmy was already planning. “I need a lock of Roger’s hair and a Latin bible, and some candles…”

“No, dear god no,” Pete put his hands on Jimmy’s shoulders. “Let’s go upstairs and talk to them, yeah? We still have time before our flight tonight to sort things out.”

Jimmy seemed to snap out of it. “You’re right. Let’s go talk to them.”

Pete unlocked the stall door with a sigh and they walked back outside. As they went back up the elevator, Jimmy started pacing anxiously, and Pete could almost hear the gears in his head grinding. The second the doors opened to their floor, Jimmy dashed out. Pete followed him, watching as he unlocked the door and kicked it open dramatically.

“ROBERT PLANT,” he cried.

A split-second later, Robert’s curly head poked out the bedroom door. He looked flushed and his shirt was undone. “JIMMY PAGE?”

“I’m going to stand up for myself for once in my goddamned life,” Jimmy marched up to him as Robert met him in the middle of the room. “Robert Plant, I want you. It makes me jealous when I see you with other men. I know you care about me as much as I care about you because you shout my name when you have sex with other men and that is my greatest achievement in life. I know you want someone who’ll fight for you, and I will be that man from now on. I won’t let anyone else stand between us any longer. I love you, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

Robert, who could put a blushing bride to shame, nearly swooned. “Jimmy Page, I am a fool. It’s you I should be with. No more distractions.” He held both of Jimmy’s hands. “I love you, and only you.”

Roger, who had walked out to watch the whole thing, threw his hands up in an exasperated protest. “Are you fucking kidding me?”
Jimmy, who cried the last time he accidentally swatted and killed a fly, turned to Roger in a rush of masculine rage and punched him square in the nose, hard enough to send Roger stumbling backwards and to send his message loud and clear. Jimmy tried to pick up Robert bridal style and whisk his damsel in distress away but he wasn’t strong enough, so he resorted to a weak fireman’s carry and carried Robert out the door and off into the sunset. Where they went after that and what they did, the rest of the world would never know, although Pete had a few likely ideas.

As soon as they left, Pete went over to Roger and examined his nose quickly. There was no blood this time, but something had definitely popped and there would be a bruise in a few hours. “Rog? Are you okay, love?”

Roger clutched at his nose, more confused about the whole event than he was offended. He honestly lost track of who’s side he was on. “Uh, I think so, yeah.”

Pete instinctively held him close to comfort him. “I’m, um, not quite sure what just happened.”

“Me neither.”

“What does that make us…?” Pete wondered, confused about where he stood with the other two, but he couldn’t be bothered to try and work out their logic right now. They’d tie up the loose ends some other time. “Never mind them for now. Let’s make you a cup of tea.”

--

Keith had the room unlocked and music blasting by the time John, Jonesy, and Bonzo made their way back upstairs to suite 1622. There were already a decent number of people there dancing and talking, and bottles of fancy liquor and various baggies of drugs were scattered all over the suite.

Jonesy, who had the heartbroken women from the spa on his arm, meandered around the party and tried to find a man suitable for her to pursue. In the ten minutes that he had known her, he had grown fond of the poor woman and thought she deserved the best. John introduced the group of bachelorettes to the other group of bachelors, and while they chatted, he poured himself a generous drink. John and Jonesy eventually found each other amongst the crowd, which was quickly filling up. They escaped to their own corner of the room, talking quietly between drinks.

The party went along swimmingly. No one had to worry about supervising because they just assumed the owner of the room was in the crowd somewhere, and if the host didn’t complain, they could keep partying. It only took about five minutes before cocaine was brought out and most of the partygoers had quite a generous helping. This meant that mixed with the booze, everyone around them got louder, danced wildly, and started getting handsy with each other.

Keith was sitting at the coffee table with four other women, and he was about to pull out his wallet and place a bet with them. Bonzo intercepted just in time, grabbing Keith’s wallet as well as humiliating him in front of the girls.

“You’re cut off,” Bonzo told him.

Keith stood up, whispering aggressively. “Mate, I’m fine, I can go one more round.”

“No.”

“Bonzo, my dear friend. It’s fine, I know what I’m doing. You can trust me.”

“No.”
“Bonzo.”

“No.”

“Gimme.”

“No, Keith. No more gambling.”

“Please. I need it. I’ll do anything.”

“Keith, go talk to one of those nice girls instead.”

“You’re terrible to me.”

“No, I’m not.”

“Yeah, you’re not. I’m sorry.”

Bonzo patted his shoulder. “It’s okay, mate.”

John found them in the crowd and approached them quickly. “Hey, are you guys good?”

Keith shrugged. “Mostly. I need to drink way more if I want to get in the mood to smash some shit.”

John winced. “Perfect timing then. Jonesy and I are going back to the room, so we’ll see you later.”

Keith and Bonzo’s jaws dropped right to the floor. John eyed them both suspiciously. “What?”

“You and Jonesy?” Bonzo asked.

“Yeah?”

“Back to the room?” Keith asked.

“Yeah?”

“Together?” Bonzo asked.

“Alone?” Keith asked.

John checked over his shoulder quickly. “Yeah, but like…shut up.”

“So you’re gonna?” Bonzo prodded.

“I’m not ‘gonna’ anything. We’re just going to unwind for a bit, maybe pack before the flight.”

“Oh my god.” Keith pinched the bridge of his nose. “Oh my god.”

Bonzo put a hand on John’s shoulder. “Jonesy is very fragile. He has soft bones. Be gentle with him.”

John took his hand off his shoulder. “Would you stop?”

Keith sighed. “John, I cannot believe this. I feel so disrespected right now.”

“How is this even your problem?”
Keith’s jaw dropped again. “John, you promised! You swore that if you were going to experiment with the same sex, you would do it with me!”

John covered his face. He didn’t have the heart to tell Keith what he and Pete did all throughout school. “Keith, it’s, ah…you’ll still be the first, I promise.”

Keith glared.

“I gave you a lap dance, didn’t I? Wasn’t that sexual enough?”

“I paid money for that, it wasn’t out of love,” Keith pouted.

“Don’t you dare turn into Robert bloody Plant here,” John pleaded. “Come on, Keith.”

Keith continued to frown. “I’m drunk and desperate for affection here, man.”

“Bonzo, be on lookout,” John sighed. Bonzo turned his back, keeping a vigilant eye on the crowd. John leaned in and gave Keith a quick kiss on the lips, wincing inwardly.

Keith seemed satisfied enough. He brushed imaginary dust off of John’s jacket. “Go on, then, you big slut.”

“You two have fun,” John told them.

Bonzo turned around. “Here’s our boy.”

Jonesy emerged, then spotted his friends and hurried towards them. He opened his jacket and revealed two very expensive looking liquor bottles. “Look what I nicked!”

Bonzo shook his head. “A life of stripping, homoeroticism, theft…America’s changed you, man.”

John reached over and grabbed a bottle, unscrewing the lid. He took a big swig, and passed it around to the other three. “Atta boy, Jonesy. Rebellion suits you.”

Keith watched how Jonesy was looking away and giggling, all bashful and blushing. “Oh, for god’s sakes. Just go already. We won’t say anything.”

John didn’t waste any time. He wound an arm around Jonesy’s shoulders, gave his friends a thumbs up, and whisked Jonesy away. They passed the bottle back and forth, drinking lots, as they walked back to their room.

--

“What about your bucket list? How many things are left on it?” Pete asked Roger over a cup of hot tea.

Roger dug into his back pocket and pulled out the list, which was conveniently with him at all times. “Okay, number three was to see a big Las Vegas show, but dinner theatre counts, so I’ll cross that off. I punched Robert Plant too, so number nine is done.”

Pete craned his neck, reading the list. “Oh my god. Why did you leave the worst two for last?”

Roger looked up at him with purposely big puppy dog eyes. “Come on, Pete. My heart is broken, you have to help me complete my bucket list so I at least have ONE thing to live for in this cruel, desolate world—“
“Okay, okay, relax,” Pete pinched the bridge of his gigantic nose. “You absolutely have to do these last two?”

Roger nodded adamantly. “It won’t take long at all!”

Pete looked at the list again with a sigh. The incomplete list glared back.

#6: GET A LAP DANCE
#10: BE IN AN ORGY

The two walked down the hallway and past the cursed elevator to the stairs.

“Rog, I don’t actually know where to…uh, find an orgy,” Pete hesitated as they walked down the neverending staircase. “I mean, we’re sure as hell not starting one ourselves.”

Roger frowned. “I just assumed there was always an orgy happening at all times, always ready for you to join, you know?”

“I wish it didn’t just occur to me that I, uh, don’t actually know how orgies work.”

They kept walking downstairs in a moment of contemplative silence.

“Do you think there’s one going on in this hotel right now?” Roger asked.

“If we ask, there won’t be an orgy. If we don’t ask, there will be an orgy.” Pete philosophized. “Schrodinger’s Orgy?”

“Do you think we should ask the hotel concierge?”

“Roger, I can’t ask the hotel concierge!” Pete cried. “Are orgies illegal? Will they phone the police on us? Or just judge us?”

They neared the end of the flight of stairs, back to the main floor of the hotel. Roger insisted. “Pete, you have to ask. This has been my dream for as long as I can remember…”

“No it hasn’t, your dream has been to own a working farm,” Pete scrunched his eyebrows together. “Plus, you already had a spontaneous foursome, isn’t that close enough?”

“Pete!” Roger groaned, like a misunderstood teenager. There was no avoiding this. Roger was so dead set on completing that list, Pete had no choice but to drag him through the hotel lobby to the concierge’s desk.

The concierge, a pretty young woman, smiled up at them. “Good evening, gentlemen. How may I help you?”

Pete shifted, suddenly feeling very awkward. Roger just hung around, waiting for Pete to do all the talking. Pete cleared his throat. “My friend was just wondering if, um, anywhere in the hotel we could find, uh…”

The woman raised an eyebrow.

“You know. Like, a gathering of sorts.”

“You’ll have to be more specific, sir.”

“A, uh, gathering of people with…the same interests.”
She eyed Pete and Roger. “Oh, like a gay thing?”

“Um, not necessarily.”

“A cult thing?”

“Definitely not. Like, uh…”

The woman tapped a pen to her lip. “Are you talking about what I think you’re talking about?”

“I certainly hope so. This is quite embarrassing.”

The woman slid open a desk drawer. Digging through, she found a room key and placed it on the desk, along with a handful of condoms. “Return the key when you’re done. Be safe. Next in line, please?”

Quickly, before anyone around them could see, Pete snatched up the room key, the condoms, and grabbed Roger's wrist, dragging him away. “I can’t believe you just made me do that. I’m going to hell.”

Roger was giggling excitedly as they went back to the elevator, and even though it was cursed, it was a lot better than walking up the stairs again. “This is so exciting! I can’t wait to meet new people and make some friends.”

As they went up the elevator, Pete said a quick prayer for forgiveness. He then thought aloud, “This continues to be the sketchiest hotel on the whole goddamn planet.”

Down the hallway, the room with the corresponding key was less than subtly playing music loudly, the bass thumping being heard all the way from the elevator. No one else seemed to think it was out of the ordinary. Pete was having a fucking out of body experience as he walked down the hallway to his certain death. Roger couldn’t be more excited.

Roger slid the key in and unlocked the door, and they slipped in quickly. It was literally exactly what you’d expect from a seedy orgy in a seedy Las Vegas hotel in the middle of the 1960’s. Clusters of people of all skin tones, heights and weights were fucking all over every piece of furniture available. The music almost drowned out all the gross noises but not quite. A cocktail of drugs were set up all along the coffee table, free for anyone to take. There were men and women, fat and skinny, hairy and hairless, queer and not queer, young and old, all joined together in perfect harmony.

No one seemed to notice their arrival, everyone otherwise more occupied with more urgent matters. Pete cringed. He was pretty sure he got an STD just from being in the room.

Roger had no idea how to actually go forth and participate in the massive orgy in front of him. He and Pete just stood awkwardly by the door, watching in a mix of fascination and disgust respectively.

Roger cleared his throat, announcing to the participants of the massive orgy. “Um, excuse me? Would anyone here like to make love to me?”

A few people raised their heads mid-intercourse, assessing Roger and his appeal. Most people seemed pretty pleased with how he looked.

“Nope,” Pete noticed a disgusting old man start to approach Roger. Pete wrapped an arm around Roger’s shoulders and steered him out of the common area. “Roger, you’re in the middle of an orgy, you can cross it off of your bucket list now so we can leave.”
“But I want to—“
“I will not allow you to participate, this is so fucking sketchy.”
“But you—“
“No.”
“Not even just you and I going at it?”
Pete winced. “I don’t want these people seeing my important bits!”
“But that’s the exciting part of it!”
“We can be exhibitionists literally anywhere else but here.”
“Promise?”
“Not really.”
Roger sighed, taking one last longing look at the horrorshow around them. “Alright, at least I can say I’ve been to an orgy.”
“That’s my boy,” Pete wrapped an arm around Roger and they got the fuck outta there as fast as they could. In the hallway, Roger scratched off number ten on his bucket list, and Pete left the keys and the condoms by the door.
Roger gave him a devilish grin. “You know how you can make it up to me?”
Pete frowned. “Uh oh.”
“Give me a lap dance.”
“Rog, I’m no good at that stuff…” Pete shook his head.
“Come on,” Roger grinned as they walked down the hallway yet again. “You owe me.”
“No I don’t!”
“It’s the last thing on my bucket list! You said you’d help me.”
Pete rubbed his face. “You’re killing me here, Rog.”
--
The two bassists clung to each other, giggling as they stumbled down the hallway to their room. John fumbled with the room keys, his drunkenness already falling over him like a shroud, while Jonesy leaned against the door frame and watched him, still taking sips of the wicked tasting booze he stole.
When they finally got inside, they were greeted by darkness and total silence. It was beautiful. No annoying friends with crippling sexual tension to bother them, and no drummers and their crazy antics to distract them. Just two men, who were perfectly good friends, to enjoy a companionable drink together.
Jonesy considered waffling around in the common area, buying some time by making tea, but instead he followed John and they naturally gravitated to the bedroom again. They even closed the bedroom
door behind them for absolute privacy in the otherwise empty suite. It was super casual, just two friends sitting on their bed together, winding down for the evening together.

The two men were usually quiet on their own, but now that they were properly sloshed, they became a bit louder, a bit goofier, laughed even more, and one might say they giggled all their nerves away. John’s laugh was deep, right from his gut, warm and trusting. Jonesy’s laugh went higher pitched, bubbling up from his chest, light and friendly. John kept teasing Jonesy and cracking jokes, and Jonesy loved the attention. Their mattress was soft, the suite was quiet, the lights were warm, and Jonesy wanted the night to go on forever.

John was telling a joke, poking fun at something stupid Pete had said earlier or whatever, and Jonesy was so drunk and relaxed that he didn’t even mind. He was so far gone that it was like he was watching his movements play out like a character in a movie. Jonesy told himself it was now or never.

In the middle of John’s story, Jonesy shyly crawled across the mattress and climbed onto John’s lap, straddling his hips. John trailed off quickly, going quiet and looking incredibly thoughtful. John carefully reached out and placed his hands on Jonesy’s hips, coaxing him in closer. The warm lamplight made John’s face look softer. Jonesy felt secure, perhaps even less nervous than when he started. He ducked his head down and gently pressed his lips against John’s.

And they were kissing. It was nice.

Jonesy did not get struck down by lightning because he was kissing another man, nor did his whole life perspective change. There was no orchestral music and no fireworks. It was just lips against lips, really. It was nice.

John deepened the kiss and pulled him in even closer, going nice and slow for Jonesy. Jonesy thought it felt just like kissing a woman, but not quite, but still the same. John’s face was rough with some stubble, which Jonesy traced over delicately with his fingers. John’s hands on him were firm and tough. He smelled of men’s deodorant and men’s soap and men’s aftershave. He was a different kind of warm than women were. Jonesy was very interested in this new development. It was quite nice.

John ended the kiss politely, looking at Jonesy carefully for his reaction. “So?”

Jonesy smiled a dumb, drunken smile. “That was cool.”

“Cool,” John smiled back.

“May I…uh, try again?”

“Of course.”

John met him halfway this time, and they kissed a bit deeper, touching a bit more. It was all becoming very nice indeed. Jonesy trusted John incredibly. He seemed to know exactly how to hold him.

Jonesy experimented with running his hands over John’s stomach and chest. John experimented with rubbing Jonesy’s back, and gently stroking his hair. Jonesy sighed and relaxed into his touch. It was all very, very nice.

Going through the regular motions felt very natural. Jonesy kissed down John’s neck, feeling his shoulders and arms and anything else he could touch. John’s breathing even got heavier, which was incredibly fascinating to Jonesy.
Jonesy shifted his hips slightly to get more comfortable, and John’s eyebrows shot up. Jonesy apologized quickly. “Sorry, it’s your belt buckle poking at me...”

“I’m not wearing a belt.”

“Oh.”

“Sorry.”

“No, it’s...cool.” The two tried not to overthink it at all.

Jonesy looked at John. John looked at Jonesy. They both went in for another kiss anyways.

--

Bonzo and Keith had just finished a line of shots so foul tasting, Bonzo’s tongue went numb. Keith became so giddy he did a little tap dance.

“Bonzo, my dear friend,” he grinned, the madness setting in. “Let’s smash some shit, shall we?”

Bonzo stood up to join him, stumbling a bit. “Let’s fucking do it.”

Keith offered his hand to an extremely pretty girl sitting on a simple wooden chair. She blushed, taking his hand and standing up with him. Keith then took her chair and smashed the window open in two tries, then tossed the chair out. He turned back to the crowd of partygoers, who had gone dead silent, and shouted at the top of his lungs, “ROCK AND ROLL.”

Now that Keith had instigated the shit disturbing, everyone else felt better about joining in. After all, they didn’t have to pay for damages. It started with some blokes smashing their glass beer bottles against the wall. More wooden chairs were smashed on the ground. Bonzo lifted a huge potted plant and threw it out the window as well. Keith unhooked all the tacky artwork from the wall and smashed the glass frames to pieces, then ripped the paper inside.

Bonzo and Keith dashed to the bedroom. The two lovers who had been occupying it before were now getting dressed and scurrying out, startled by all the noise. Keith went right for the nightstand, rifling through the drawers. He stole a cigar from whoever’s room it was, lighting it with cheap matches he found. He puffed on it for a bit, then found the hotel copy of the bible in the drawer. He lit that on fire too.

“Bonzo, look!”

The other drummer looked over. “Holy shit, Keith.”

Keith Moon, a man who did not fear god or death, tossed the burning bible in the bathtub in the adjacent bathroom and left it to smolder. It was a bit scary and badass and offensive at the same time, sorry if you’re religious. Anyways, he smashed the bathroom mirror with the handle of the toilet plunger while he was in there, and Bonzo unplugged the lamp and smashed it over the dresser half a dozen times.

“This feels pretty damn good, Keith,” Bonzo shouted to his friend as he moved back to the bed and started ripping the pillows apart. He tugged out the stuffing, which was incredibly satisfying.

“I am ALIVE,” Keith shouted, squirting bottles of shampoos everywhere.

A few other partygoers drifted into the bedroom and helped them destroy it even more. One guy,
who they had previously watched snort a ridiculous amount of cocaine off of a young woman’s ass, punched his fist through the wall and got plaster and blood everywhere. Bonzo and Keith, who were far beyond that now, snuck back out to the common area as everyone else was flowing into the bedrooms.

The common area had been thoroughly torn through, with papers and bottles and rubbish strewn all over the place. Most notable was the coffee table broken in half, and most of the smaller furniture was thrown out of the window following Keith’s lead.

The two felt satisfied, having done their job. Getting back at the upper class as revenge for their gambling loss felt pretty damn good. Keith squinted, struggling to read his watch but his mind was swimming thanks to the booze and the adrenaline. He took it off and tossed it to Bonzo to try.

“It’s been…seven minutes? Maybe?” Bonzo slurred, so drunk he was having difficulty telling time.

“Alright, let’s go,” Keith found the phone, which surprisingly was still plugged in and usable. He dialled the front desk, putting on a terrible Scottish accent. “Yes, hello? Someone in suite 1622 is destroying their room, send security up right away.” He slammed the phone back onto the cradle, grabbed Bonzo’s arm, and they took off running.

Of course, not before shouting, “FUCK YOU, RICH PEOPLE.”

--

Roger took Pete’s hand and dragged him all the way back up to their room again. When they got through the door, they saw their bassists’ shoes already lying about.

“It’s just me and Roger,” Pete called out. Roger was giving him that familiar look already and Pete added, “Best stay in your room.”

“Come on,” Roger tugged him along, sliding the glass door open and taking Pete out on the balcony.

Pete nervously slid the door shut behind them. “Out here? Seriously?”

“You said we could be exhibitionists literally anywhere else.”

Pete’s face reddened just thinking about it. “Rog, any of our neighbours could come out on their balconies and catch us. John or Jonesy could come out and see us through the glass door. Hell, all of America could see my pale British arse from down on the streets.”

“That’s the fun part, eh?” Roger gave him a cheeky grin, reaching over to pinch the pale arse in question.

Pete rubbed his face. He knew Roger really got off on this stuff, which was fun. And truly, it didn’t matter if random people caught them doing something dirty. Pete felt okay as long as their friends didn’t catch them.

And Roger was giving him that look that was so goddamn tempting, that same look that set him off every time—and Roger knew it, too. Roger reached up to kiss Pete, and Pete instantly felt more relaxed. It could be fun.

Roger broke away and walked over to sit on one of the patio chairs. His legs splayed open and he sat back, looking inviting yet commanding. He gestured Pete over, and Pete knew there was no way he could get out of giving a lap dance now.
Standing in front of him, Pete felt rather small and awkward. He scratched the side of his nose quickly. “How should I, uh, start?”

Roger chuckled. “I dunno, do whatever you want, just start dancing.”

“I don’t even have any music!” Pete wailed, cheeks going even redder.

“Come on, love,” Roger coaxed him, and Pete could never say no to Roger. To buy himself some time, Pete bent down and kissed him some more, deep and dirty and with plenty of tongue. He ran his hands all of Roger’s chest, which they both equally enjoyed.

After a while Pete reluctantly broke away. He hadn’t ever received or given a lap dance before, so he just did what he assumed would be right. Pete awkwardly bent his knees and stuck his arse out, looking behind him to try and get in contact with Roger’s crotch without sitting on him. He wriggled his arse from side to side before his thighs started tensing up.

Roger was the first one to break his straight face and start giggling, burying his face in his hands. “Pete, oh god.”

“Don’t laugh!” Pete scrunched his eyebrows together, focusing intensely. “I’m going to try again, hold on.”

Pete tried to be a bit more vertical, and he stood in between Roger’s legs and wiggled his way down. He couldn’t see very well over his shoulder and started grinding on Roger’s stomach, drastically overshooting his target.

Roger was laughing even harder now. He wrapped his arms around Pete’s waist and pulled him down to sit on his lap instead, putting him out of his misery. “Come here, you awkward git.”

Pete pouted, twisting around to face him. “Wasn’t I a tiny bit sexy, at least?”

“God, no,” Roger laughed even harder, but kissed him to apologize. “That’s okay. I’ll make sure you practice lots when we get home.”

Pete started teasing. “I’m ruining all your fun today, aren’t I?” He wriggled out of Roger’s grasp and sunk down to his knees between Roger’s legs.

“You’ll have to make it up to me, yet again,” Roger grinned, playing along.

Pete kissed down Roger’s stomach and quickly unbuttoned his trousers. He pulled Roger’s cock out, already half hard, and started stroking it. Pete quickly looked around. No one else was out, except for someone on the balcony directly above them who couldn’t see anything anyways. It was still exciting to think about, and Pete wanted Roger to be as loud as possible. Suddenly he wanted everyone to know what terrible things he could do.

Pete eagerly started licking and sucking at his cock. He wrapped his lips around him and started swallowing him down, moaning loudly around him.

Roger bit on his thumbnail, trying to keep quiet. He used a free hand to stroke through Pete’s hair lovingly. “Pete, you slut…”

Pete was working quite quickly, which took Roger’s breath away. He worked on Roger’s cock, bobbing his head eagerly and stroking his base with his hand. Roger tipped his head back with a low groan, feeling himself wind up quickly with all the nervous excitement of potentially being seen.
The person on the balcony above them stopped shuffling around, probably to listen, which made Pete want to perform even better. He sucked hard, and used his tongue to swirl around the head of Roger’s cock. Pete kept thinking about how he’d look, submissive and on his knees, if someone were to stumble in on them right now.

They wouldn’t know, however, that John had drunkenly stumbled out of the bedroom for an innocent glass of water from the kitchenette. He hadn’t realized his friends were out on the balcony until he saw movement from the corner of his eye, with Roger tipping his head backwards and his hair flowing out behind him.

John hid around the corner, watching the whole thing unfold. It was quite bold of them to do something so dirty out in the open. John bit his bottom lip as he watched Pete swallow that cock down eagerly. He had always been quite the slut. Of course he could be found on his knees for another man at any given time.

It was so hot to watch those two together, but he’d never admit it. John loved seeing Pete like that, always a natural with these things. He resisted the urge to palm himself through his jeans, already feeling a stir.

“John? Where did you go?” Jonesy called out from the bedroom.

John was a bit torn in that moment, but he did have a beautiful drunken boy in the other room waiting for him. He forced himself to walk away and back to Jonesy, completely forgetting about the glass of water.

Back outside, Pete had his eyes closed and was lost in his own bliss. Roger combed his fingers through his own curls, already feeling close to the edge. From where he was sitting, he could have sworn he saw the curtains by the window on the balcony next door move. Roger watched carefully, and sure enough, a woman’s face peeked out behind the curtains. Roger locked eyes with the woman as he placed his hand at the back of Pete’s head, and lifted his hips to start fucking Pete’s mouth roughly.

Pete groaned in appreciation, clutching at Roger’s thighs for support. Pete’s skilled mouth felt amazing, and knowing that woman was watching their filthy act from her window was enough to drive Roger to his finish. He moaned as loud as he damn pleased, spilling down Pete’s throat. Pete scrambled back onto Roger’s lap and they kissed sloppily. Roger pet him and hugged him appreciatively, and shivered when he tasted himself on Pete’s small lips.

Roger reached down and gingerly tucked himself back into his trousers and zipped up. He lovingly stroked his hands over Pete’s thighs. He murmured affectionately, “My beautiful boy. You’re so lovely.”

Pete blushed, kissing Roger’s cheek and down his neck again. “Do you think anyone saw us?”

“Oh, I don’t know…” Roger sighed as Pete left a lovebite on his collarbone. “Now it’s your turn.”

Pete eased off of Roger’s lap and stood up again, then offered his hand to Roger. “Let’s go somewhere much comfferier though. My knees are getting sore.”

Roger grinned and pulled him back inside and they fell onto the couch in a giggling heap, and Roger showered Pete with kisses.

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Bonzo and Keith stood in the elevator, giggling like loons and feeling like vigilantes for their fellow
poor people. They stopped their celebratory drunk dancing when the elevator stopped at another floor to let more people in. Robert and Jimmy came in, completely wrapped around each other like the young lovers they are, and also smelling faintly of weed. Bonzo and Keith exchanged quick glances. They couldn’t keep up with all the drama unfolding.

“What were you two up to?” Keith asked casually.

“Oh, you know,” Robert waved a lazy hand, and Jimmy giggled.

“We just came back from a party,” Bonzo told them. “You could say it was quite…smashing.”

The drummers did feel a bit guilty, because if they got caught, Jimmy would be charged. Everything was under his name. Jimmy however, gave them a pleasant, drugged out smile. “I’m glad you two had fun.”

There was a companionable silence between them all, but Keith was just burning with one last question. “Jimmy, I gotta ask. I’m sorry if this is rude, but like, how did you even afford to pay for everything this weekend? The rooms, the food, the plane tickets…”

Jimmy nestled his head on Robert’s shoulder with a nonchalant yawn. “Oh, it’s no problem at all. I’m involved in a pyramid scheme on the side, so I have some extra money lying around.”

Keith, now a poor man, looked at Bonzo, who was also now a poor man. “Do you wanna—“

“No, Keith. It’s sort of really illegal.”

“Damnit.”

The elevator door opened and the four of them stumbled out, drunk and high respectively, going back to their room. They were blissfully unaware of their friends snogging beyond their front door, everyone avoiding the thought that they’d have to start packing soon and leave their nirvana.

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Chapter Summary

no one can have a normal trip home, it's just not in their nature

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In the designated probably-not-gay-we’re-just-experimenting bedroom, Keith fumbled with the radio to try and get it to turn on. He was surprised to find his cassette still jammed in there. “Hey, who used ‘Keith’s Mix’ without telling me?”

Jonesy blushed. John looked up from the clothes he was folding. “Oh, erm, that was us.”

Keith looked horrified. “Did you use it while you were—“

Jonesy buried his face in his hands, blushing. John rolled his eyes. “No, not for that. We used it for background music while we were stripping for that old man.”

“That was a sentence I never expected to hear, and yet here we are…” Bonzo muttered.

The four of them were sitting on the floor, still half-drunk and coming down from respective adrenaline highs, which left them quiet and tired. John was folding up the American flags they had accidentally stolen all those nights ago, the two of them keeping them as a cheeky memento. Keith was staring forlorn at his last $5 bill. No one was in the mood to be doing all their tedious packing. Bonzo gave up and just jammed his clothes into his bag, and Jonesy came by later and folded them neatly out of love for his friend, and also his own personal compulsion. The radio played old forgotten songs as they organized themselves under the soft lamplight, enjoying the companionable silence. It was enough to make Keith emotional, at least.

“I’d like to raise a toast,” Keith climbed on the mattress and stood on the bed. He didn’t have a cup so he held up with toothbrush which didn’t really make any sense but no one wanted to point it out and ruin the sentimental moment. “As I look around me, I see the faces of three beautiful, talented men who I am proud to call my friends. We have shared together in an extraordinary adventure. We supported each other during our most fruitful, richest moments, to our most desolate, emotional moments.”

Jonesy moved in closer to John, their shoulders brushing. Beside them, Bonzo dabbed at his eyes with a tissue.

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers…” Keith announced. “For he today that…uh…”

John whispered, “Sheds his blood with me—“

“Ah yes, thank you dear boy,” Keith cleared his throat. “For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition.”

Bonzo whispered to John, “What does that mean?”
John whispered back, “Keith’s gay.”

“I am not!” Keith shouted.

“I’m not g—” Jonesy bit his tongue. “Wait.”

“Everyone shut up, I’m not done yet.” Keith threatened to pelt John with his toothbrush. “Anyways, sharing a bed with three other men for this trip has been a humbling experience and I feel much closer to you all now. We have a special bond that no one else can penetrate with their long and hard —”

Bonzo covered his ears. “Keith, oh god—“

“Anyways, what I’m saying is, the marriage between the two houses of Who and Zeppelin, both fair and alike in dignity, is a beautiful and rather slutty one. So if one is in need of help, we must help the other. For example, if Jonesy needed a kidney, I would happily give him one of mine.”

Jonesy gave him a thumbs up.

“As well as…oh, I don’t know...” Keith pondered aloud. “One of us has fallen on financially hard times and needs some assistance...”

“Boo, get off the stage,” John heckled and threw a tube of toothpaste at him, lovingly.

“Fine, fine,” Keith frowned, clutching the toothpaste shaped indent on his stomach as he jumped off the bed. “Just remember all the times I was there for you when you pass me by on the streets, in the gutter, eating baked beans out of a rubbish bin...”

Jonesy chuckled as Keith sat down with them again and finished packing. “I didn’t know you were so well versed in Shakespeare, Keith.”

Keith furrowed his eyebrows. “Who?”

In the designated dramatic-homosexuals bedroom, the four of them were packing their bags in peace. Well, Jimmy and Robert folded a few shirts and then started making out on the bed. Pete and Roger let them be as they packed together in their own harmonious, post orgasmic bliss. There weren’t really any hard feelings in hindsight. Everyone had someone to go home with at the end of the day. It all turned out quite well in the end.

Roger struggled to fit the glass dolphin statue he stole into his bag.

“Here, let me,” Pete smiled. He took the statue, which was surprisingly heavy, and wrapped it in a few t-shirts for added protection, then nestled it into his suitcase. He leaned over to murmur to Roger, “Are you ever going to tell the truth about Sky Biscotti?”

“Maybe, maybe not.” Roger grinned mischievously. The shorter man left to go collect all their things from the bathroom, and Pete wandered out to the common area to try and find one of his books he left lying around, as if he had any time to actually read this weekend. He found John putting some used cups in the kitchenette sink.

Pete walked over, stooping down to check the mini-fridge beside him for any leftovers. “So, did you and Jonesy have a nice time in the suite all by yourselves?”

“Oh, very much so,” John smiled to himself.
“And?” Pete prodded. “How far did things go?”

“I’m afraid I don’t kiss and tell,” John teased. “I’m not public about it like you are.”

It took Pete a second to clue in before his face turned bright red. “John! Don’t tell me you saw anything…”

“Alright, I won’t tell you,” John grinned cheekily.

Pete buried his blushing face in his hands. He was embarrassed but some other thoughts emerged from that which were far more intriguing. He turned back to John, deflecting the conversation away from himself. “You and Mr. Jones are quite the unlikely pair, but I’m happy you two finally did something about all that weird tension.”

John shrugged. “He’s an absolute treat. Small, submissive, kind of girly looking…kind of reminds me of someone.”

Pete looked at John. John looked at Pete.

Jimmy emerged from the bedroom, thankfully interrupting the conversation that never seemed to have an end. He collected a few papers from the counter, blissfully unaware of everything around him. He gave Pete and John a warm smile, all his problems having vanished now that he and Robert were exclusive once more. “Say, lads, are you almost ready to leave? I’m going to order two taxis to come pick us up in about an hour.”

Pete cleared his throat quickly. “Yeah, of course.”

“Sounds good,” John nodded, then walked back to the bedroom, purposely brushing against Pete as he walked past.

After phoning for the cabs, Jimmy and Pete made their way back to their bedroom. Robert looked up and smiled when they came in.

“I have made a decision on behalf of all of us,” Robert announced to the other three, completely ignoring the dramatic events that happened earlier. He cleared his throat, preparing his grand speech from his throne on the hotel mattress. “We few, we happy few, we band of br—“

Pete threw a pair of socks at his head, lovingly. “Get on with it.”

“Okay, okay, fine. I’ve decided that we four should continue in our special tradition every time one of us has a birthday,” Robert grinned devilishly, pleased with the success of his own orchestration.

The four of them smiled to themselves in a daze, happily reliving the memories in their heads of their ridiculously brilliant group sex three chapters ago.

Jimmy quickly calculated in his head. “Yours was the last one of the year. We have to wait for my birthday in January next.”

Everyone winced. Six months was such a long time to wait.

“I’m in,” Pete said, easing any unresolved tensions with diplomacy.

“Oh, I’m so in,” Jimmy agreed.

“I’m definitely in,” Roger grinned.
Robert smiled, clapping his hands. “Wonderful! This settles everything.”

Roger chuckled, keeping with the lighthearted, jovial feeling in the room. “Yeah, everything is settled perfectly, including the bones in my nose that had been disjointed when Jimmy punched me in the face, haha. Does anyone remember that? Does anyone else remember when Jimmy randomly punched me in the face? Does anyone remember?”

Robert threw his arms around Jimmy, who was sitting on the edge of the bed, hugging him from behind. “I don’t think I could ever forget my big manly man fighting for me like that, obliterating all my suitors so he can have me all to himself…”

Jimmy, who wasn’t quite the posterboy for big manly men, blushed. He turned behind him to give Robert a kiss. “I love you.”

Robert pulled him closer, showering him with grateful kisses. “I love you more.”

“No, I love you more.”

“No, I love YOU more!”

“I love you the most.”

“No, I love YOU the most!”

They collapsed into a heap on the bed, kissing and purring declarations of love. Pete and Roger looked at each other.

“You know,” Roger said quietly. “You’ve never punched someone for me.”

“I’ve never had to!”

“You had, like, ten opportunities this weekend alone,” Roger sighed dramatically, looking away. “I guess you don’t love me enough…”

“You absolute berk,” Pete pulled him into a hug. “Okay, fine, next time an adoring fifteen year old girl comes up to you for an autograph, I’ll punch her lights out so everyone knows I love you even more than a crazy hormonal teenager.”

Roger blushed. “You better. It’s going on my new bucket list.”

“Your what?”

“I’m making a bucket list for when we get home to London. More punching, more lap dances, and more…” Roger went on his tiptoes to whisper something quite inappropriate in Pete’s ear.

At the top of the hour, the eight of them collected their bags and left the room for the last time. Pete and Jimmy stayed behind to double check no one had left anything behind.

“You still owe me a dinner, you know,” Pete joked. He figured their potential date was out of the window, which at one point would have been a relief, but now he felt a twinge of disappointment. “I can just be as friends if you want, I understand.”

“I still want to get to know you,” Jimmy smiled kindly. “I’ll ring you in a week or two. Robert and I have a honeymoon to celebrate.”

Pete paused. “Wait, what?”
Downstairs, Roger watched as his friends walked through the hotel lobby. There was Keith, still causing trouble even to the last minute, with Bonzo being the perfect companion, egging him on but still keeping him in line like a mischievous but responsible brother. Jonesy was glued to John’s side. In the course of a few days, a strange tension had grown between them and dissipated into something new as quickly as it started. Jonesy looked at John like a blushing schoolgirl with a crush, and John seemed more at ease, even carrying his bags and opening doors for him. Roger watched as Jimmy organized their checkout for them at the front desk, and Pete stood by him loyally, the two joking around with a newfound ease. And Roger watched Robert’s delighted smile when Jimmy came back to his side. Roger gave a similar smile when Pete joined him again, kissing the top of his head.

All around them, people in the lobby looked horrified as the troupe of gay-ass hippies travelled through like a freak show.

The happy few—the band of brothers—couldn’t have been more proud, though. They loaded their luggage into the trunks of the cars and separated to climb into the two taxis, leaving behind the sketchiest hotel in the whole goddamned world and all the wonderful memories they made there, yadda yadda.

Everyone tried to stay awake, regretting drinking so much before they had to leave for their flight. The night was just beginning as they were getting ready to leave, which everyone was forlorn about as they crammed in the back of the small taxis. Each of them longed for their spacious London cabs again. Their familiar city was only a tortuously long, red-eye flight away.

“By the way,” John leaned over to whisper to Jimmy, who was jammed in the middle seat because he was the smallest. “I have this for you. Thanks for everything, mate.”

John produced an envelope from his jacket pocket and discreetly handed it to Jimmy. Jimmy examined it quickly, noting the generous wad of money tucked inside neatly, and slipped it into his own pocket. It was only about a quarter of what he and Jonesy earned this weekend, but no one had to know that.

Jimmy smiled warmly. “Thank you, John.”

As they got out of the cab and wheeled their luggage into the airport, John noticed Jonesy looking particularly worried.

“You okay there?” he asked quietly.

Jonesy responded, “Yeah, I’ve just been thinking…”

“Don’t hurt yourself, now.”

“Piss off. I’m just, uh, thinking. Am I? You know…?”

John stared at him, forcing Jonesy to say the word out loud.

“You know…” Jonesy dropped his voice to a whisper. “…a gay?”

John blinked. “You did actively work as a gay stripper on multiple occasions with other men.”

“Well, yeah, but…”

“And you also snogged another man on your own free will.”

“That could mean anything, really.”
“And you still don’t have any idea?”

Jonesy shook his head.

As they stood in line to check in, John leaned in close as if he were whispering the world’s biggest secret. “It’s not all about sex, you know. It’s a lifestyle.”

Jonesy nodded earnestly.

“It’s often very subtle, but on other people, you can tell right away. Here, watch this.” John looked up. “Hey, Pete?”

Pete, who was ahead of them in line, turned around. “Yeah?”

“Who’s your favourite Victorian era writer?”

Pete thought for a moment. “I’d probably say Oscar Wilde. His take on aestheticism was so ahead of its time. His writing was phenomenal, and De Profundis absolutely reduced me to tears.”

John turned back to Jonesy. “See? Gay.”

“Come on, so many people like Oscar Wilde because he’s fucking brilliant.”

“Alright, fine,” John turned back around. “Hey Robert?”

Robert turned around, his hair cascading over his shoulder elegantly. “Yes, John?”

“Who’s your favourite artist in the high renaissance movement?”

Robert smiled. “Oh, easily Leonardo da Vinci. I love a good jack of all trades. He contributed more to arts, science, engineering, and mathematics than we realize. We certainly owe a lot of advancements in society to him.”

John turned back to Jonesy. “See? Gay.”

Jonesy shifted nervously. “I don’t know, that’s nothing concrete…”

Their group moved up to the counter, showing their papers and passports one at a time.

Jonesy elbowed John. “Okay, but what about Roger? That’s so ambiguous. He’s, like, both extremes at once.”

“Hey Rog?” John called.

Their singer turned around. “Yeah?”

“Are you gay?”

Roger wrinkled his nose. “Don’t be silly, John. I’m not gay, I’m just sexually attracted to men.”

Behind him, Pete pinched the bridge of his nose. He wrapped an arm around Roger’s waist and ushered him along. “It’s a good thing you’re pretty.”

John turned back to Jonesy, not needing to say anything more. Jonesy just looked nervous. “Okay, John, ask me something. Do the test on me.”

“Alright,” John warned him. “But you have to be absolutely honest.”
Jonesy nodded quickly.

“Who’s your favourite member of the Rolling Stones?”

Jonesy bit his bottom lip, thinking carefully. “Is it, like, who I think is best musically? Or who do I like best as a person?”

“Who you like best as a person.”

“Um…” Jonesy broke out in a cold sweat. “Well, I ran into Mick Jagger once at a concert and we got on really well, I think he’s quite funny. So yeah, he’s my favourite.”

John clapped a hand to his mouth, gasping. “Oh my god.”

Jonesy blanched. “What? Oh my god, no, don’t tell me…”

“Oh no,” John shook his head sadly. “Oh, you poor thing…”

“John!” Jonesy grabbed his arm. “Tell me!”

“Jonesy, I’m so sorry…” John patted him on the shoulder sympathetically. “That was the gayest answer you could have ever chosen. That makes you a top tier, A1 homosexual. You’re the gayest of the gay.”

“Oh god,” Jonesy scrambled, finding a bench. He sat down and buried his head in his hands. “Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.”

John sat down beside him, their friends waiting politely. He placed a hand on Jonesy’s shoulder. “I’m so sorry you had to find out this way.”

“The…the whole time?”

“Yes, I’m afraid.”

“Oh my god. I…I need to phone my family. I need to phone all my old girlfriends and tell them. Oh, god, I need a lawyer to make all the arrangements for me…”

“Jonesy, look at me,” John urged him. “It’s too late. You’re too far gone.”

Jonesy wagged his fist at the sky, crying to the heavens. “Fuck you, Mick Jagger!”

A few feet away, Pete clutched a hand to his heart. “How rude!”

The eight of them finished checking their luggage, and eventually made their way to crash at their terminal, the whole ordeal quite exhausting.

Jonesy rested his head on John’s shoulder, dozing off as he tortuously contemplated his sexuality, and John shared an armrest on the uncomfortable plastic chairs with Bonzo, who was trying to wrangle a deck of cards out of Keith’s hands. Keith accidentally elbowed Roger next to him, who shifted closer to Robert, who was holding hands with Jimmy, who was sharing a magazine with Pete. They all noisily occupied the row of chairs by the wall, waiting to be called for their flight.

John liked people-watching. The airport at midnight was like an alternate reality. However, reality was especially altered in this particular Las Vegas airport, as there were people casually hopped up on hard drugs, people who were most definitely prostitutes lingering around, and other scary looking and unsavoury people just waiting for a flight like them. John watched as a flight from New York
landed, and the passengers exited through the terminal across from them. A particular looking duo caught his eye—a man with long, dirty blond hair and another man with a distinguished looking nose walked side by side, carrying dry-cleaning bags with sparkly, sequined outfits.

“I swear, I’m going to give Beatrice hell for this, Alex. I can’t believe she mixed up our flights like that.”

“Don’t make this another repeat of Amsterdam, Derek. We missed enough shows as it is, we can’t get kicked out of any more. This is where we make the big money.”

John nudged Jonesy awake, about to point them out, but they disappeared before he could prove anything.

Roger pulled out his copy of The Hobbit from his bag, resuming the chapter he left off at on their flight over here. Robert could have recognized that book cover from a mile away. He turned to peer over Roger’s shoulder. “Oh my god. That’s my favourite book of all time, I never knew you were a Tolkien fan!”

Roger put the book down, making the second most important decision of his life. “Actually, it’s John’s. He lent it to me.”

Something dangerous flickered in Robert’s eyes.

They were called to start boarding after that. Everyone stood up, tired and getting grouchy. Before they all went to line up, Robert kissed all seven of his friends on the cheek. He also checked everyone’s tickets, making an important swap along the way. “I’d like to thank each and every one of you for making my birthday a delightful one. I’m so glad I got to share it so intimately with you all. Let’s do it again next year!”

Everyone used the last of their energy to wish Robert happy birthday again and hug him. They all filed into line to get on the plane. John placed a possessive guiding hand on Jonesy’s lower back, and Jonesy shivered. He was getting into something quite dangerous, yet he couldn’t be more excited. Everyone shuffled through the crowded airplane in a tired daze, coming down from their drunken escapades. They were, however, delighted to find that by some stroke of luck, they had the same deadpan flight attendant from before.

Keith was seated next to an older gentleman. Before they had even buckled their seatbelts, Keith was pulling out his wallet. “Hey, wanna make a bet? Five bucks says they’re going to serve cranberry juice instead of orange juice this time.”

“Keith, no,” Bonzo warned him from across the aisle. He tried to confiscate Keith’s wallet, just as the flight attendant passed by to help someone nearby with their overhead storage bin.

She smiled down at Bonzo. “Ah, you again. How was Russia?”

“Couldn’t have been better,” Bonzo winked.

Roger, who was sitting next to Bonzo, furrowed his eyebrows as the attendant kept walking. “What did she mean by that?”

Bonzo sighed. “On the flight over here, Keith accidentally drugged me and I slept like a rock. When I woke up, he and John tried to convince me we were going to Russia and the flight attendant even joined in!”

“Oh no!” Roger looked sympathetic. “How terrible. John and Keith prank me all the time, so I
definitely know what that’s like.”

“You get pranked too?” Bonzo turned to him, excitedly. “Back home, it happens to me all the time because I’m the gullible one.”

“I’m the gullible one too!” Roger exclaimed.

“Our friends are kind of douchebags,” Bonzo agreed.

Roger sighed. “Yeah, we shouldn’t trust them all too much, in hindsight.”

John got the lucky seat next to the window, and Jonesy had the aisle seat. They hadn’t even settled in yet when Robert elbowed his way through to the middle seat, jamming himself down in between the two of them. Robert turned to John, his chin in his hand, batting his eyelashes. “So, John, I heard you like The Hobbit…”

And finally, Jimmy and Pete were crammed in at the very back. The elderly woman who was also sitting with them kindly offered to switch seats so they could be next to each other. They continued sharing their magazine.

Without any delay, the plane took off smoothly and they started their overnight flight back home to London. The lights were dimmed so everyone in the cabin could sleep.

Their deadpan flight attended wheeled through quickly, offering drinks. She tapped Jonesy gently on the shoulder. “Would you like anything, sir?”

“No thank you, I’m a homosexual.” Jonesy explained.

A few rows ahead, Roger and Bonzo whispered enthusiastically, careful not to wake anyone around them.

“Have they done the one where they steal all your clothes while you’re in the shower?” Bonzo asked.

“Oh my god, yes!” Roger gasped. “Last time it was when they were having the repairman over and I had to use a tea towel to cover myself while I signed his cheque.”

“The bastards!”

“Have they ever made you a new drink and convinced you it was delicious, then it turned out to be a mix of random rubbish they found in the fridge?” Roger asked.

“More often than I’d like to admit,” Bonzo frowned. “Usually when I’m hungover and overtired. Have they ever convinced you something, and like, absolutely everyone is in on it?”

Roger buried his face in his hands. “Oh god. One time, right before soundcheck, Pete told me to sing ‘Bowling Sorcerer’. And I was like, Pete, what the hell? I’ve never heard of a song like that before. Keith started laughing and he said we spent a whole day rehearsing it. John played the bassline to try and trigger my memory. Even our roadies tried to help, they told me it was a song about a paraplegic boy named Franklin who didn’t have any arms or legs or whatever, and the only thing he could do was go bowling with a single prosthetic arm and somehow he won every game. Pete started crying because he said it was his opus and I must have hated it or else I would have remembered all the hard work he put into it. I felt so bad, and I was so confused because I could have sworn they were making it up to trick me but everyone around us knew the song by heart. So I took Pete out for dinner later to apologize and he told me the whole Bowling Sorcerer story and it went on for, like,
two hours and I was bored to tears. Also they waited a whole year to tell me it was a joke.”

“Jesus Christ,” Bonzo shook his head. “That sounds like the sort of shit Pete would actually think of though, so I don’t actually blame you.”

“See? That’s what I mean! I can never tell if he’s joking or not when he pitches his weird song ideas.”

At the back of the cabin, Jimmy flipped a magazine page, falling on an ad. “Oh, would you look at that. A Harmony Sovereign H-1270 guitar.”

Pete shifted uncomfortably in his seat. “God, what a beauty.”

“What a magnificent 12 string,” Jimmy purred. “Imagine that sound.”

Pete cleared his throat. “Um, yeah, I really can.”

“There’s even a trapeze tailpiece,” Jimmy gazed over at him.

“Jimmy, don’t,” Pete pleaded, and conveniently covered his lap with a book.

Jimmy smiled innocently. “Look at that rosewood ovalled fingerboard and bridge.”

Pete bit on his knuckle, hard.

“Mm,” Jimmy trailed a finger over the glossy photo of the guitar. “And that Torque-Lok adjustable reinforcing rod…”

“Oh god, I’m going to, um,” Pete broke out in a sweat. He groped his jacket pockets for his cigarette box and then stood up. “I’ll be right back.”

A few rows ahead, the seduction continued.

“Personally, the vivid imagery is what I love the most,” Robert twirled a golden curl around his finger, gazing deeply into John’s eyes. “I’ve never read a book that truly whisked me away like that before. Oh, how I long to be over the hills and far away…”

“What I enjoy even more than the escapism is the poetry of the text, really,” John was rather enthralled in the conversation. “It’s written with such a mesmerizing cadence, you get wrapped in the words for hours.”

Behind Robert, Jonesy cleared his throat loudly. John broke out of his trance to look at him over Robert’s shoulder, giving him an apologetic smile.

“I suppose it’s been popular for so long because of the nostalgic feeling in the story,” Robert purred. “No matter where you are, or how old you are, suddenly you’re a kid being told a bedtime story, just as Tolkien told it to his own children.”

“I hadn’t thought of it that way before,” John grinned. His gaze briefly shifted back to Jonesy, who, in a jealous huff, unbuckled his seatbelt and stalked off down the aisle.

Robert clasped John’s hands in his, stealing his attention back. “Oh, but please, we must talk about the World War One symbolism…”

Jonesy walked down the aisle of the cabin, just as he spotted Pete heading into the lavatory. Pete gestured him over, and Jonesy didn’t hesitate to follow him in and lock the door behind him, secretly
hoping John had seen the whole thing.

“I’m absolutely dying,” Pete slipped his pack of cigarettes out of his jeans pocket and stuck one between his lips. He groped for his matches and lit the cigarette, taking a long drag. He then offered it to Jonesy, who only smoked in stressful situations, and deemed this a great inconvenience.

Jonesy blew the grey smoke out, then waved away the cloud quickly. “Isn’t this some sort of safety hazard?”

“It’s the 1960’s, nobody gives a fuck,” Pete reassured him, taking the cigarette back for another pull. The two sat in comfortable silence, Pete leaning back against the sink and Jonesy against the door, smoking in the restroom like two rebellious schoolboys. Jonesy briefly wondered if he would have been friends with Pete if they had gone to school together as kids.

There was a knock at the door, and they both flinched. Pete scrambled to find something to stamp his cigarette out on, then sighed with relief when he heard the familiar voice. “It’s John, let me in.”

Jonesy unlocked the door as Pete continued puffing away, quickly letting John in before anyone else outside noticed. Jonesy shifted to the back wall with Pete to accommodate the third person. The two stood side by side, arms crossed, sharing the cigarette.

“I was running out of interesting things to tell Robert,” John coughed, the smoky room quickly getting smokier. He narrowed his eyes, letting his jealous suspicion seep through. “What were you two doing?”

“I was teaching little Jonesy here what a rimjob is,” Pete told him.

Jonesy laughed as if he understood what that actually meant. It would take him an embarrassingly long time to learn that a rimjob was not, in fact, a special kind of mouth-on-mouth kissing.

“Very funny,” John crossed his arms. He looked back and forth between the two lanky, naturally submissive men whom he conveniently both fancied. Pete, Jonesy. Jonesy, Pete. Pete or Jonesy? Pete AND Jonesy? A rather delectable thought popped into John’s mind, swirling and growing and intriguing him even further.

There was no time to explore that thought, however. There was another knock at the door. “John, it’s Keith, let me in.”

John unlocked the door and quickly let Keith squish in past him.

Keith hadn’t expected to find two other people in there. He looked worried. “Guys, I gotta pee so bad. Can you just…plug your ears or something?”

“Keith, no,” Pete cried. Keith looked desperate. “You should have gone before we left.”

Another knock at the door. Pete closed the toilet seat and sat on it, pulling his legs up to make more room. Jonesy sat on the small sink counter, and John took the opportunity to stand between the two. Keith opened the door and Bonzo pushed in awkwardly.

“Hey everyone, Roger fell asleep and I got lonely,” Bonzo said quietly, taking a quick headcount. The air was getting stuffy, and Pete made matters worse by finishing his cigarette and lighting another. John plucked it from his lips and took a drag, then Jonesy mimicked the flirtatious gesture and plucked it from John’s lips, and John watched Jonesy’s mouth very carefully. Keith yanked the cigarette in the middle of Jonesy’s languid drag and smoked it nervously to distract himself. He had a feeling his friends were going to make him wait forever to pee.
The cramped lavatory was getting a bit too stuffy, but they would all be bored to tears if they went back to their seats. Keith shifted from foot to foot, struggling to hold in his pee. “So, it’s technically the end of the trip, right? Did Roger ever tell the truth about Sky Biscotti? Who won the bet?”

“Roger hasn’t come clean yet,” Pete grinned. “I told you, he’s going to hold it over Robert’s head forever.”

Keith pulled out his wallet from his trouser pocket, peering inside. “By the way, I sorta lost all the betting money.”

“Keith, how do you just randomly lose—” Pete cried. “You’ve been gambling again, haven’t you?” Keith shrugged. “Technically it’s your fault for not noticing and stopping me, so…”

“You have a serious problem,” Pete told him. “We need to sign you up for a support group or something.”

“To be fair, we were smack dab in the middle of gambling Valhalla for a weekend,” Bonzo defended him. “When in Rome…”

“That’s another thing I was wondering,” Pete asked John, wanting to take a stab. “You said you were going to tell me what you and Jonesy did all weekend to earn that money you keep waving around.”

Instead of being humiliated like Pete was waiting for, John just shrugged. Jonesy looked nonchalant, and the two drummers stared at them.

“You mean you haven’t told him yet?” Bonzo asked the bassists.

“We worked as gay strippers,” John told Pete.

Pete laughed. “No, really, what were you doing?”

“We actually did,” Jonesy told Pete, and the others nodded in agreement.

“Come on, I’m not going to fall for that again,” Pete rolled his eyes with a chuckle. “Just tell me!”

“Fine, fine,” John humored him. “We went to a giant orgy in the hotel and stole everyone’s wallets.”

Pete scrunched his eyebrows together. “Really? I didn’t see you there.”

John stared at him. “What?”

Pete stared back. “I mean, what? What’s an orgy?”

A sharp knock interrupted the incredibly awkward confession.

Jonesy shook his head quickly. They couldn’t fit another person inside.

“Occupado,” John called to the person by the door.

“It’s Robert, I know you’re all in there,” Robert whispered back. Bonzo, always a loyal friend, unlocked the door for him let the sixth person cram into the lavatory with them. Now everyone was uncomfortably elbowing one another, but let’s be real here, their friend group had no boundaries around each other at this point.
Jonesy conveniently pressed against John, who was happily smushed against Pete and was already scheming in his head. There was another knock at the door.

“Go away, I’m taking a shit,” Keith called out. They heard someone outside grumble and walk away.

“John,” Robert called across the lavatory in a hushed voice. “You haven’t even told me about your comparisons with the Lord of the Rings. Maybe you should come over some time for a drink and we can talk about it…”

The other four men awkwardly stood in between the equally awkward flirting. Quite literally, too.

Keith decided he should take one for the team as an apology for losing the bet money. Also, it was about time they stirred things up again. “Actually, Robert. I’ve been meaning to tell you. J.R.R Tolkien is actually my, uh, great-uncle.”

Robert shuffled to face Keith, his eyes lighting up with that familiar look. “Oh my god.”

Keith nodded. “Yeah, no lie. I usually keep it a secret because people get really crazy about it, but I figured you’d like to know.”

Everyone nodded quickly in agreement. Robert gave him a sly smile. “Oh, Keith…have I ever mentioned how handsome I find you? Perhaps you should come over sometime, we can share a bottle of wine and you can show me your…” Robert purred languidly. “…family photo albums.”

“Definitely. Come back to my seat and I’ll tell you embarrassing stories about him at our family Christmas parties,” Keith took Robert’s hand and they slipped out of the lavatory. The remaining four men gave Keith a hero’s salute as he left.

“Such a brave man,” Bonzo smiled forlornly. Jonesy grinned mischievously, now having John all to himself again.

John sighed in relief. “That was scary. I thought I was going to be the next Roger.”

“Don’t speak so soon,” Pete told him. “Robert’s going to find out eventually.”

“I give it until the end of the flight. Robert is the biggest Tolkien fan, he could definitely tell when some facts don’t line up,” Jonesy added.

“Keith is the best bullshitter I know,” Bonzo defended him. “He can convince anyone anything he wants. He once told me Queen Elizabeth used to be a man and I still sort of believe it.”

John shook his head. “He’ll crack the moment Robert tries to seduce him. Keith’ll give it up and back pedal the fuck out of there.”

“Why can’t anyone be honest with Robert for once?” Bonzo frowned. “We’re all caught in a web of lies. All you need to tell him is that you’re not interested.”

“I do suppose we owe him the simple dignity,” John pondered quietly.

“But what fun would it be if we were all good people?” Pete asked one of life’s biggest, incomprehensible questions as he leaned back against the lavatory wall. He lit another cigarette and passed it around.

They all frowned out of pity, and then took out their wallets to place the bet anyways.
Chapter End Notes

it's the end, folks!

page count: 142. holy shit.
times ‘cock’ was mentioned: 28. not nearly enough, in my opinion.
historical and cultural inaccuracies: six billion

thank you all for sticking around for yet another journey! as always, your comments and feedback are always appreciated. after this, i’m going to focus on writing a rather large project. i aimed to have it done by the end of june so hopefully i can stick to my goal! keep in touch on one of my blogs [my-g-g-g-generation.tumblr.com], i love hearing from you all! thank you for everything! :D

Keith's Mix:

1. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
2. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
3. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
4. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
5. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
6. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
7. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
8. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
9. Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys
10. Keith's Epic Drum Solo, as interrupted by Pete

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