keep them in your mason jars (i've come home)
by sincehewaseeighteen

Summary

“I saw them there and I wanted to know what they were. I thought they were maybe tea lights or something but there’s things written on them. Like middle school and other happy things. Do you collect things?”

“Memories,” Louis blurts out, hand so tight on Harry’s shoulder his fingers could bruise into him. But he needs something to hold onto in fear he may fall over and pass out if he doesn’t. “I collect memories.”

But the silence between them is unsettling. As each cold second passes, the thought of Harry shouting out loud that he’s a freak is doubling. The thought of Harry running away and never coming back to him again is tripling.

Until Harry speaks. “You have fifty mason jars sitting outside with memories inside them?”

or the high school au where louis believes he can hold memories inside mason jars to last a lifetime, and harry holds both louis and his unique tradition deep in his heart. otherwise known as the mason jar fic.

Notes

rightio. i've been writing this 'little' thing since february. originally it was supposed to be 40k but aha blame how much fucking fluff i added in here because one direction has caused me
endless amounts of pain.

anyway, damn well enjoy because you deserve to. please note that there may possibly well be a few mistakes. it's been 9 months out of school and i've almost forgotten everything next to nothing about english and literature. please forgive me. (bless u if u do)

russian translation by iloveholl

italian translation: to be completed.

my tumblr is this one, and the photoset is this one here. please reblog it if you can, otherwise enjoy one of the favourite ever works i've created, and possibly one of my best.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

With an uneasy sigh, he falls deep into the birch bentwood located in the very centre of the school library. The book that folds out neatly in Louis’ lap is no other than the tale of Oedipus the King. One would say that he’s deep in the 400-page book, the book spread out to appear as if he’s read three-quarters of the text already. However, if you’d assume that, you’d would be wrong, as Louis has only read two pages of the third play; the only play he is supposed to be reading. His Literature teacher is going to have him at his throat.

“Alright,” he murmurs to himself. He swallows his panic hoping it will settle as a replacement meal for today’s uneaten lunch. He needs to, at least, read to line 500 by the end of the break. The library seemed like a good spot to read, to not get distracted. “Focus, Louis. It’s only a small play.”

He glares at the tiny print on the paper, blinking confusedly when the text blended into one massive blur. Louis readjusts the glasses balanced on the bridge of his nose. His vision becomes even more terribly impaired the more he tries to glare at the words. Maybe it’s a sign that Literature not only ruins your view on the morality of your society, but your vision... literally. Fuck.

“Act, defend yourself, your former glory! Your country calls you savio-- Oh look, line 60 already!” Louis cheers absentmindedly. With a tight grin on his lips, he continues through the rest of the Priest’s dialogue, coming across words he can barely pronounce let alone know the meaning of. He skips plenty of sentences, and plenty more pieces of dialogue to finally reach to line 375 “and I’ll never reveal my dreadful secrets…”

He pauses to reach for his water bottle inside his day pack. He takes, what Louis supposes is, a well-deserved break, opening his mouth and sipping at his drink. He drags out his actions purposely, forgetting to screw the lid around the bottle’s lip so that he could pick the drink up again and retighten the seal. He wastes 2 minutes of his time with nonsense, snapping himself out of his usual procrastination antics and delving himself in the Theban play once again.

He doesn’t look at the text. He presents himself to look like he is. His eyes make direct contact with the crease line in the centre of the book. He wastes another minute blankly staring at the paper, a discoloured yellow that’s thin and easy to tear. Oh yes, the colour also has a few imperfections in its tone, a few white specs, black specs, here and there. And the printing of the font on the page is uneven. The two O's in the same line of Oedipus’ dialogue isn’t the same-- fuck.

Louis knew from the very start of his Literature course back he wouldn’t be able to complete it. His mindset from three months ago hasn’t changed now. He can’t even read 375 lines properly without going into boredom overdrive. With that being said, he definitely would not be able to complete the in-class essay next Thursday on the play. Louis is so fucking fucked. He doesn’t know how he let himself stoop so low to end up failing the lowest stage of Literature provided by his school. He doesn’t know at all.

“Christ,” an urgent voice whispers. Louis loses all focus on his book. Not as if he was paying any attention to it anyway... But whatever. His eyes divert upwards to where the voice came from. It’s hidden behind the bookcase next to Louis’ chair. “Hello?”

So mystery person is taking a phone call inside the school library. Maybe not so convenient considering a library is a place for absolutely no talking whatsoever. This is going to be some delicious gossip to tell if the person’s busted for chatting in the library, not to mention the fact he’s using a mobile phone during school hours. A dickhead, this mystery kid is.
“Why are you calling me, what’s so important? You know I can’t talk to you during school hours.”
Louis rules out the fact that this kid might be new to the school. He knows the rules. He knows he
shouldn’t be doing this. God knows why he chose the library out of all places to have an over the
line conversation with someone. “Yeah, I know, mum. She called me last night. I haven’t forgotten.”

His own damn mother. How sweet.

“I’ll be home at seven,” the mysterious boy, Louis can now identify through the hoarse whispers,
speaks with sincerity in his voice. It reminds Louis of when he used to speak to his mother on the
phone every day like that. Always after school when he would go to Niall’s house, tell her that he’d
be back by five, ready for dinner, washed up with hands-free of any dirt, grime and worries. Louis
can’t remember the last time he had a proper phone call with his mum. By that, he means a proper
phone call where he doesn’t lie at least once.

The bookshelf hiding the man creaks just where Louis’ chair is settled. Louis’ breath hitches in his
throat, body frozen as he glances at the unmoved books. There’s silence in their air; as there should
be. But soon enough, footsteps are pacing further and further away from Louis’ hideaway and the
voice grows softer as he continues to speak on the phone. Louis sighs once again, looking down to
the book and trying to sharpen his glare at line 376 of the play.

It’s silent for an extensive amount of time. Louis composes himself and drowns in the words spoken
by Tiresias towards Oedipus. Suddenly, an abrupt voice sneaks up behind Louis’ back and frightens
him. He squeaks, snapping his head leftward to see the mystery man slouching as if he’s not hidden
enough behind the tall shelves. He’s got his phone tucked close to his ear, a hand cupping around it
as his pink mouth hangs open mid-sentence. He’s got long hair that passes his shoulders. A feral,
Louis declares he is. A lovely looking feral.

Louis then realises he must have been completely concealed by the bentwood’s back.

Beady green eyes stare intently at Louis. He can’t tell whether or not the boy’s planning his next
move or if he’s just startled that he got caught in the act. It’s not like Louis is going to tattle-tale about
what he’s doing. He’s just as panicked as the boy is, as a matter of fact. How dare he scare him like
that.

“I,” the boy says, Louis’ unsure if it was towards him or the phone, “Yeah.”

Louis doesn’t speak a word. It’s just a fucking phone call for God’s sake but the man’s expression
belongs to someone who just got caught slaughtering 5 cats. He glances at his book, still nestled
between the gap of his thighs, and thinks to himself. It’s the first lot of good thinking he’s actually
done today. A few muted seconds later, he tilts his head up again, seeing the man in the same
position as he was when Louis first caught eyes with him.

Louis sends a reassuring smile, one of earnestness and endearment. The man doesn’t hesitate to smile
back, a goofy grin with a bit of tongue popping out between his top and bottom teeth. It sends Louis
spiralling into a world of delight and bashfulness. He’s got pink high on his cheeks when he sends
his eyes straight down to the crevasse of his book once again, screening his shyness from any
observance. The next time he looks up, the long haired man is gone, and so has the mysterious voice
he carried around with him.

Before proceeding, Louis checks if anyone has the ability to spot him. He realises that he’s in the all
clear. He bends down to his day pack once more to bring out an empty mason jar, washed and
cleared from anything that was once contained within it. He opens the lid, placing it in his lap, and
swoops forward to collect what looks to be nothing but the silent air of the library. He then fumbles
with the lid, closing the mason jar and shoves it in his bag quickly to prevent anyone from seeing
what he has done.

The bell rings ten minutes later and he rushes out of the library to the final period of the day; Literature. Louis only gets to line 523 of the Oedipus play, but he supposes that’s enough to kind of get the story line. Kind of.

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After his drive back home that afternoon, he locks himself inside the desolate house. His first instinct is to walk to the kitchen, where he could either find his mother dressed with her cherry red apron tied around her waist, occupied behind the stove, or a lonely sticky note. As expected, stuck on the marble counter is a yellow square, Louis picking it up and instantly recognising his mother’s handwriting. Dinner’s in the fridge, love mummy x, it says.

He finds a foil wrapped bowl in the fridge, inspecting what this “so called dinner” was. Alfredo. Also expected. He closes the fridge door with nothing more than a solemn sigh, soon stumbling up the stairs to the second storey of the house. His bedroom lies at the very end of the upstairs corridor, the area quite obscurely dark even though it’s only early afternoon. He passes his sister’s room, noticing the door was left open with her three dolls by her tea set; a thing she always does before their mother takes her to play time with Louis’ niece. It saves Louis the stress of looking after his four-year-old sister after school hours. It gives him plenty of opportunities to do things without being interrupted too...

Like Literature homework.

Opening the door to his room is like entering the gates of heaven itself. Not so much for the fact that the room is pristine or has a ten-course buffet ready to devour, but the tall window framing his balcony doors floods light into his room. It makes the white walls look whiter and the double bed in the corner of his room seem as if they were the clouds themselves. But before he drops face first to his mattress and falls into a three-hour nap, he has some business to attend to.

He unzips his day pack, reaching in for the mason jar he used earlier. He takes it out, dumping his bag on the carpet, and walks to the second door of his room; the balcony entrance. Unlatching the door’s lock, he swings the door open and the sheer curtain immediately blows in his face. Louis moves past it, unfazed, and steps outside to where 50 mason jars are scattered on the balcony’s railing, on the painted planks that support his feet, on the homemade shelves...

Everywhere you look there would be an empty mason jar, only the fair few having pieces of papers inside them. Louis knows those special papers have writing on them. Most of the jars have writing on their glass exterior. This is so he could identify them for future purposes.

Louis puts the mason jar in his hands on a shelf, placed next to another jar labelled “First day of middle school.”

He steps back and looks at the jar he had just positioned. It’s taller than half of the jars Louis has. He doesn’t mind, however. All jars came in different sizes, just like people. Just like memories.

He breathes in the Autumn air while glancing at the sky. Up there, he spots a cloud in the shape of a lighthouse. No one else could probably recognise it as so. Louis purses his lips together into a tight smile, one that’s unsettled. It doesn’t take long for him to tilt his head downward to look at the planks
beneath him. He bunches his fists up into secure bundles to compose himself.

“Hold them forever, Nan said,” Louis murmurs to himself. “They’re held indefinitely here.”

Louis reaches into his nine-year-old memory, seeing himself sitting before his Granny. She was sat on the lone couch by the TV, knitting, as most Grannies do. Louis was there with a doll, one that Granny herself made for her favourite grandchild. He still has the doll now, Louis remembers. It’s perched on top of his dresser.

“Louis,” she had whispered to him, a gentle voice that’s smoother than the seaside’s waves. “I have a gift for you.”

A present. Louis stands up quicker than the old woman could blink. He immediately stretches his hands out for whatever his Nan was knitting. Instead, he was gifted a glass jar, one with a gold lid. It was empty.

“No lollies?” Louis murmured. An innocent being he was.

“No lollies,” his Granny whispered with a chuckle. “Not yet, anyway. But don’t tell your mother.”

Louis giggles to himself, but is soon enamoured by this random object he could easily find at the bottom of his kitchen cupboard. Why did his Nan give him something so easy to find, so easy to break?

“This is a special gift from me to you, my dear,” his Granny told him. Louis inspected closer. No rainbows were inside it, no invisible fairy. This was a plain mason jar that had been washed out and given to him. What is he supposed to do with it? “A long time ago, and I mean when I was about your age, I found a jar in my cupboard just like this one. It’s a bit dusty now, maybe broken. But I still remember the day I held it in my hands and thought of the most precious of ways to keep my most fond memories in perfect condition.

“I went outside and found the most beautiful flower, Louis. I kept it in the jar and little did I know that the pretty little thing would die after two days. Your great-grandmother threw the flower away but kept the jar in my room. And you know what? I looked at that jar every single day from there on and every time I looked at it, I remembered the very day I found that flower and how beautiful it was, how magical the day was. I collected more jars, and instead of collecting more flowers, I collected the air that filled the day, the air that brightened my mood.”

Louis glared at her as if she was straight out of a mental asylum. But his Granny continued to talk.

“You see this jar that I have here?” She pulled out her own small jar, similar to Louis’. “This is the jar I used when I first met your Grandpa. A few weeks later, he found out what I was doing, and he joined me in collecting memories while we journeyed through our lives.”

He held the jar out in his hands. It’s clear on the inside, just filled with air, but there’s so much more to it. 70-year-old air was inside that jar. A 70-year-old memory. Only Louis and his grandparents knew what was inside that jar. It’s just a clear jar to everyone else. This was... kind of beautiful.

“You mother didn’t carry on with something like this. She broke her first jar and forgotten about it after time passed by. But you, Louis, I think you should do something that carries on with our family. To keep our memories together, to keep your memories safe. Literally.”

He blinked at his Granny twice, blank in the face but not in the mind. His Granny smiled to him wholeheartedly. Louis loves her so much. He would do anything for her to keep her happy. To make sure he could be the best grandson.
“You’re an absolute treasure, you know that, Louis?”

He cupped the jar tighter in his hands, holding it close to his heart and saying “Thank you Granny,” and smiling delightedly. His Granny watched him sit down again and instead of playing with his knitted doll, Louis opened the jar to only close it a few seconds later. She watched in awe.

“Look Granny!” Louis squeaked, holding up the closed jar. “I did it!”

His Granny grins proud and enthralled. “Yes, yes you did.”

Nine months later, Louis’ grandmother passed away in her sleep. Louis slept with the gifted mason jar by his nightstand for four years.

The town lighthouse was the last place Louis went with his Granny. The Summer was bliss and the trip to the seaside was unforgettable. Louis collected the memory, along with a few seashells that sit at the bottom of the glass jar. He remembers the salt wafting through the air as it gathered in his mousy brown hair. He remembers the sand sliding between his toes to be found in the shower, the bed, and everywhere in between three days later. He remembers holding his Granny’s hand, listening to her hum a sweet melody as they walked to the pier; their final destination of that magical evening.

The sunset was beautiful that night. It was the last one they’d spent together.

It was downhill from there. Louis would’ve never thought his mind would fall succumb to mild depression. He never thought that his grandma’s passing would affect him to this very day. Eight years. The funeral replays as clear as day in his mind, the sweet scent of the fresh chrysanthemums scattered on her coffin; her favourite.

Louis unclasps his balled fists, looking to the sky now just a shade of blue lighter. It’s fading into soft tones of vibrant orange. He walks back inside from the balcony before sunset dares to come any closer to him. He falls into his bed, tucking himself deep into the white duvet and dreams of a happier tomorrow.

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A week after he’d been on the balcony, he finds himself face to face with the same long haired wonder.

Resting against the bentwood is Louis, once again. If the boy is stupid, he could conclude that Louis hasn’t moved at all in the past week. But a preposterous idea like that could never come from someone who is smart enough. Then again, Louis is talking about the same boy who did use a mobile phone during school hours in the quietest place on school grounds.

But this time, the boy isn’t talking on the phone, or talking at all for that matter. He’s been strolling around for a while, Louis has seen him pace up and down a few non-fiction aisles nearby. The boy is by the same bookshelf where he had frightened Louis before. The situation is quite similar, both of them eyeing at each other with little to no idea on what to do next.

However, this time, the boy’s the first one to smile. It makes Louis’ heart stop and stutter against his ribs. His cheeks indent, small dimples pop out and smile to Louis themselves. He wears the grin beautifully. The boy’s eyes are comforting. They remind him of his grandmother’s. Louis beams a grin back, game enough to lift his hand from where his fingers clutched the book page to wave over
to him. There is a pregnant pause that stops them both from breathing suddenly, but then the man turns his back to Louis. Louis watches his behind, seeing he’s gazing at, what Louis supposes is, the book he’s been looking for.

He slides out his selection then views the blurb. The boy hums approvingly, turning on his heels and pacing away from Louis in the bentwood. Louis is about to continue with his reading of the Theban play, which yes, he still hasn’t finished despite facing the consequences of going into tomorrow’s in-class essay unprepared. He sees something fall out of the man’s pocket, which was perceived to be impossible due to how tight his jeans are around his thighs. It’s a small black object. Louis recognises it as his USB.

“Wait,” Louis calls out in a firm whisper. He rests his book aside and stands from the chair, trotting over to the USB on the floor. He picks it up with his pointer finger and thumb then proceeds to examine it. Louis looks to where the man had walked away to the left. He’s gone. As if he’s just vanished into thin air. “Shit.”

After a further search around the library, he can finalise that he’s going to have to wait until the boy tries to track down his missing USB. He can also safely say that the curly haired, green-eyed, charming man is of the name Harry Styles. The name was carved in neat capital letters on the USB’s plastic surface. Louis runs his fingers over the engraving. It burns heat into his skin. Also grazes plastic shavings into his thumb. Whatever.

He strolls back to the bentwood to finish up the final few pages of Oedipus the King. The bell rings thirteen minutes later, and Louis still hasn’t finished the damn play.

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He leaves his Math class with a notoriously bored expression on his face. Before travelling out of school grounds to drive back home, he walks to his locker located in the Music blocks’ corridor. He snatches his day pack, his lunch - which he yet again didn’t eat - and his Literature study notes with The Three Theban Plays book. When he gets home, he’s going head first into study for the essay tomorrow morning. He can’t fuck it up that bad. It’s a small play, a simple topic to write about. The contextual meaning of Oedipus the King. *Ha ha,* simple...

The walk out of school grounds is uneventful. He says goodbye to a few fellow students from his classes and proceeds to head to the emptying parking lot. However, if Louis were walking any slower or faster, he would have missed the long locks of hair that blew in the gentle town breeze. He puts two and two together. The man who sports the white t-shirt and tight black skinnies, now walking to his car, who lost his USB earlier today, is, in fact, Harry Styles.

He doesn’t wave a hand around like a maniac to grab his attention. Neither does he call out. Instead, he runs like bison in a stampede. He sprints to Harry as if it’s the last time he is ever going to see him again. He earns Harry’s warm eyes on him when Louis’ footsteps echo closer from the bitumen underneath them. Louis is in awe when he comes face to face with Harry for the third time in the past week. He’s more pretty when close up. His eyes radiate all sorts of magnificence. Harry’s definitely something else.

“Hi,” Louis says with his untimely breathing. Harry smiles at him, amused and probably confused. “I... um, I have something of yours.”
He slings his bag over his shoulder to have the bag resting on his front. He reaches in to search for the USB deep inside his pack, feeling Harry’s eyes burn deep into the top of his head as Louis struggles to find it. He takes out his Literature books and places them next to his feet, finally having enough light and space to see the USB clearly stowed away in the very corner of his pack. He hands it over to Harry confidently, the boy’s green eyes lifting with his eyebrows as his mouth pours out gasps and stutters.

“I-I, oh my God, how did you... Where d-did you--”

“You dropped it in the library earlier,” Louis tells him. “You know, when you were in the central part of the library, looking for that book. I saw it fall from your pocket or something, and I tried finding you all over the library and couldn’t find you so... I kept it thinking you’d probably come around tomorrow trying to look for it.”

The thankful man nods excitedly. “I would have, for sure. Oh fuck-- I have never felt more in debt! You have no idea how panicked I was when I found out it wasn’t in my pocket last period. I have an assignment due tomorrow morning, and the file was on here.” He shows his USB to Louis as if it’s the first time he had seen it. “Man, honestly. I need to repay you somehow. You’ve saved my ass--”

“Harry, it’s just a USB,” Louis states. Harry’s face lights up further when he hears his name being said. He takes an easy guess that Harry didn't expect him to know his name. “No compensation needed. You’re alright.”

Harry snickers shakily, eyes directing away from Louis' as he scratches the back of his neck with his free hand.

“Yes, I know... Ha ha, sorry. I just... Sorry,” Harry rambles awkwardly. “You know, it’s a massive thing you’ve done. It doesn’t seem like a lot like… it’s a damn USB but... wait.” Louis follows Harry’s gaze. It’s straight to the Literature book on the bitumen. Oh. He forgot to pick that up. “You study Literature?”

He said that so passively that Louis is almost afraid to say “yes” just in case Harry begins to tease him. Yes, it’s studying the beauty of a book, and some other stuff. And he might like poetry. Whatever. Jocks always take the piss out of him for choosing Literature. Always asking Louis why he selected a “girly” subject. As if subjects have fucking genders or something.

“Um, yeah,” Louis says apprehensively, bending down to collect the books hastily. He doesn’t want a cute boy coming for him with this entire gendered subject bullshit. He’d rather not know that Harry might be some misogynistic bully. He stuffs his notes and The Theban Plays in his bag and zips the pack up, hoping to move away from the conversation, and maybe Harry altogether. “Trying to, anyway. It’s... It’s not that great of a subject.”

“Oh, that’s where you’re wrong. Literature is beautiful. As a matter of fact, I’m studying it now as well.” Harry speaks proudly. His eyes glitter when he expresses his subject choice. If that isn’t a plot twist, Louis will never know what is. “I never knew there were two classes of third stage?”

“There isn’t,” Louis murmurs, shuffling on his feet restlessly. “I’m the lowest stage they offer here. I’ve never been great at English, let alone Literature. I feel like there’s a part I’m missing about it because it isn’t as beautiful as Miss Watts makes it out to be. Like, I want to be able to experience that. I don’t put a lot of effort into it so that may be the problem.”

Something lights up in Harry’s eyes, and it isn’t the excitement from earlier. It shouldn’t nerve Louis, but it does.
“You know,” Harry begins, “If you’re up for it, I could like... You know, tutor you? You did give me my USB back after all and regardless of what you say, I’m going to pay you back somehow.”

Tutoring. Not an offer Louis thought would come out of Harry’s mouth, but it’s there ready for Louis to take. “Like... Really? You’d do that for me?” Louis questions. Harry only nods, no sign of regret for the proposal he’s given. Louis grins. “That would be really nice... Lovely, even.”

“I’ll do it,” Harry claims, slipping a blue pen from his pocket and poking at Louis’ forearm. “I’ll write my number on your arm. Just message me when you want to study up a few things or need some help. I can be a bit busy sometimes so planning ahead is probably better, but if you have any questions and stuff I’ll be a text away!”

Louis smiles, endeared by his cheerful aura. “No worries, mate.”

He leaves Harry to it after a few minutes more of pleasant conversation. Blue biro is up his arm in forms of letters and numbers, including a flat smiley face. He gets into his car and bites into his lip, over-excited about the fact that he and Harry are in no doubt going to be spending a lot more time together. A cute boy hasn’t appealed to Louis in a very long time. His senior year has turned for him.

He’s ten minutes into his drive back home when he suddenly realises that Harry doesn’t have a shit’s clue what Louis’ name is, at all.

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heyy it’s louis! the guy who gave you back your usb. realised i never told u my name ha ha. anyway turns out i have a bit to do in the next few days but i’m alright for this saturday if ur free of course. thnks again for offering this!

It takes him a lot longer than usual to hit the send button. He gets to it eventually, after minutes of making sure that he sounds every bit reasonable in his first ever message to the pretty boy. Harry doesn’t take long to see the delivered message. The writing bubble pops out from the left soon after that.

Louis, gotcha! and thanks again for the USB!! i totally forgot about asking for your name. bit ridiculous that. anyway Saturday is perfect!!! i’m free from 10am until a little after lunch. public library sound good to you?? :)”

Two entire hours with Harry. For studying... of course. Only studying.

perfect. i’ll meet u at the front. i’ll send a msg when i’m close :)

The fore-coming Saturday comes quick, and Louis arrives at the Public Library to see Harry already standing out the front. He parks in the lot, looking to the passenger seat where his Literature notes are gathered. He picks them up and leaves his car to meet face to face with Harry. Harry approaches him with a brilliant smile.

“Fancy seeing you here,” Louis greets. Harry laughs a simple ‘hi’. “So, um. I probably should have picked a better time because I haven’t received my results from my in-class on Thursday. That might have helped a little on what you should teach me and stuff.”

“Not needed for now. I was planning to start from scratch, you know? You said you had a bit of a
problem grasping the beauty of it all, so I feel like it’s just the concepts that you maybe need to focus on,” Harry says. Louis glares at him blankly, almost horrified. “And don’t be afraid. It’s much easier to grasp than wet soap, I can tell you that.”

_Bullshit_, Louis wants to say. He restricts his mouth from doing so and filters his mind. He needs to seem interested, maybe a bit more enthusiastic. A cute boy’s tutoring him. He can’t look too stupid, or say stupid things. He wants- no, needs, to impress him.

They enter the library, and by the view of the parking lot when driving in there is probably no more than four people currently inside. Harry leads them to a large wooden table by a set of Apple computers, setting down his work books and bringing a chair out for Louis to take. Louis thanks him before sitting down, eyes following Harry’s lean body as he moves around Louis’ chair to sit in his own.

“Right,” Harry starts off, opening a smallish yellow book. Louis gulps. It’s a thick book with small print. His worst nightmare. “How do you feel you went during the essay on Thursday?”

Where to begin. “Totally unprepared. Tired, for sure. Maybe like... Like I’ve been set up to fail? It’s hard to explain--”

“So you think you went pretty shit, yeah?”

Louis tries to swallow a laugh, but it comes out soft within his words. “That’s the easy way to say it.”

“Do you know why you felt like that, Lou?” Lou. God, Louis trusts a man who he caught rebelling in the school library much more than 99% of the town’s population at the moment. He trusts a man who had offered him tutoring lessons after a few sentences to each other. Louis, without a doubt, will lose himself as easily as Harry lost his USB.

“I...” It takes him time to gather his words. The nickname knocked him right over. He hasn’t been called Lou by new people in a long time. The name is very much kept for Niall or his mother. But it rolls off Harry’s tongue so languidly, so smoothly. He hopes he says it again, and again. All the way until next Winter ends. “I just didn’t understand the book, the play. I’m not interested in it. It’s not good. I can’t read something unless I’m into it, you know?”

Harry nods knowingly, and Louis is relieved at that. “I do know,” he clarifies, “And you have every bit of reason to not be interested in Oedipus, I mean, they make you study this shit because there’s themes within Greek tragedy that are good for Literature study. Personally, I think that there’s a lot more we can study than books which describe incestuous relationships which ends up with four people hanging themselves and the other twenty living in exile.”

He stares disgusted at Harry. “Is that what Oedipus the King is about?”

Harry nods knowingly, and Louis is relieved at that. “I do know,” he clarifies, “And you have every bit of reason to not be interested in Oedipus, I mean, they make you study this shit because there’s themes within Greek tragedy that are good for Literature study. Personally, I think that there’s a lot more we can study than books which describe incestuous relationships which ends up with four people hanging themselves and the other twenty living in exile.”

Harry grins after a silent pause. “You didn’t read the entire book, did you?” Louis had never said he did.

“Never said I did,” Louis backfires. Harry accepts that with a small shrug. “But honestly, I’m fucking glad I didn’t. What the fuck? I mean... I’ve heard about the incest stuff, but four people hanging themselves? Really? Did they have anything to do with the relationship?”

“No, and that’s the stupid thing about it. And four people didn’t hang themselves. Oedipus gouges out his eyes and exiles himself from Thebes. His wife, who is also his mother, kills herself. That’s the content those sick people enjoyed back in those days. Interesting, isn’t it?” Harry mutters
sarcastically. Louis can’t remove the state of revolt from his face. “I studied this last year during second stage. It was a very pleasant few weeks we spend studying this play.”

Louis wants to quit Literature while he’s ahead. Fuck this. He doesn’t want to study something so devastating. He will work ten times as hard to get back into a proper English course. This is mayhem.

“That entire story is tragic,” Louis says, his head in his two hands. “A mess, just... Tragic.”

“Clearly why it’s called a Greek tragedy,” Harry says, bumping Louis’ ankle with his own. The touch pleases him. “But the real question is, why isn’t there an Era named after me? All my life seems to be is messy and tragic.”

“Oh please. Do you take drama class as well?”

Harry smirks. “Would it please you if I said yes?”

“For one, it wouldn’t surprise me if you did. And two, I would also know that you’re lying because I, in fact, take that class and know that there’s only one stage available at our school for seniors to take.”

“I would never lie,” Harry comments playfully. “Also, drama class, hm? Are you the diva kid who I hear passes out every time they’re about to enter Maths class just to get out of doing Algebra? Are you going to threaten to hide away in your locker forever if you end up failing your Lit course?”

“Now, now, with you here, I would certainly hope I won’t be failing my Lit course. I’m not paying you to be a horrible teacher, Styles.”

“You’re not paying me at all, actually,” Harry laughs. “And no, don’t offer me money, or donuts. It’s hard enough finding someone nice who studies the same thing as me. I’ll take the opportunity as is.”

“Glad to be your nice companion,” Louis says, admiring the way Harry’s eyes flicker to him and glow brighter. “Donuts, hey?”

“Gets me on my knees, every time.”

Fuck.

It takes a moment for Harry to understand what’s off about his sentence. Then, there’s the light bulb that blinks on in his head, and a flaming red colour begins to spread across his cheeks.

“Unintentional innuendos are a blast, aren’t they?” Harry groans in his hands, obviously embarrassed. Louis tries to choke down his laugh, but it sputters out as he cackles with his head down to the table. Harry kicks his chair to try silence him. “It wasn’t supposed to sound like... that, I swear.”

“Sound like what?” Louis grins cheekily. Harry groans again, miserably. “Please, Harry. I’m only young. What is a penis.”

Harry picks up his small notebook and cracks it over Louis’ head. Louis throws his head back and barks out in ridiculous laughter. A librarian guiding a book cart passes by their table and asks the two boys to quieten down for the other patrons. Both apologise, not sincerely, however. Louis supposes the librarian would have enough expertise in this job to know that.

They do quieten down, though. Now laughed out and relaxed, Louis leans on his books with his
elbow to glance at Harry, still red in the face and unable to directly look at Louis in the eye.

“Weak at the knees, I think would have been the most appropriate thing to say.”

Harry breaks out in a super massive grin, eyes lifting to see Louis also smiling back. “It’s funny how I, a Literature student, had totally forgotten one of the most used phrases in the universe, only to stuff it up and turn it into an innuendo.”

“You know what’s funnier? You making an innuendo about sucking cock without realising it—”

“I will not hesitate to crack this book over your head again,” Harry warns. Louis mercies with his hands in the air, earning a proud simper from Harry. “But as much as I would love to ramble on about stupid remarks and cock related things, we have a bit of work to do to make sure you can kick Literature’s ass.”

Louis agrees with a hum, silencing himself from any further banter.

The more Louis or Harry tries to remind one another that they need to do something, the less they actually do. Harry drifts on about some excellent coffee at a café down the street from his place. It ends up with Louis discussing his favourite things in the universe with Harry leaning on his arm listening to him babble on for twenty minutes straight. He’s charmed enough not to interrupt Louis with a ‘we need to get back to work’ anytime during his shit talk. They get something done within the two hours they’re there. With that being said, the something they actually get done is talking endlessly, getting to know each other plenty. And by the end of their session, Louis wants to tuck his head into the curve of Harry’s neck and fall asleep with his nose buried in his curls.

Harry’s timer on his phone sounds and the buzz startles them both. Harry’s movements are panicky as he turns off the alarm, looking to Louis apologetically with a weak smile.

“God, I’m so sorry,” he says, as if he’s foolish, “We didn’t get much done, at all.”

Of course they didn’t get anything done. Louis could say they wasted their time, but this wasn’t a waste. Getting to know someone isn’t a waste. Spending time talking to Harry isn’t a waste of time at all.

“It’s alright,” Louis says reassuringly. Harry is about to dispute, but Louis cuts him off short. “A mate of mine had a tutor for Biology once, and he hated her. Only because they didn’t get to know each other. We did get something done.”

Harry thinks about his words for a moment, then nods happily. “If you call making fun of me and my love for donuts getting to know me, then yes, you’re right,” he laughs. Louis slaps Harry’s bicep, annoyed, but very much smitten. “I’m kidding. Besides, this only means we have to organise another session.”

So Louis isn’t the only one who wants to plan more of these. Well, it’s expected. Harry’s his tutor after all. But between the lines, Harry wants to spend more time with him, regardless of whether or not it’s just for study.

“Of course, would never pass up the chance to make fun of you some more,” Louis chirps. “I’ll... um, message you? Just my schedule’s a bit sketch at the moment so I don’t know what times I’ll be available.”

Harry begins to collect his things, stacking his books nicely one on top of the other. “This was really fun, Lou.”
“It was.” He stands from the table, picking up his things and cradling them in his arms. Harry joins him. “I’m a bit hungry now, also keen for a nap. All tuckered out from the study we did.”

Harry snorts. “Of course,” Harry says. “And I wish I could join, but I have to run around with the little ones now. Study won’t be the only thing putting me to sleep tonight.”

“Little ones?” Harry’s certainly got a way with making things sound different than the way he intends. “You don’t... You don’t have kids, do you?”

“No, no,” Harry says, humoured. “I babysit for a few families, some are close friends or family. It replaces what I should have as a job. Good pay and all. It’s why your tutoring is free.”

“You said I didn’t have to pay you! I would gladly if you need it.”

Harry sighs out contently, face relaxed and elated. “You can pay me back by teasing me for the rest of eternity, how about that?”

“Quite an offer there, Styles,” Louis winks at him. Harry seems unbothered. “I’ll think about it on the drive home.”

They part ways from there. Louis doesn’t think about the offer. He thinks about playing with Harry’s hair with his head in his lap and slipping a dandelion crown over the top of his hair. He almost crashes his car while doing so.

:::

When he gets home, he finds a mason jar underneath the kitchen sink. He runs to his room and finds his sharpie, drawing a large smiley face on the glass. He opens the jar and scrambles to find a piece of white paper. Once retrieved it, he rips off a clean strip and writes on it with his sharpie.

*first day spent with harry. he’s more beautiful up close. when he laughs, especially :)*

He stuffs it into the jar and closes the lid. Without a doubt, he’s not going to be able to take the jars out and capture the memories in front of Harry. Let alone show the fifty jars he’s stowed away. Harry might think he’s a freak. Nevertheless, anyone thinking he’s a freak or finding out about the jars won’t stop Louis from writing down the memories he’s creating with the world.

But he wants to keep this a secret for his family and too close friends for as long as possible. In that case, instead of capturing these memories with Harry upfront, he’ll write them down. It’s better than leaving them in his mind and prone to forgetting altogether.

:::

Throughout the next week, Louis continues to see Harry out and about in the most random of places. None of those being the school library.
Louis gradually warms up to messaging Harry for more reasons than Literature. And as Harry promised, he has never left Louis in the deep end with unanswered questions. There would be a few times where they’d go off topic, which is normal, Louis has concluded. On Monday, Louis stopped their conversation abruptly by telling Harry he needs to get back to work. Harry replied with a cheeky oh reaaaaally ;) but left him be with a talk later lou! which was clearly an invitation to text each other as if there was no tomorrow. By Thursday, he and Harry were messaging each other so much that Louis couldn’t take his eyes off his phone, in fear Harry’d send a message without him seeing it on his lock screen.

Another week passes and Louis is once again sat on the bentwood. He’s reading a fictional book, enjoying it over the Theban Plays. It’s not the book he’s here for, however.

He thinks about Harry; a normal everyday occurrence. He wonders if Harry would walk into the library not suspecting that Louis would be in the same place he always is. He wonders about a lot of things. If Harry would walk in and talk to him. If Harry would walk in and ask Louis to move over in the bentwood so they can share it. He would gladly share a kiss too. Probably. Maybe. That’s not going to happen.

Twenty minutes until the end of lunch time, and Louis can’t bear to wait for Harry to dawdle his way into the library. He decides to rebel against the school, slipping out his phone from his day pack and concealing it behind the novel he holds in his hands. While unlocking his phone, he looks up to see if anyone will pass by and notice what he’s doing. He’s sure he’s in the all clear. If Harry could take a fucking phone call in here, he certainly can send a few texts.

Oh. There’s a message from Harry already, it seems. Only from a few minutes ago. Convenient.

*where are youuuuu :)*

Harry certainly wouldn’t want to spend lunch with him. Would he?

*the library!! a poor lonely soul needs company :(*

A reply is almost instant.

*Ahhhh i’m on the other side of the school for this stupid club i’m in. i get to quit after next week’s meet up though! but :(*

Dammit. Fucking dammit.

*You busy after school today?*

Okay. Okay. Fucking okay.

*no! wanna to meet up? Louis starts off with. He’s about to send it, but he tuts his fingers against the side of his phone then decides to add in, i got the essay back in second period today, and maybe u can go through it with me? see what’s bad and good and stuff :)*

Smooth, Louis says to himself. He watches as Harry sees the delivered message, the three dots appearing in their bubble as he types out his message. It should be a yes, it must be a yes. It’s almost been a week since he’s actually seen Harry up close and spoken to him. He misses his face. His voice. His eyes that twinkle when he smiles.

*School library’s holding tutorial classes this afternoon. we can join them :) what class do you have last? i’ll meet you there and we can walk together.*
He breaks out into a smile. His afternoon is going to be nothing less than wonderful.

:::

“The blandest taste of them all! How could anyone possibly enjoy that shit?”

Louis has his eyebrows furrowed, sharp eyes glaring in Harry’s direction. Harry is chuckling under his breath, scribbling something in the margin of the lined paper in front of him.

“It’s not bland. Your creativity awaits you. You can add strawberry topping, chocolate topping. I’m sure there’s a choc-mint topping too! You’d love that considering it’s your favourite!”

Louis doesn’t know how this dispute started. One minute they’re writing down a critic for him to follow while writing essays, and next thing they know there’s a book being threatened to be whacked across Louis’ head again, and squeaky swears coming from Louis’ mouth. All Louis knows is that Harry’s disgusting choice of favourite ice-cream is very, very mortifying.

“But that defeats the entire purpose of just vanilla ice-cream, you fool!” Louis argues intently. He taps Harry’s pen with the end of his own, intruding his personal space and drawing a small dick on the lovely smile face. “You might as well get strawberry ice-cream, or chocolate ice-cream. You don’t need to spend more money to buy the topping. Where is the logic behind this, Harold?”

In turn for destroying the smiley, Harry throws up a crumpled piece of paper at Louis’ temple. “Lots of logic, Lou. You can have multiple flavours waiting for you, instead of buying an entirely new ice-cream pint every time you want a new flavour.”

Dammit. Just... fucking damnit. Harry’s ice-cream logic actually makes sense.

But he doesn’t let him win. Not this time. Not again. “Who would want more than one flavour once a month? Come on, if you love any flavour enough you wouldn’t buy another one. You’d be a traitor.”

“Traitor for ice-cream? Oh no, chain me up and lock me in the prison cells made of wafer sticks!” Harry cries dramatically. “What’s my punishment? No relief from an everlasting brain freeze?”

He doesn’t realise he’s staring intensely at Harry’s pink mouth until Harry’s hand touches at his thigh. He flinches at the unusual touch, Harry pulling his hand away suddenly as if the contact was accidental. Louis clears his throat, glancing down at the scattered pages on the desk before them and noticing how much work they’ve done today. Nothing.

“Our study sessions sure are productive,” Harry comments sardonically, leaning back into the padded chair. He drops the blue pen he was holding, eyeing the pages Louis has now collected into a neat pile. Louis’ grin is forced as he nods hastily to continue Harry’s satirical game.

“I’m glad I’m not paying you.” He unlocks his phone and heeds that it’s in fact quarter to five in the afternoon. They’ve definitely spent too much time squabbling about nonsense. Yet again, Louis doesn’t regret his time spent with Harry. He’ll never regret it.

“Same,” Harry tells him. “I probably would have spent the money on vanilla ice-cream. Could you imagine that?”
“If you ever told me that you spent my good money paying for good tutoring lessons on something as dire as vanilla ice-cream, I would actually not hesitate to shave all your hair off.”

At that, Harry runs a hand through his curls. It’s hypnotising to watch. “You like my hair as much as I do, don’t even try to deny that.”

“Never denied it, Harold. Besides,” he reaches up to touch at the soft tufts of Harry’s hair, “I might like it so much that I want to shave it all off and keep it for myself.” Harry shoos his hand away with a flick at his wrist. He pauses to rethink his odd words, blushing slightly when he notices Harry has a lopsided sneer on his face. “That sounded a bit weird, didn’t it?”

“Almost as weird as me getting on my knees for donuts.”

Louis snorts loudly. “You made my words sound a lot more normal, thanks. Also, thanks for reminding me that you’re never going to live that moment down.”

“Damn, who knew you could be so incredulously evil,” but he’s grinning like the Cheshire Cat. “Here I thought I was the evil bastard with his so called bland taste for vanilla ice-cream.”

“You are. No person could ever withstand vanilla ice-cream for the rest of their lives, let alone call it their favourite. Why did you think the people who invented ice-cream made more flavours? Not to be betrayed by your vanilla taste, surely!”

Harry is the first to stand from his desk, and Louis thinks he’s had about enough, going to walk out on him and never talk to him again. Instead, he cocks his head left towards where the exit is. He realises that Harry is asking if he wanted to walk out with him, since both of them knew that there wasn’t much else going to be done today than constant teasing of each other’s preferences. Teasing at a limit, that is. He would never purposely hurt Harry for his choices. For what he likes, and what he prefers. All humans are different.

“I think this is the reason why we never get anything done,” Harry whispers to him, walking down the main aisle to the exit with Louis, bumping arms every so often. Louis eyes him, asking him to elaborate on something so obvious. “I think we need set proper study days, so we can prepare for what we’re going to do when we have sessions like this.”

“Yeah,” Louis acknowledges, opening the exit door to let Harry through. He passes through with a bold ‘thank you’. “Any chance for lunch time tutoring lessons? If it’s during school hours, I usually stay a lot more focused since I’m more... in the zone, I guess.”

“That’s fine, yeah. That might be a good idea, actually,” he answers.

The walk to the parking lot is only a short distance from the Library exit. It feels even shorter since he’s walking with Harry by his side. He can see Harry’s Range Rover parked in the middle section of the lot, Louis’ little Hyundai parked a few spaces away. Without realising, he walks with Harry to his car, discussing further about future study plans. Louis bets to himself that it’ll only be one lesson until they both end up falling out of their plan and spending 98% of their study time teasing each other again.

Harry stands with his back against his car door, books perched in his arms as they both fall quiet. Louis should really leave now, but he’d rather... stay. It feels as if they have some unfinished business, and yes, that business may be the study that they didn’t end up doing. Harry presents the same look. There’s something that’s holding them back from saying their goodbyes. Louis is unsure what it is.
Until it’s actually said. “Um,” mumbles Harry out of the blue. “It’s just out there for you to take or think about. I’m having a get together at mine this weekend. Or should I say tomorrow night. I was wondering if you wanted to tag along?”

Oh. “A party?”

“No, not a party,” Harry says quickly. “Just a few friends - four of my mates. We’re just having pizza, something to drink, playing FIFA and some other game Ed’s bringing over. Few of them are staying over. You’re welcome to do so as well, if you’d like.”

Tempting, it is. To spend the night with Harry is one thing. If it’s too early for that might be another. Not saying that... that.. is going to happen. Harry isn’t a type of guy to shag people for the fun of it, or by what it seems. And Louis knows very well that’s something he doesn’t want to get involved with unless he likes the guy first. In which... yeah, he does like Harry. He’s attracted to Harry, fuck. Just not enough.

He likes to assume a lot, and that usually results in assumptions never actually happening. But he hasn’t been out in a while. It might be nice to get out and about with some new people.

“We’ve talked about how we should try and actually study on the days we set for tutoring, but I don’t want to... Put you off. Like I don’t want to stop talking to you, to stop hanging out just normally. You know? It’s a lot of fun, and we hit off pretty well for mates who had just met. It’s not something that normally happens with me.”

He smiles, eyes lifting from the floor in thought. “I’m glad you feel the same way as me,” he confirms to Harry. “Y-Yeah, I’ll come around. Might as well.”

Harry bounces off the balls of his feet, twisting his body around to unlock his car door. He looks back to Louis just before he hops inside, chiming, “I’ll text you my address.”

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The drive to Harry’s is quick on the Saturday afternoon. He lives in a quiet suburb not too far from Louis’ own, filled with quaint houses and affordable flats. He drives up the large driveway, seeing two cars already parked close to the garden plot of roses. One’s Harry’s, he recognises it. The other belongs to anonymous, an average grey Fiesta. Louis parks behind Harry’s car, shutting off his engine and settling deep into his seat. He relaxes for the time being, hands still warm around the steering wheel and eyes locked to Harry’s number plate.

The house is built with white bricks and a deep grey roof. As are most houses in this area. The neighbourhood is new compared to the others in their town, so it’s expected that this area is more modern and has greener grass. Harry’s lot has a beautiful, well-kept garden. There are tall birch trees that circle their land. Plenty of pretty flowers contrast to the dark brown soil, the flower bed surrounding the mowed grass that’s large enough to play a half field game of football on it. He thinks he could just lie on the grass for hours and stare at the clouds. That being if there were any clouds in the sky at this very moment.

Instead, he gets his ass out of the car. Harry’s probably peeking out the window wondering why the fuck Louis is taking so long to walk to the front door. He walks the path to Harry’s doorstep, knocking three times against the hardwood. There’s the soft thud of footsteps coming closer and
closer, each thud growing louder and louder. The knob jiggles slightly and there’s a light ‘f-ttang’ noise coming from the other side of the door as Harry opens it. Louis blinks at him, then grins.

“Hi,” he sings instantly, shoving his hands into his pockets and nodding his fringe from his face.

“Hey,” Harry marvels back, stepping to the right to let Louis enter. The inside of his house is coloured with dark tones. Dark wood linoleum underneath Louis’ feet that blend into the navy blue walls. It makes everything feel more homely, for some reason. It’s not large and empty. More compact and warm. Louis easily settles in.

There’s a soft tap at Louis’ bicep. It’s Harry seeking his attention. He cocks his head to the left signalling Louis to follow him. Harry leads them to the living room, a telly sits near the window angled from the corner. There, Louis sees a man with short brown hair facing away from him watching a movie. Harry clears his throat.

“Liam, Lou is here.” He’s actually introducing him as Lou. Lou, for fuck’s sake, this man is insufferable.

“Hi,” Louis says without thought. Liam turns his head around, noticing the small figure close to Harry. He smiles. It’s cordial.

“You’re the little one Harry can’t stop talking about.”

“You’re a fucking prick,” growls Harry. Louis puts a hand in front of his mouth, probably for dramatic effect. He’s genuinely shocked. But who’s to believe a man he’s just met. “That’s not true. He’s just... He’s being a prick.”

Liam smirks at Harry. Louis doesn’t see. “Anyway, Louis,” Liam starts, “Join your pal here.” He pats next to him on the leather couch. It sounds comfortable, as if Liam’s sitting on clouds.

He does join him. Harry’s following him and taking the spot beside Louis, rather than the larger spot beside Liam. It’s nice, really. To have this attention around him. New company is always good.

“Josh and Ed should be here in a few. They’re out at the moment buying some things and collecting the pizza,” Harry says to Louis. Liam echoes a ‘yeah’. “Andrew’s coming back here later. He’s got work on tonight so he’s out a bit late.”

“He’ll be catching up,” Liam says after. “Odd that. It’s usually Harry who’s last to get pissed with the rest of us.”

“Sorry it doesn’t take me one tequila shot for me to get fucked,” Harry argues. Liam sinks further into his lounge chair.

“Hey, it only means he needs to spend less on alcohol,” Louis retaliates. Harry glares at Louis with wide eyes, unexpected to hear an answer from him. Liam immediately perks up in interest, clapping Louis on the shoulder meanwhile.

“Exactly,” Liam chirps back in support. “See, my pal is one of a kind. He gets me.”

“Aw, Liam,” Louis dips his body into Liam’s, curling into him slightly. “I can see us getting along rather well, hm?”

“The one time I bring you into my house and you’re all over my best friend,” Harry mutters grumpily. Louis pulls a deviant grin, a face he hopes Harry notices. He does. “What’s that look for?”
“Jealousy stinks on you, Harold.”

Harry begins to panic under his own skin, but it’s not noticeable to the two friends. “Excuse m-- What? There’s no reason for me to be jealous?”

“So why are you, then?” Liam banters. Louis leans further into Liam’s touch, practically putting all body weight into Liam’s shoulder. Harry chuckles, reaching over to slap Liam on the knee. “Twat. Of course you’d abuse me and not Louis.”

“Of course. You’re my best friend--”

“Ouch, Harold,” Louis pouts. He pulls away from Liam, resting normally with his back against the leather couch. “Not your best friend, am I? Very much hurt. I’ll be taking back my thousands of dollars I’ve kept away to pay for your tutoring lessons.”

“You two are impossible to please. It’s going to be hell with the both of you around. A nightmare and a half is on it’s way, I swear,” he squints at Liam and Louis, the little bit of green Louis can see of his eyes radiating sheepishness. Louis nudges his bicep with his elbow, Harry humming in disregard towards the telly. Harry can hear Liam whispering in Louis’ ear, and Harry feels the slightest bit uncomfortable at that. Louis can tell by the way he shifts, almost as if he wants the same amount of attention.

“I’m going to call Ed,” Liam says, suddenly. He stands from the lounge and walks out of the room with no questions asked. It’s suspicious. Still, Louis doesn’t question it, instead he keeps his eyes peeled on the telly.

“I hope you like pepperoni pizza.”

He’s quick to look at Harry, who’s staring at the show playing in front of them. “I do,” Louis admits. “Tastes almost as good as the feeling of victory when winning an argument against you.”

“It wasn’t even an argument! Besides. It was two versus one. I deem that as an unfair advantage.”

“A debate isn’t about the quantity, Harold. It’s the quality of your point. I thought you’d know that from Literature.” Harry’s grinning down to him, unsure if the smile is one of pride or to make things less pensive. Either way, Louis finds it as stunning as any other time he smiles. The feeling of making Harry smile is better than the feeling of tasting every pizza in the world.

“Smart one, you are Lou,” Harry compliments. “Let’s just see how your Literature talk goes after five tequila shots with no relief.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me. That’s like... Fuck, you might as well be pouring gasoline down your throat.”

“Well, this tequila is the best one you can find,” Harry says to him. There’s a hint of maliciousness that slips from his mouth. It could only mean that they’re going to be drinking something that’s going to make Louis wish he was drinking gasoline instead. “Passion tequi--”

“No way, Harold.” He crosses his finger mid-air, a frown on his face. “You’re fucking satanic for even having that pink shit in your house. What made you think buying that would be a good idea?”

“Louis, it’s fucking fluro-pink for crying out loud! Who wouldn’t want fluro-pink tequila!”

“Me, that’s who. Do you wear a gas mask while handling it? Have you smelt it? Have you tried it?!”
That’s Harry’s cue to stand up and retrieve the death potion in a bottle. Louis hides his face in his hands, groaning weakly in remorse as Harry reveals that he, in fact, does have the pink tequila ready to be poured in his two hands. Harry looks proud. The bastard should be for even touching the thing.

It remains in the middle of the coffee table until nine o’clock that night. Of all people to pick up the bottle, it’s a tipsy Louis that takes it by the neck and shouts at the five other lads “Time for shots, boys!” and slams his palm to the wooden table’s surface. Harry’s attention is immediately caught, snickering at the small boy opening the lid from the tequila and instantly gagging at the scent.

Andrew’s by Louis’ side, a hand spread underneath the bottom of the tequila bottle. He’s just as drunk as Harry, which means not at all. He’s fast to warn Louis about the tequila. Louis already knows too much about the pink poison, but he’s drunk enough to not give anymore fucks.

“You sure you want to do that, mate?”

Louis hates his snobby attitude and ugly face and uglier personality and he’s just been flirting with Harry the entire night. Fuck Andrew. Louis wants him to go away. He wants to hoard Harry away into the kitchen’s pantry and maybe lean on him for a few minutes just so he can hear Harry’s heart beating. It’s the only way Louis will know that this gorgeous man is alive and real.

“How ‘bout you go fuck y’self?” Louis blurts out, giggling meanwhile. Andrew does fuck off, stepping away from Louis with hands in surrender and a knowing look plastered on his face. Louis knows that’s the same face that’s going to be saying ‘I told you so’ in the morning. Andrew’s ugly face.

There’s a few red cups lying about. Some are still filled with cheap scotch and ginger ale, others with spirits on the rocks. Louis picks one up and tips out anything contained inside it, spilling ice and diluted whiskey onto Harry’s carpeted flooring. He doesn’t try to find Harry’s face to see his reaction to that. He begins pouring a shot of tequila for himself into the empty cup. Or what he supposes is a shot. The cup’s almost half full, but it’s basically a shot.

“Lou, oh my God.” Harry snatches the bottle from Louis, capping it and placing it back on the table. Louis turns his body away just in time so Harry can’t steal the red cup from him. “You’ll throw up if you drink that straight.”

“Not if I drink it quick enough!” He has the rim of the cup at his lip. There’s no further protest from Harry, so Louis drinks it. Half of it. He ends up spurring out in disgust and sending some tequila from his mouth back into the cup, but swallows the majority he tried to chug down. Harry catches the cup before Louis could drop it. Louis coughs and tastes his breath. His cheeks burn. His gums could be on fire. This stuff could be a bleaching agent.

Harry glares worriedly. Louis falls down into the leather couch, the chair unoccupied. Harry stares at him from above, still standing.

“Are you gonna finish that?” Louis asks him, pointing at the cup. Harry doesn’t respond to him, taking full ownership of the poured drink and sipping from the cup himself. “You’re disgusting for drinking that.”

“I honestly can’t tell if that’s him drunk talking, or him talking normally,” Liam laughs while entering the room. In his hand is the crust of a pizza slice. He’s stumbling around trying to make his way to the pillow fort Ed and himself made by the TV earlier. “Anyway, tequila. Who was the first to bring that out?”

“This tipsy moron here.” Louis points at himself. “Woo, that stuff’s a good hit. Try some Liam. It’ll
knock you out!"

They all end up having about two shots each. Two of Louis’ shots, that is. Andrew’s passed out in
the upstairs guest room by ten thirty. Liam and Josh are piled on top of one another, deep into a
conversation about Instagram girls and other things that Louis has no interest in whatsoever. Ed’s
messaging someone, sipping on the last of his scotch straight from the bottle. And Harry. Who sits in
front of him so majestically with his hair loose to his shoulders. His legs are adjacent to Louis’,
extending forever up the couch. His toes brush at Louis’ thighs, covered in ankle high black socks.
Harry’s pretty eyes are focused on the beer bottle he has in his hand. He’s peeling off the label. He’s
too mesmerised to take his eyes from what Harry’s doing.

“Babe, I’m tired,” he calls out sleepily. Harry stops what he’s doing, standing up and asking Louis to
follow. There’s an extra room upstairs that’s hopefully there for him to take. Maybe it’s the same
guest room Andrew’s in at the moment. He might murder him, actually. He’s sure he tried to touch
Harry’s hair when they were taking shots. Fuck Andrew.

They get to the foot of the staircase, and Harry asks a very important question. “You alright to walk
up here?”

Surely he is. He isn’t incapable. Though, he would like Harry to carry him. “Yeah, you doof,” he
says, slurring enough to hope he’s not making too much of a fool of himself. “Should be fine.”


This is better than getting Harry to carry him.

He reaches for Harry’s hand, missing a few times but Harry makes sure they grip onto each other
tight. Their fingers slip between each other’s and interlock. Butterflies bang hard against the sides of
Louis’ stomach. Or maybe that’s the tequila ready to come back out for an encore and ruin his night
and confidence. Louis holds it down, however, and makes it up to the top of the stairs without falling
back down at any time.

From what he could remember, Andrew took the exact same path to his room upstairs. Well, of
course he did; there’s only one set of stairs. But Louis’ sense of direction or object permanence is
next to nothing while drunk. However, Louis wants to ask just in case Harry leads him into the place
of the condemned. “Hey, ‘ey ‘ey you’re not going to take me to Andrew, are ya?”

Harry leads him a few steps forward, shaking his head. “No, Lou,” Harry says. Louis sighs
dramatically with relief. “I wouldn’t do that to you.”

Of course he wouldn’t. Harry’s a sweetheart.

Harry turns left abruptly, the third door closest to the stairs. He opens it to reveal an average sided
bedroom with a navy coloured bed in just in front of them in the middle. There’s a desk to the left,
cluttered with notes and books but still seems somewhat organised. It’s hard to see in the dim light,
but Louis can make out a neat dresser next to another door on the right, which Louis supposes might
be an entrance to one of the bathrooms. There’s a large white t-shirt lying crumpled on the carpet
beside a lonely pair of Nike’s.

Oh. Is this... Harry’s bedroom?

Well, unless Harry changes in other rooms. Harry only lives with his mum. And where was his
mum, actually? Too many unanswered questions. But one of them being why did Harry take him up
here. He could sleep on the couch, he could sleep in the pillow fort, or in the car, or something.
“Lou.” Harry tugs at his arm, pulling him into the room. Harry closes the door behind them. Is this... No. He needs to tell Harry no. This is not what he's here for. “You alright? You’re paler than my carpet.”

He might be proper sick in a minute. He swallows the nervousness down. He knows how to say no.

“Yeah, mate, I’m fine,” Louis murmurs, twisting on his feet to come face to face with Harry. “The tequila was a strong hit... Sorry. I’m a little out of it at the moment. Tryna get back into reality and... stuff.”

“Right,” he laughs weakly. “You can make yourself at home up here. Sorry I didn’t have any other... places for you to sleep. And before you say the couch, I know well enough that a piss night like this plus my couch equals doesn’t only promise a terrible hangover in the morning but neck pains that last a lifetime. I have enough respect for you to not put you through that kind of torture.”

“Aw, a sweetheart you are, Harold.” And as cunning as Louis sounds, he genuinely means it. Though, while this does push away Harry might have lead him up here for a drunken shag, it doesn’t completely destroy the thought. “I’ll pay you back with something nice one day, I promise.”

It probably could be interpreted sexually, if Harry’s horny enough to believe so. But Harry only smirks and says, “Lifetime supply of donuts?”

That really fucks with Louis’ mind.

“One day, little prince,” Louis repeats with a slur, untangling his hands with Harry. He steps close to the bed, the sheets looking fresh and duvet looking more delectable than any sort of fast food meal at the moment. Louis touches the left side pillow. He thinks this is a nice place to call home for the night. But wait. “Wait, where are you sleeping?”

Harry shrugs. “Anywhere, I suppose. If Liam and Ed can make a pillow fort while tipsy, I can certainly make one while I’m sobering up.”

“You’re ridiculous.” And Louis is always full of bad ideas. But this is probably the worst one yet. “Stay here.”

Harry shifts uncomfortably on his spot. It’s so fucking noticeable that Louis’ thoughts don’t process properly before he’s commenting on the movement.

“Like, you don’t have to stay here. It’s just... easier. You might think I’m trying to get into your pants but I’m really not I promise like I wouldn’t do that to you... Here, or at all... I just wouldn’t take advantage of you like that I really really promise,” Louis rushes. And fuck fuck fuck why does he have to fuck up so bad. What happened to this mind-to-mouth filter? What the fuck. “I’m just... Fuck, I’m so sorry, I’m such an awkward person. I-I... Fuck--”

“You’re alright, Lou,” Harry reassures. It’s not enough to reinstate Louis’ composure. “I... Was just, um... Never mind. You wanted sleep and the other three are probably going to go off their faces soon, so...”

It is alright, he supposes. Louis still wants to shrivel up inside the duvet and die.

“I’m going to go back downstairs, alright?” Harry says to him. “If you need anything, just call out for me. Or throw something at the door. I’ll hear it easily enough.”

Louis barks out a laugh, falling into the mattress and rolling into the soft duvet. There’s a faint click of the door locking into place. Louis realises that Harry really did mean he was leaving him
here, alone. He groans loudly into the sheets, probably loud enough for Harry and the other three lads to hear downstairs. The duvet covers half of his body now, the warmth keeping him away from feeling somewhat isolated. A few minutes have passed with Louis staring blankly into the air, head recovering from its unbearable dizziness.

He doesn’t like being alone. He’d very much rather Harry by his side with his fluffy curls at his nose. He wants to talk to him. Intoxicated Louis has never wanted something more. And whilst Harry is only downstairs, no less than a few close metres away, Louis feels as if the distance between them is impossible to reach unless he took two plane trips and had a portal to another universe. His hands clutch tight in the navy sheets, his entire body fatigued but his mind raging with how upset he is without Harry by his side.

So he begins to sob. Weakly. It feels like nothing but tequila is coming out of his tear ducts. His eyes feel like they never close, the tears burning down the sides of his cheekbones and tickling against his ears. He smudges them away with the back of his hand, hiding any sort of weakness.

Crying doesn’t help him, he realises. He continues to stare blankly at the ceiling. A pretty ceiling it is. He’d rather something else in his view. Harry. Is it healthy to want something this bad? Is it healthy to want something this bad after such little time? Probably not. But Louis had like five Louis sized shots of Passion tequila so anything is healthier than that.

“Harry,” he calls out, voice mewling more than shouting. He has nothing to throw at the door. It’s been twenty minutes and Louis could have easily fallen asleep and forgot about the world for ten hours. Instead, he wants to speak to Harry. He wants to touch Harry’s hair and fall asleep while Harry tells him nonsense about donuts and Literature again. That feels like a dream worth living. Though, he had totally forgotten that it was once reality to Louis when they were both sober.

There’s silence for a minute. Impatient enough, Louis sits up with his head throbbing and eyes feeling as if they’re about to pop out from his head and dangle past his chin. He manages to pick up something from the side table, something of leather. He ditches it at the door. The “thwack” noise against the door rumbles through the room. If that wasn’t loud enough, Louis’ scream of ‘Harry!’ should do the trick.

The brat remains motionless for another minute. Harry’s at the door not a second after that, head popping into the room to see what the problem was. He sees Louis sitting up with the duvet over his legs, Louis’ eyes drooping and eyebrows low. He could be mad, but there is nothing he could be mad about. Harry steps into the room with nothing but curiosity pasted on his face.

“You alright?” Harry questions him. Louis shakes his head. Simple enough. “Need me to get you a bucket, or something?”

Louis shakes his head again, close to dislodging his skull from his spine entirely. Harry closes the door behind him. He knows it’ll be a while.

“Tell me what you want, Lou,” Harry murmurs, pacing closer to Louis’ side. Louis twists his thumbs into the duvet, giggling gingerly with his head lopsided. The grin he sports can only be defined as cute. “You’re a funny one, aren’t you?”

“You,” Louis slurs once Harry sits down on the edge of the mattress. Louis pokes a finger into his bicep, as if his answer wasn’t direct enough.

However, it wasn’t concise. “Me? What about me?”

“No no,” Louis giggles, voice high pitched and distorted. “I want you. Here.” He pats the space next
to him in the bed. It’s free and has Harry’s name written all over it. Louis wants him there, now.

“Please.”

Harry smiles. “Lou,” he drags out like a snooty child, “I’d love to stay and talk but--”

“Then why don't you?” Louis interrupts, his tone assertive but still gentle.

It doesn’t take Harry much to give in to him. Whatever Harry was going to do with the other boys downstairs obviously wasn’t important enough. Louis doesn’t care however. He would have used every bit of strength and persuasion to make sure Harry doesn’t even think about going to that door and leaving Louis to suffer in seclusion.

Harry rolls his eyes, but shuffles his bum closer towards the middle of the bed. Soon enough he falls into the mattress, back against Louis’ shins. Neither of them move.

“Fucking princess, you are,” Harry whispers into the air. “However, your offer is too tempting.”

“Get off my shins, you big oaf. Do you think royalty deserve this type of treatment?”

“Let me remind you that you did call me little prince no more than half an hour ago,” Harry mentions. Oh, did he really do that? He can’t remember. “That’s right. Contradict yourself a little more!”

Harry scoots over, his entire body now on the bed. He’s laying on his stomach proper ways up the bed, propping himself up on his elbows so his hair flows down and frames his face. Harry remains close to the centre, not to the right. Which is interesting, really. Louis doesn’t mind it. He could reach and touch Harry’s hair easily from here.

“You really don’t want to try and get into an argument with me,” Louis warns him. “Especially when I’m full of tequila.”

Harry scoffs, head cocking backwards while doing so. “What’s the worst you can do? Spew on me?”

“You’d hate that if I did it.”

Harry’s glaring at him with narrowed eyes. Even with soft creases of disgust lingering on his skin, Louis finds him remarkably beautiful. It’s unbelievable how much Louis wanted him here.

“Can I touch your hair?” Louis babbles suddenly. Fucking mind-to-mouth filter...

Harry uses his elbows to scurry up the mattress, crawling close to Louis. He dips his head towards Louis, giving him the invitation to touch his hair.

He lifts up a hand excitedly. “Really?” Louis says, voice buoyant. Harry nods with no hesitation.

“It’s there for you to touch, always,” he preens.

Louis doesn’t waste anymore time to tangle his hands deep into the delicate curls. And they’re exactly how he’d imagined it to be. It’s like his hand is in another world, being smothered by all things great. His thumb circles around thick strands of hair with his fingers scratching into Harry’s scalp. Louis watches as Harry eyes flutter closed, dry mouth parting a little. He seems to relaxed under Louis’ touch, so poise and elegant. This is maybe a thing that Harry’s not used to. That’s going to change from now on in.
He doesn’t stop the gentle touches to Harry’s scalp whilst speaking. “You like this, don’t you?”

“Hm, yeah,” Harry hums happily, mouth now closed and curved into a tamed smile. “You’re really good at it.”

Louis stops intentionally. Not as if he wanted to. It’s to only see Harry pout and hopefully come closer. He does.

“Why?” he sulks. He scoots further up the bed, Harry’s forearm brushing against Louis’ waist. “I like it.”

Harry rolls his entire body over just so his head settles in the very middle of Louis’ crotch. His melancholy eyes are focused on Louis’, showing both want and need. They’re glowing and very pretty, almost too pretty. Harry’s mouth is prettier, bitten red and no longer dry. His tongue is hard to see in the dark, but it’s still there making an appearance every few seconds as Harry licks his bottom lip. Sinful, he is. Oh my God, Louis did not expect this.

“You’re in my lap,” Louis comments.

“I can see that,” Harry retorts. “Touch my hair, again.”

He tries to find Louis’ right hand, taking him by the wrist and guiding the hand to the same spot where Louis had carded his fingers through the strands earlier. The moment Louis circles his thumb into his scalp and lightly tugs with his other fingers, Harry’s eyes are shut and his mouth mumbles something incoherent to Louis’ ears.

They stay like this for a while, the air between them light and calming. Louis could feel his mind stepping into the zone of minor sobriety. Harry’s breathing slowly in front of him, Louis taking notice of his nostrils flaring inward and outward, his chest raising and lowering with perfect rhythm. His mouth quirks up sometimes when Louis touches new areas on his scalp or tugs at sweet spots. He’s sure Harry’s fallen asleep on him. But he isn’t unconscious, Louis realises, when Harry begins to talk about anything and everything his mind decides to focus on.

“The only thing that could make this better is having you put green grapes into my mouth,” Harry whispers to him. Louis laughs, bringing his left hand to rest against Harry’s chest. Harry doesn’t flinch at the move, instead, lifts his own two hands to cover Louis’ tiny wrist. It forces Louis to feel Harry’s heartbeat. It’s a mild beat that jumps every few seconds. Probably not healthy. But once again, tequila...

“I like it here because I get to touch your hair,” Louis grins, pulling his hair a bit harder than he would do, forcing a squeak out of Harry. “Got you weak at the tips of my fingers.”

“Still, could easily prowl on you.”

“Bullshit,” Louis announces loudly. “You said you get on your knees for donuts. All I have to do is show you Homer fucking Simpson and you’ll bust a nut.”

Harry scrunches up his face. “It’d be the donut that I’d shoot a load for, not the dude who strangles his own fucking devil kid.”

He fonds briefly. He’s sure Harry doesn’t see it in the darkness of the room.

“You disgust me, Harold,” Louis mumbles light-heartedly. He decides to try move his left hand to flatten his palm at Harry’s stomach, to pat his tummy with soft, easy strokes. When twisting his left hand upward, he finds that Harry’s hand also curls. But not to shy the hand away. He curls it to
grasp Louis’ hand and interlock their fingers. That is—That’s very okay. “Disgusting creature.”

“Only me.”

Louis sighs, pressing his thumb into Harry’s hand. “Only you.”

“And you’d be Marge Simpson,” Harry continues, dragging their hands together further up Harry’s chest. It rests between his prominent collarbones now. “Smart, is the one everyone has the hots for—”


“Crazy hair,” Harry finishes with a chuckle. Louis growls and twists his fingers to roughly tug at his curls. Punishment. “Ow.”

“You should have left it where you said I was hot.”

“I didn’t say you were hot.”

“Oh, so you’re not everyone then. As a Literature student, I believe that you, who is also a Literature student, should try and word your sentences in a better way for full clarity,” Louis speaks poshly, eyeing Harry as he sits up from Louis’ thighs. Louis removes his hand from Harry’s hair instinctively, but the other remains locked with Harry’s hand. “Sick of me touching your hair?”

“Sick of you teasing my sentence structure, is more like it,” he smirks playfully. “I had enough of you being my pillow.”

“Excuse me? What type of normal pillow will scratch and detangle your hair for you while you relax, hm?”

In turn, Harry steals the pillow from Louis’ side. Harry clutches both his own and Louis’ pillows tight between his arms, never giving Louis the chance to snatch his pillow back for a good night sleep. Louis glowers miserably when Harry turns around, back to him, and rests his head on both pillows. It looks uncomfortable, his neck not in perfect alignment compared to the rest of his body. If anything, Harry’s going to be getting a deserving amount of sore payback in the morning for stealing his pillow and not thanking Louis for the thirty minutes of free head scratches.

“What am I supposed to use for my lovely head then?” Louis asks him, prodding Harry’s shoulder blade. Harry shrugs cluelessly. “Harry,” he whines.

The idiot fakes unconsciousness with obnoxiously loud snoring. Having none of his attitude, he decides to shuffle closer to Harry’s body and tries to find space on the pillow. Harry’s taking up the majority of it with his large head. Great. He could try and push him off the bed, leaving him all the free pillow and bed space in the world for an excellent night’s sleep. But it’s the question of whether or not Louis will be able to take Harry on while half drunk, half weak. Harry might wrestle him and lay on him with no release until tomorrow comes. Maybe they could thumb wrestle; a fair game. Hold hands until a person calls mercy.

Eh, maybe it would be a good idea to annoy the shit out of Harry.

“Move,” Louis orders. Harry doesn’t obey. “Don’t be a pig, give me some pillow.”

“Find your own.”

“You took my own.” Louis brushes some of Harry’s hair from the pillows. It exposes a few inches worth of space to lay on, but it’s still not enough. “You better fucking move before I sit on you.”
“Oh, the horror,” Harry barks out monotonously, making Louis squint daggers into the back of his head.

Well, he asked for it. He stands up on his knees, spinning himself around to sit right on Harry’s hip. The boy underneath him grumbles, the loudness of it muffled by the two pillows he’s smothering his face in. Louis balances himself while straightening himself up. He feels like a proper prince now. On his very own throne. All he needs is a crown.

“Lou,” Harry moans. Louis doesn’t answer him, attempting to press more of his weight into Harry’s now tensed body. “Fuck, get off me.”

“Oh, was that a noise I hear? Nah, can’t be. I’m very much alone in this room,” he teases brutally. Harry groans, frustrated. “Another noise. Must be the mice upstairs squabbling about. Pest control should be called at once!”

“Sure thing, your highness. I should warn them of the twat sporting a blue hoodie and white chinos in my room. He’s the biggest pest in the kingdom, surely.”

The description fits him perfectly. Despite the glorious chance to banter silly with Harry, Louis continues to ignore him. “Dear, oh dear. I should close the windows to the room. The wind seems to be speaking nonsense again.”

He wriggles his arse to pressure more weight into the hip, but begins to slide backwards while doing so. He tries to shift himself for his comfort’s sake, Louis removing his weight from Harry’s body. Within a split second, Harry somehow, some fucking how, had managed to twist his entire body around, sit up and then push Louis’ body forward into the mattress, stomach first. Louis lands where he is now, out of breath due to shock and a heavy weight pooling at his lower back. Harry’s on his fucking back.

“It is as fun as it looks,” Harry grins, big toes digging into Louis’ thighs. They’re sockless, he realises. And quite chilly. “How does it feel now?”

“Fuck off,” Louis frowns. His words grow whinier when Harry places his each of his hands on Louis’ shoulder blades, leaning on them to equally distribute the weight. Or so Harry thought. “I can’t breathe.”

Harry sneers. “I couldn’t either.”

“Okay, your lungs aren’t in your fucking hip, Harold,” he snaps hastily, breath shortening the more he speaks. “Get off me, you oaf! I’m drunk but I still have feelings.”

“Thank God, I thought you were soulless this entire time.” Harry sits up high, but not high enough to uncage Louis from Harry’s leg prison. Instead, Louis turns himself around, back to the bed rather than stomach. That way, if Harry does end up moving a little bit more Louis can knee him right in the balls and escape. Maybe escape with his pillow as well.

Plan A’s called off the minute Harry grabs both of Louis’ wrists and pins them above his head. It’s play time; just as Louis had hoped for.

“You’re not going anywhere. You’ll suffer for thirty days and thirty nights in compensation for your inhumane torture to me.”

Louis rolls his eyes at his dumb comment. “Surely you’ll be able to hold me here for thirty days and thirty nights without no one suspecting our disappearances. Especially since we go to the same school, have friends who worry shitless about us, and not to mention mock exams in no more than a
month’s time.”

Harry giggles mercilessly. Louis looks at his hair drooping over his face like a willow tree in a misty forest. His skin appears to be so smooth, so milky. It’s so aesthetically pleasing to his eyes. Harry’s eyelashes curl and veil shadows on his puffed cheeks. His eyes are intensely dark, but they’re not chilling as if they would lead to the unknown. Harry’s lip twitches into a smile and creases are carved in the hollow parts of his cheeks. Dimples. And they belong to Harry. All of this belongs to Harry.

“You’re hot too,” Louis whispers absentmindedly.

It doesn’t take Harry by surprise, weirdly enough. The once-over Louis had just given Harry might as well have said the exact same thing. Harry could have understood that. Or maybe Harry’s just cocky enough to know he’s hot already.

“I can’t believe you’re on top of me like this,” he murmurs as Harry focuses keenly at him. “Can I have my pillow back now?”

“I am your pillow,” Harry says down to him.

“I don’t remember resting a pillow on top of my body when I’m about to go to sleep.”

Harry flops down suddenly, torso coming to contact with Louis’ own. His head slots beside Louis’ neck. “You’ve been sleeping wrong your entire life then.”

“You’re telling me that I’ve been sleeping wrong for the past 18 years, and my family have been sleeping wrong for the past... I don’t know... two centuries?”

“Of course,” Harry mutters promptly. Louis feels his hot breath closing into his neck, and it’s bliss.

“You’re teaching me how to English properly, I think it might be time for me to teach you how to sleep properly, young man.”

“That means I get to spend more time with you,” he murmurs into his neck. “Cuddling.”

He’s about to whisper a yeah but his word is lost in the back of his throat when Harry presses a kiss into his skin. Louis’ eyes are wide open, eyelids creaking as the stretch wider than they have ever been. Heat rushes to his face and his left hand comes up to touch Harry at the curve of his waist. He curls his fingers into Harry’s t-shirt, trying to calm his heartbeat and drag himself in the reality of the night.

Harry noses at the skin, stained with the print of his soft lips. “You smell like strawberries.”

“You’re drunk enough to mistaken tequila for strawberries.” Louis dips his knuckles into Harry’s waist, soothing him with sweet touches. Harry sputters a laugh into his neck and turns his head away so his nose is deep into the mattress rather than into his skin. Harry’s kiss still burns into his neck.

“Hey, hey.”

Harry perks up from the mattress with his face so very close to Louis’. “What?”

“Keep going.”

The confusion that spreads across Harry’s face softens into a smile after a silent pause. He bends his head down again, top tufts of Harry’s hair brushing against Louis’ chin as lips touch at the very centre of his neck. It’s a sensitive area. Porcelain smooth.
Louis’ knuckles against his waist soon become fingertips digging deep into Harry’s skin. Harry trails his mouth from point A to B; from the centre of Louis’ neck towards his left side jaw. Louis tilts his head to the side but curls his head downward to feel the sweep of Harry’s hair over his rosy cheeks. He feels pliant like this, weak at the knees and incapable to think about anything else other than Harry’s skin touching his and the heat between their bodies. He can hardly remember the rest of the night as is, but with Harry straddling his body and with his lips attached to his neck, it’s hard to remember literally anything that has happened five minutes ago.

A warm wetness begins to be felt under his jaw. It lingers on his skin longer than a simple kiss. He’s caught off guard whilst trying to think about what Harry could be doing, Harry’s mouth opening on his skin and sucking just under the jaw. Louis bundles the side of Harry’s shirt tight in his hand, tugging the shirt up in shock to reveal Harry’s flushed abdomen. Harry stops himself from sucking a mark into Louis’ neck, instead biting softly at the reddened area.

Louis cocks his head to the left, pressing his nose into Harry’s jaw and whispering, “Try again if you wanna know what’s good for you.”

“You asked for it.”

His lips touch the same area, and he doesn’t kiss the spot before sucking this time. It’s a harsh bite that comes too quick. Warmth smotheres him into the mattress but Louis grips onto Harry tight enough to not be compelled by the power of heat. He moans, loud. He doesn’t care. And Harry sucks another love bite just under the first, just as quick as the first. He kisses over both before marking another into his skin, and another. There’s no stopping it; it’s addictive. And Louis slides a hand into Harry’s hair to entice him to keep going until time stops. He doesn’t seem like he’s going to stop, until he does.

The seventh love bite is stamped into his skin and Harry pulls away breathless and pink cheeked. He leans over Louis, looking at the pretty red marks that he’s left up and down the side of his neck. Harry giggles and rolls over, freeing Louis from his weight. Louis sits up in relief, fingers gliding across the markings he’s yet to see. Louis won’t be impressed in the morning, but who cares. Right now just who fucking cares.

“C’mere, munchkin,” Harry whispers, arms open wide. He’s laying the wrong way across the bed. Harry really needs lessons on how to sleep properly. “Found you a pillow.”

Two pillows are right there for him to take, including the soft pillow he has been fighting Harry for for the past half hour. Instead he crawls to Harry and rests his head on the squishy part of his bicep. Harry curls his arm around Louis’ back and cradles him in closer. Much closer. Warmer.

_The best pillow_, he thinks before resting his drunken little head.

::

The early sunrise peering through Harry’s blinds wakes Louis from his drunken slumber. He’s stomach down, still laying lengthways across the bed with a navy pillow cushioning his head. He’s not as sore as he had expected to be. As a matter of fact, he feels perfectly fine. Could climb Mount Everest in a matter of hours, in fact. It’s better than a 6 o’clock wake up on a Monday school morning.
Except today, he’s alone in a stranger’s bed. Topless. He surely doesn’t remember taking his shirt off at any point last night.

His body is now somewhat alert of most things. Now that his senses have come in, a swarm of smells have attacked his sinuses. One that stands out clearly is the aroma of bacon. Fucking bacon. Bless whoever’s downstairs and cooking that up. The perfect food for the drunken aftermath. Hangover Sunday has only started.

Slightly disorientated still, he sits up and notices his shirt creased on the floor beside the bed. Right, so that’s didn’t go very far. He’d hoped that. Once standing from the mattress he picks it up and shrugs it back on, smoothing the creases out with soft strokes across his torso. The smell of bacon is clogging his nose entirely now, and it’s only making Louis more hungrier by the second.

It doesn’t take him long to follow the scent to the kitchen, peeking past the door frame to see who was occupying the stove before Louis just waltz in with the demand for food. Behind a sizzling pan is Harry. Topless, also. Should he mention. Louis hopes to God there isn’t some sort of connection there between his own previous half-nakedness and current Harry’s half-nakedness.

His assumptions don’t worry him as much as they should.

“Haz,” he calls over the loud sizzling. Harry turns his head, looking over to Louis by the door frame and sending him a big toothy grin. It’s contagious.

“Hey Lou!” Harry cheers, too happy for a boy with regrets and a hangover. “Hungry?”

“God, yes.” He paces across the room to the stools by the counter. There, he receives a direct view of Harry twisting the bacon to their uncooked sides. The smell is incredible. He wonders how the other boys haven’t been woken up and compelled by Harry’s cooking.

Harry covers the strips with a pot lid, facing Louis with the same smile from earlier. It disappears as soon as Harry locks eyes with him.


“Nothing... Um, nothing’s on your face?”

It’s a question, not a clear and firm statement. Louis’ anxiety doesn’t fade. Harry looks around Louis, side stepping to get a closer look at whatever the fuck Harry’s entranced by. God, it must be humiliating enough to have this much attention on him.

Louis realises Harry’s looking at his neck. He slaps a hand over the presumed spot. “Harry, Jesus Christ, what is it?” Louis demands. Harry’s got a finger over his lip in thought, still not saying a word. “You know, I could have gone to the mirror and back within the time it’s taking you to answer.”

“You might want to go to a mirror,” Harry says, unsure if his tone is humoured or uneasy. “I did a bit of damage... I see.”

“Wa--” Louis runs two fingers across his neck, trying to feel for marks, scratches. Anything. But there’s nothing. Shit. He knows exactly what it is. “Did you--”

“I didn’t mean to! I didn’t... I wasn’t thinking!”

“Oh my God,” Louis barks, pushing himself from the stool and continuing to use his last hope to find something. Harry can’t have given him love bites. That’s... What. Why? “They’re not what I think
They are... are they?"

"There’s seven." Harry shies himself away, hearing Louis gasp loudly to the side. "I counted seven."

There’s small footsteps behind him within a few short seconds, the soft sound of poof poof poof poof as Louis’ feet stormed on the lino flooring. Harry tenses up but turns around when Louis taps him on the back with the tip of his finger. Harry could only smile. The bites look lovely on Louis, he must admit. Not as if they should be there.

Harry continues to try smile away the serious situation. "Hi."

Louis pokes a finger in his chest. "Don’t hi me, asshole. You attacked my neck."

"It was an accident!" Harry raises the spatula and gives the puppiest of eyes to Louis. It doesn’t do him justice. "Lou."

"Accident my arse. You did seven. Seven. That’s the same amount of dwarves Snow White had, Harry! The fucking evil queen, you are!"

Harry pouts his lip out next. Still, it does nothing for him. Louis’ finger dips further into his chest, pinching Harry’s skin slightly. Good.

Harry smirks suddenly, lowering his spatula and tapping the end of it at Louis’ hip. "We could make it eight—"

"No," Louis tries to say confidently. He fails, miserably. He ends up grinning and shuffling an inch closer to Harry’s body. "Definitely not."

Harry doesn’t try to go for another, as much as he would like to. The damage is enough, seven redish purple love bites are scattered up his neck in an uneven line. He’ll get him again one day. Last night was fun and had enough, somewhat, sexual release for Harry to relish on for the next few weeks.

"Your bacon’s burning," Louis warns him. Harry spins around to attend it. Louis whispers behind him, "Need any help?"

"Actually, yeah. The boys will be up soonish, I think." Harry points the spatula to the clock. It reads 9:23. Not as early as Louis had thought. "They love their toast. Would it be a bother for you to make some up?"

"Of course it would," Louis laughs, stepping towards the counter beside the stove. "But since it’s for the boys, I guess I might have to."

"Yeah, that, or I won’t give you any cover up for those bruises and I will make sure I’ll point out every single one and say that Andrew did them."

"Evil queen," Louis repeats, lifting himself onto the counter and dragging the toaster by his side from the right. "Anyway, where’s the bread?" Harry points to the cupboard. "Just when I made the effort to sit up on the counter?"

"Oh dear, your poor efforts have gone to waste, haven’t they?" Harry glances at Louis feigning all sorts of sorrow. Louis rolls his eyes and travels to the cupboard, finding a pre-cut loaf of bread inside the bread bin. "You’re lucky I didn’t give you eight, munchkin."

By 10 in the morning, there’s 11 pieces of toast - rather cold but whatever - sitting on a china plate in the middle of the dining table, with bacon strips on another. Harry’s frying up eggs with Louis sitting...
on the counter, annoying him and throwing pieces of egg shell at his hair. Harry fries up the last of
the eggs quickly, turning off the stove and plating up each of the soft eggs nicely. While setting the
plate to the table with the rest of the breakfast feast, Louis throws half a shell at Harry. It lands
perfectly in his curls, the little bit of egg white left inside the shell oozing out to ruin Harry’s ends.

Harry freezes and glares at Louis. Louis has both hands over his mouth, astounded. Harry shakes the
egg shell from his hair and ditches it at Louis’ thighs, missing entirely.

“Ha! Missed!” he shouts at Harry’s attempt. Harry growls and stomps over to him. “Oh, what’re you
gonna do? Fry me like you did your soggy eggs?”

He presses his two hands on Louis’ knees, securing him to the counter. Louis smiles down and tries
to kick his leg up to kick Harry in the nuts. Before he could, Harry’s in front of him locking his shins
against the side of the counter, eradicating any sort of potential harm to his beloved crown jewels.
Harry smirks and leans on his hands, putting pressure onto Louis’ knees.

Louis makes eye contact with him. His eyes are iridescent, he concludes. They’re almost a blue
green from eye level, unlike the jade green or deep green they’re usually from other angles. This
angle is the best, he thinks. A centimetre taller and he would, for once, be the taller one between
them. A centimetre closer and he’d have Harry’s breath warmly hitting his face. He has never
wanted to pinch someone silly more than he does now.

Instead, Harry whispers, “I’ll make it eight.”

He wasn’t going to protest, is the thing. If Liam didn’t come into the room with a frustrated moan for
breakfast, he would have found his hand twisted in Harry’s hair with his lips attached to his neck
again. Harry jumps from him, freeing him, and points over to the table where the three plates sit.
Liam almost screeches, running to the table and snatching at the meal like a scavenging wolf.

The other three join a few minutes later, Louis and Harry sitting across from each other but always
finding a way to catch each other’s eyes every so often. Breakfast is slow with laughs about the
drunken night that had passed them and compliments about Harry’s cooking. Louis takes no praise,
but doesn’t mind it. He knows well enough that Harry loves the toast and will thank him for it
privately once they’re done. He’s a sweetheart like that.

The three plates are polished off and it almost goes unnoticed. When Louis stands up in offering to
take the plates to the sink, Josh gasps out and points at him. All attention is caught on him, and his
neck.

Harry tries his best to mask his guilt. It’s the most transparent look Louis has ever seen someone
give.

“Fuck, Lou. Those are some nasty marks,” Liam comments. And Louis very much hates Liam right
now but he tries his best to hide his shame. It’s as good as Harry’s failed poker-face. “And who did
that, hm?”

All eyes glance at Harry with no hesitation. There’s no way to backtrack from this now. The only
thing that saves Louis from losing all composure is with Andrew’s face contorting into all sorts of
jealousy. It suffices to bring him away from ultimate humiliation. Louis points out the tenseness of
Andrew’s face. He immediately detests.

The rest of the boys laugh at his restlessness. Andrew is teased for the rest of the morning.
He drives himself home by half twelve. He’s outside on the balcony just before quarter to one, writing down every little thing he remembers about the night before, separating his memories between two jars. One for the boys, one for Harry.

His ripped papers go into their designated jars. The lids are sealed and the memory filled jars are returned to their places on the shelves. Louis goes back inside his room, closing the doors to the balcony. He slips off his shirt and dives into his bed, resting face down while remembering more of last night’s antics.

He had spoken with Harry earlier, just after breakfast. The boys took turns with showering, playing a game of FIFA meanwhile. Harry had dragged Louis out of the room at one point, and the hoots and calls that followed their footsteps were expected. Harry brought him to the bedroom despite there being private rooms that are much closer than the upstairs room. Louis doesn’t mind the extra walk.

Harry sat with him on the centre of the bed, cross legged with Harry holding a pillow between his arms. They talk about what they remembered from last night, and obviously Harry remembered more than Louis. There was never an awkward moment talking about what had happened. Neither of them said they regretted anything. They ended up heading off topic, a common thing to happen between them. It only led to relentless stomach-cramping laughter and for a pillow fight to ensue.

Love bite number eight also kind of happened but Louis is trying to keep his mind from that. Just in case his mind never stops thinking about it.

It reminds him that Harry gave him a bottle of liquid foundation to cover things up for school. Kind of him, really. He’s sure he stole it from his mother’s bedroom, but for the time being Louis can’t really care. He’s got to learn how to cover up eight love bites by tomorrow. That, as well as not using the entire bottle just to cover up said bites.

So he resorts to Youtube tutorials. On incognito mode. He doesn’t want his mother to see this in his internet history. There’ll be enough questions as to why Louis has a patch of light skin on the left side of his neck. He should just go to the store now and by a foundation that’s the same shade as his skin. But whatever, this will make do for something at least. If worse comes to worse, he can wear a turtle neck.

Whilst in the middle of a tutorial, his phone bleeps on the bed side table. He pauses the video and retrieves it, seeing the message is from Harry. The preview message isn’t teasing, or anything about the love bites. Or a mix of both. Actually it’s...

“Oh shit.” Louis can’t find a way to swipe his phone unlocked. He’s in... shock. He can’t stop reading the message over and over because did Harry say... Date? Study date? A date?

He could be reading too much into it. But they called their sessions “sessions” enough to make that the usual thing to say when they want to study. A study date. Harry wants a study date tomorrow.

He sounds ridiculous, but it’s not as ridiculous as how long it took Louis to reply “sure!” to Harry.

So it’s organised. Louis sits back in front of his computer and fucks up the coverage on his neck completely. He gives up and falls into the carpet, thinking about his and Harry’s date tomorrow.

A study date, he reminds himself sheepishly.
It’s the four words Louis had dare hoped to never say to Harry.

*we have to cancel :(*

The reply is slow. Louis could see Harry’s frown now at the school library’s desk. He would be collecting his stuff in solemn and be planning to ignore Louis’ sad text for the rest of his life.

Of course Harry wouldn’t ignore him. He’s a sweetheart.

*oh nooooo :*( i had donutssss

So Louis had ruined Harry’s plans as well as ruined his chance to have a perfect powdered donut with Harry. He’s been ever too excited to see icing sugar stain Harry’s mouth.

*i’m so sorry! we can organise for friday if you’re not busy? im so sorry!!!! mum just messaged me and it’s an emergency :((

*you’re alright lou. friday is fine. i owe you two donuts for friday ;) x*

The x Harry sends him drives away most of the guilt he feels. He could only wish his mother had planned forward with her schedule instead of suddenly handing all responsibility to Louis to look after his little sister on this dismal Monday afternoon.

Louis strikes a permanent line through the 28th. He sees the other number written in red underneath the black line. 8. Eight days until mid-term exams. He’s so fucked.

He had just woken up and his day’s already ruined. He doesn’t even know why he bothers looking at his calendar. It reminds him of how little time he has left before his failure comes for him at his throat. It reminds him also of how little he’s done in the past 45 days counting down to the start of mid-terms.

If there’s anything good that has come out of this calendar that Harry had given him 45 days ago, it’s the fact that Louis knows now that he and Harry have been friends for around about two months. And that’s kind of weird to think about, actually. The time flew past fast. Faster than their study sessions, even faster than the times they’ve spent together for the hell of it.

They’re attached to the hip, Liam had said to him once in the cafeteria. Louis doesn’t mind him and Harry being known as the friends who can’t get away from each other. No one else seems to mind it, even Harry’s current best friends. Niall certainly doesn’t mind Louis hanging out with Harry. In fact, he keeps encouraging it. Louis knows very well why.

It’s not so hidden that Louis may like Harry just a little bit. Like... only the tiniest bit. Niall always tells him to shut up when Louis talks about him over the phone and stuff, but that only means he
likes talking about Harry. Niall tells him plenty that Louis has an obsession, or something. That or Louis is crushing harder than ever for the messy haired punk, as Niall describes him.

And sure, Harry’s hot as hell. He’s admitted that more times than told himself he’s going to fail his mid-terms. Certainly doesn’t mean that Harry thinks the same for Louis. Of all things, he might like Louis as a friend, call him his best friend. If that. Whatever Harry thinks of him, he’ll take it with a tight hold. Harry’s a good mate. He’s not going to let that friendship slip even if he does have a bit of heart for him.

He loses the daylight fast. The sun is setting when Harry calls him; a usual thing that happens now. If Louis was actually doing anything he’d drop it all just for a phone call with Harry. It’s not a good thing when he’s got important things to do and a man who grants nothing less than a four hour phone call is ringing for his attention. Always does Louis answer.

“Working hard, or hardly working?” Harry asks him. It’s always the latter, but Harry likes to push that in his face. Bastard.

“Can I come over?” Louis questions in return. Harry hums delightfully.

“Is it because you don’t want to talk to me. You’d rather come over and steal every bit of food in my cupboard before sleeping off your hard-not-so-hard work in my bed?”

“You forgot the part where Doritos crumbs are left where you were supposed to sleep,” Louis laughs, already packing his back pack with a pair of grey sweats and soft beanie.

“Sad thing is, love, the Doritos are quite, as someone would say, gone.” Louis gasps in horror, clutching his chest as if someone was watching his dramatic episode. “Anyway, we can go for a drive to shops. Pick me up.”

“Oh, so am I your taxi now?”

“Oh,” Harry mocks, “So am I your second home now? Your second supplier of food? Your second bed—”

“Whatever, I’ll be there in fifteen.”

The seventh day until exams is just like the eighth, except, he spends it with another human being. He lays in bed with Harry for most of the day. However, Harry doesn’t let him drown in laziness and makes him recite some quotes from Oedipus - which Louis did end up finishing, as a matter of fact. It’s for the sake of the mid-terms. Harry wants him to do well. He’s told that to Louis enough, but Louis rolls in the praise he gets whenever Harry says he’s done well for the day, or he’s going to do great in the exam. Which... Okay, it does sound kind of fake. The possibility of him passing the Literature exam is next to nothing, not to mention the possibility of doing well. Harry just has some sort of other belief in him that Louis can’t obtain.

The sixth day until mid-terms Louis spends with Niall. He goes from the late evening to early fifth-day-until-exams talking to Harry over the phone. Harry reminds him of his fate of passing all five exams for each of his subjects. Louis still doesn’t believe him, but feigns belief just to keep Harry happy. Anything to keep Harry happy.

Day four and three aren’t any better. School has begun after the two week holiday, and even though there’s time for revision during classes, Louis doesn’t do much other than say he’s going to his locker but never comes back to his class. He walks around the school instead, clearing his head. Harry joins him on day three during his Gym class and Louis’ Drama studies. Pleasant conversation was
exchanged. Louis feels like he could do anything after returning from the walk. Well, except his exams.

After school, Louis lays in bed for both of those days, and his mother comes into his room every so often to see if he’s alright. Louis only tells her he’s fine and will come down for dinner prep to help her out a bit. Just to keep her happy. Anything to keep his mother happy.

He doesn’t remember day two or one. They’re just as much of a blur as Louis’ mind during his Maths exam on the first day of mid-term week. He’s only thanking the Lord that his Literature exam is last. He spends most of the days after exams with Harry studying in the library. That is if Harry didn’t have an exam himself. Their schedules seem to slot perfectly for long study sessions, that being actual study sessions. Louis feels motivated knowing Harry’s doing something, whether that be scribbling colours on his note pad or sticky noting pages in his text book.

Friday afternoon, it is. Louis has just walked out of his final exam and he’s not relieved. He’s more tense walking out than he was walking in. The first thing he decides to do is call Harry, who had completed his Stage Three Lit exam earlier in the morning. Harry will calm him down, he hopes. Just... Something. He feels so fragile that one step down the stairs might end up shattering him.

Harry answers after a few rings with a sweet “Hey munchkin, you finished up?”

“Y-Yeah,” Louis replies, shaken up. “I... Fuck, Harry. I did so bad. I couldn’t remember the quotes and forgot the fucking... The acts, for the play! I didn’t... The reading in the first part was awful, didn’t make any sense at all. I knew I couldn’t do this--”

“Lou,” Harry speaks calmly, unhurried and perfectly kind. Harry’s a fucking sweetheart. “Love, it’s not the end of the world, a’right? You wrote something on the page, and I’m proud of you for that.”

He can only smile at Harry’s words. Harry makes everything okay. “C-Can I come over?”

“You know me well enough to know the answer to that.”

Yes, of course.

Two weeks later, Louis finds out he had passed three out of five exams, those three being Drama, Biology and Literature.

Literature. He passed his Literature exam. The moment he’s released from class, he finds Harry walking from his locker to morning tea. He shouts for him and sprints towards him. Harry doesn’t have enough time to compose what’s going on, being slammed into with two arms wrapping around his torso. There’s a small figure hugging him, and if he didn’t see the little beady blue eyes glare up to him he wouldn’t have realised it’s Louis attached to his body right now.

Harry furrows his eyebrows, but keeps his expression soft. “What’s up, munchkin?”

“I passed.” He could cry. And he does. “I passed the Lit exam.”

“Holy-- Louis!” Harry fucking picks him up and spins him around. Louis clutches him tighter, burying his nose into Harry’s t-shirt. “Lou! You passed! You fucking passed-- Oh shit, don’t cry, you silly goose!”

Harry places his two feet back to the Earth and rubs his thumbs under his eyes. Louis’ eyelids are spilling out weak tears onto his cheeks. “I’m happy, you idiot!” Louis cries out, gently punching into Harry’s stomach. Harry grabs his wrists and holds them warmly. So, so warm. “Thank you. I can’t... Just. Thank you.”
“I always believed in you, you know that,” Harry whispers to him, bunching Louis at his chest against and holding him close. Louis feels Harry nose into the hair on the top of his head. “And I know you didn’t really believe in yourself, but you did it. You pulled through. And you need to be so proud of yourself for that.”

He could say anything right now. He could say that he is proud of himself, he could say that he helped him believe in himself in the end. Instead, he breathes deeply to catch his excited breath but soon feels his heart beat race when Harry kisses his forehead in appreciation. That’s better than any sort of verbal pride, any sort of written pride.

Louis grasps the back of Harry’s shirt, pressing their chests closer together, as if they’re not already close enough. “I’m so glad I met you,” he whispers up to Harry. “So, so glad.”

He could have kissed him then and there. A thank you kiss. He doesn’t, though. He doesn’t know why.

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“In reality, I would be the one taking a penalty shot right now, Tommo.”

“But in this reality, Payno, you’re not,” Louis places his foot on the football, stopping it from moving about, “So fucking deal with it.”

He takes a few steps back and marks his aim. He takes his unfair shot straight into Liam’s hands, who barks a crude laugh at Louis’ horrid footballing skills. Louis doesn’t show his resentment (Oh, the irony). He’d rather let it show next time when he kicks a ball straight into Liam’s face without damn sorry in the world.

But it’s Harry’s turn, and Louis always knows Liam lets Harry get the goal. Because they’re best fucking friends. Louis hates them sometimes. He doesn’t know why he agreed to Harry’s outing to the park by his street. Maybe because he kind of really fucking likes Harry but doesn’t very much like Liam and his attitude towards football. He loves Liam a lot, really. But not right now.

“You know, Messi would have your arse by now, Liam,” Louis points out, joining him at the goal posts. Harry ends up jogging to the pair before they play a small game of kick around between the three of them.

“Lucky I’m not trying to be a professional footballer, unlike...” Liam says smugly. Louis drones a look at him. “Alright, alright. Calm down with the look, mate.”

“Harry, I’ll give you five dollars to punch your best friend.”


“What type of gang up is this,” Liam hisses, passing the ball over to Harry. “Harry, if you didn’t realise, when you’re on a certain team, you don’t defend the opposition.”

“Oh, yes, I know that Liam. If you didn’t know, my mate Lou here is actually on my team. Looks like you’re the one who’s been fooled.”

“Fooled by the foolish, I would like to think.”
“Hey,” Louis snaps with slight offence. “You like to think wrong, don’t you?”

Harry knocks the ball over to Louis, where his leg takes a massive swing at the ball, hitting Liam dead on the thigh. Instinctively, Liam cups his hands over his crotch and turns away, glaring eye wide at Louis with his mouth formed into an O. They hear Harry before they see him. Louis looks over to see him on the floor cackling loudly and beautifully. He looks so tiny and precious. If Louis could scoop him up and give him a thousand and one kisses, then he would. It takes all his will power not to do as so.

They all bounce around silly like three puppies in a pen for the next twenty minutes. Harry ends up falling to the grass again, where he doesn’t bother to get up. Louis joins him, star fishing his body once he made contact to the Earth. Liam comes about somewhere. They all take in a heavy breath together and giggle, letting their bodies relax and their eyes focus on the sky. The clouds have raided the blue sky today, all different shades of grey and only promising a storm for the later evening. It’s going to be a good night sleep tonight, Louis thinks.

There’s a faint beeping sound that earns all their attention. It’s unknown of where it’s coming from, until Liam speaks up with mild annoyance in his voice.

“Ah, I need to head back home.” Louis can see him sit up in his peripheral vision. He had just remembered Liam set a 4:30 alarm on his watch when they walked to their cars after school. He has some sort of dinner with his relatives. Poor Liam. “Good game, lads. I’ll see you around.”

Both Louis and Harry wave him off with a cheery goodbye. Neither of the two pick themselves up from the ground, still all eyes on the sky moving above them like a calm ocean. Harry’s the first to speak between the two of them, even though it had taken three minutes worth of silence before either of them did anything other than breathe as quietly as they could into the air.

“Do you ever think clouds look at humans and think ‘what if I just rained on them’?”

If Louis expected anything normal to come from Harry’s mouth at this given time, he’d be more wrong than admitting to himself that he doesn’t fancy Harry one little bit.

“It’s certainly a wonder why you didn’t take Biology class, Harold,” Louis teases, tilting his head leftward to see Harry’s hair gently smoothed against the grass. Placing a million dandelions in his hair has never felt more tempting. “Certainly a wonder.”

“Just because science has theorised that clouds are inanimate doesn’t mean that my imagination can’t think that clouds have competitions on who can piss rain and hit someone in the head first.”

He’s adorable. A 17 year old with an expanse imagination that is usually found in a five year old. He could be deemed childish. Except he isn’t. He’s just really adorable.

He keeps it going for the sake of getting the giggles out of Harry. “I think that one up there is called Sanjay.” Louis points to what he thinks is one cloud. All the clouds are mushed together into a big blanket. “He’s looking at you now and contemplating your next move.”

“No, he’s looking at you and contemplating your next move. He’ll rain on you because he knows you’ll create the most magnificent of rainbows.”

Louis questions what he means, “Is that you telling me that there’s going to be a paint fight involved later in the day? And I’m going to be drenched all sorts of colours?”

“It was meant as a figure of speech,” Harry whispers, amused. He also cocks his head to the side, gazing at Louis’ face wrinkled with confusion. “You create rainbows when the rain pours on you
because you’re the sunshine.”

Oh. Just. Oh. “I’m the sunshine?”

“My only sunshine,” Harry sings happily, “You make me happy when skies are grey--”

“Oh God,” Louis moans, whacking Harry’s chest with the back of his hand. It shuts him up good. “I should have seen that one coming.”

“I’d make a musical out of anything, so you should have definitely seen that one coming.”

Louis fishes his phone out of his front pocket and checks the time. It’s only quarter to. He knows Harry has to leave soonish for a babysitting job down the street. Sad, really. He’d love to spend the rest of the afternoon with Harry, the rest of the night. But for a boy who needs to rewrite his failed Maths and Politics exams by Monday week, it’s not a good idea.

“I’m still coming over tomorrow, right?” Louis asks him. After three months, it’s incredible how Harry hasn’t asked him why they haven’t gone to Louis’ place for a study session. Maybe Harry doesn’t mind always going back to his own house. Or has noticed Louis uneasiness with going back to the Tomlinson residence. “Like... For study.”

“If study actually happens,” Harry snickers. “And yes, I haven’t got anything planned so just call me when you’re about to come over or you’re at my door or something.”

“Cool.” He watches as Harry takes his own phone out, tapping his thumbs on the screen a few times before dropping the phone to his stomach. Louis shuffles closer to snoop into Harry’s business. “Who’re you messaging?”

Harry faces him with narrowed eyes. “You certainly take a lot of notice on unimportant things, don’t you munchkin?”

“Not my fault when your sausage fingers tap the screen louder than a kid with a new drum kit.”

Harry barks out a laugh, picking up his phone and handing it to Louis. “An old mate of mine sent me a meme.” Louis takes the phone in his hands, unlocking it. It’s passcode free, he realises. Harry’s very open to the people around him, it seems.

The meme is nothing more than a cat laying on its back with its tail stiffened on its stomach. Rather funny, but not a meme.

“Zayn knows I have a thing for cats.”

Louis grins mischievously at him. “A thing for pussy, hm?”

“Oh my God,” Harry snatches the phone from him and shoves a flat hand at Louis’ cheek, “The number of times you’ve taken my words the wrong way...”

Louis licks his palm, Harry growling in disgust. “Your fault for wording things the wrong way.”

“I only said I have a thing for cats. There was no need to associate it to people with vaginas, Lou.” He’s got Louis there. Louis only *hmph*’s in defeat, sitting up and folding his arms in front of his chest. Harry follows him, crossing his legs and settling his hands in his lap, laughing at Louis’ crankiness.

He places a hand on Louis’ knee, startling him. He looks down to the burning touch and realises then
how close they are. Harry’s left knee is resting against Louis’ thigh. Everything touching him that belongs to Harry fries against his skin. They could leave marks that last a lifetime. Louis doesn’t mind.

“You’re something else, you know that?” Harry whispers.

“Of course I am,” Louis states proudly. Harry laughs at his cockiness, but nods in agreement. Louis tones down his confidence with a gruff chuckle. “I’d say something really sappy like you bring out the best in me but you know, I’m horrible enough.”

Harry smiles gently, nudging his pinky between the fold of his knee. “I’ll pretend that the statement you just said was the only thing you said to me.”

“I was hoping you’d do that,” Louis says. “I’m too much of a loser to admit that I can be quite sweet.”

“You don’t have to add something to discourage yourself to make a point. You can just say it. If there’s anyone that’s going to tease you for opening up, it won’t be me.”

He eyes Harry shyly with face tilted slightly downwards. Today, his eyes match the sky, but they’re not as glum as the clouds. They’re still a brilliant green but much darker than usual. He’s so close that Louis can make out the detailing in his irises, count every eyelash on his bottom lid, spot the very point where the blush on his cheeks start and grow out into a fading pink. He glows as if he’s swallowed a million fireflies and they’re trying to escape through his pores. So much about Harry he wants to learn just so he could paint him. He doesn’t even paint, but Louis wants to paint the beauty on a canvas and show the world, name the work “Prince”, sell the artwork for a priceless amount of money.

Louis feels his eyelids become heavy, his mouth become light. “You’re something else, H.”

“Of course I am,” Harry mimics terribly. Louis dips his forehead against Harry’s shoulder and laughs into his shirt, feeling Harry’s hands squeeze around his knee cap. “Thanks, munchkin.”

“Where did that nickname come from?” he mumbles. He admires Harry from the low angle. How his jawline curves deep. Even with the limited sunshine given by the sombre afternoon his structure casts a shadow onto his smooth neck. His Adam’s apple is prominent, sticking out the middle of his neck as if something’s trying to get out. It bobs when Harry swallows, and Louis is instantly hypnotised. However, it’s not as mesmerising as Harry’s lips.

“It just came from somewhere,” Harry grins down to him, bumping his nose against Louis’ forehead. They’re close. Too close. Except neither of them mind it. His lips are right there. Mouth is a pretty pink with a crystal glaze. They’re full, always full. Never dry. Smoother than Harry’s neck, than Harry’s voice. Harry. “I-I... Um, I don’t... I don’t know...”

His heavy eyelids fall shut without warning. Harry’s hand is gently squeezing his knee again. Harry could burn a forest with his own hands, he thinks. He dances his fingers over to Harry’s t-shirt, twisting his fingers just above his pecs and surging him forward, close enough for Louis’ lips to attach to his neck. Though, that doesn’t happen. He lets his breath hit Harry’s skin, breath too hot and too quick. They haven’t spoken a word in a minute. There’s still no need to.

His body falls into the ground by force. With the way his hand is still loosely clutched to Harry’s shirt, Louis understands that Harry’s hovering above him. Unknown where. The burn of Harry’s hand on his knee is missing. It’s replaced to the left of his chest, a palm flat against his heart. He knows Harry can feel how fast its beating. It’s for him. It’s always for him.
“I... Um,” Louis mutters suddenly, eyes peeking open just the slightest. He sees Harry not even three inches away, vision unable to focus on how close he is. Harry’s eyes are bulging from his head. It reminds Louis of the first time he caught him in the library. “I-I think it’s a cute nickname.”

Harry chuckles and pushes himself back, removing all contact from Louis and shaking his messy curls away from the front of his face. “It is,” he agrees. For some reason Harry looks agitated, or maybe unaccomplished. It’s nothing for Louis to know about. “Anyway, I think it’s time for me to go. You know... Babysitting and stuff.”

“Right,” Louis says blandly. “I forgot about that.”

“Yeah, glad I didn’t. Leaving a two year old child to fend for himself isn’t such a good idea,” Harry giggles, lifting his body from the ground and roughly wiping the dirt from his jeans. He puts out a hand to help Louis from the ground. Louis takes the offer. “I’ll see you tomorrow night though, won’t I?”

Louis smiles with glee. “Definitely.”

Harry begins walking off with his hands in his pockets, head hanging low. He wonders what’s going through his mind. He wonders all the way back home, where he finds his little sister sitting in her room playing with her tea set.

Louis knocks on the door and Amelia stands from her plastic chair, screaming as she runs over to her big brother. She clutches at his leg as if it’s the first time she’s seem him in months. It’s only been two hours. Nevertheless, Louis ruffles her blonde hair and boops her on the nose hello. Amelia finds his hand and tugs at it, yanking Louis to the tea party and making him sit next to Mr. Fluffikins. Louis compliments his blue and purple hat, taking a plastic tea cup and asking Amelia for a fill up.

At some points, Amelia just ignores him completely and tends to her stuffed dollies. Louis hides in his daydream for a while, thinking about Harry. His fleecy hair, his pink lips, his iridescent eyes... He’s never wanted to know what someone had felt like against his mouth in such depth before. Belonging to him is a voice sweeter than cotton candy. Louis wants to know if his lips will taste the same.

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After school he retrieves his phone from his locker. There’s a message from his mother. Shit.

**Emergency call in. Could you pls pick up amelia from preschool?? I need u to look after her tonite. Promise to take care of her this weekend. Love u. xx**

Shit fuck piss fucking fuck fuck. He’s got a study date with Harry this afternoon. He can’t cancel this. Not today. *Fuck!*

God, there’s no way of getting out of it. He can’t give Amelia to a babysitter. It’s too late for that. He doesn’t know a babysitter other than Harry. Harry doesn’t let the baby be sat at his house, either. Fuck, he can’t waste this day with Harry. He’s got so much to do, so much to accomplish.

His life is a fucking disaster.

He waits at Harry’s car, unhappy. Harry’s going to be so disappointed. He can already feel the
disappointment shake his bones. He never wants to disappoint Harry, because he does that pouty lip thing that is worse than stepping on a poor puppy’s tail. He’d cry if he ever saw that face again.

He’s so fucking nervous to tell Harry. Seeing his face light up from far away when he finds Louis at his car makes Louis stomach turn. It’s just a cancelling of a study date. Louis has done this before. Once. 

F**k, he said he’d definitely spend time with Harry today. And look what’s happened. He’s about to crumble down in his own anxiety for something he can’t help.

Harry waves him and walks faster when he’s approaching Louis. Louis plays with his fingers, twiddling his thumbs, and scuffing his Vans on the ground. He doesn’t look up to Harry; he doesn’t think he can. Harry’s in front of him presenting what Louis thinks is an enthusiastic smile for the afternoon plan.

“Hey munchkin, need a lift?” He’s so, so happy. It’s a fucking Friday afternoon, a sunny day. Things can’t be more perfect for him. Until Louis tells him he can’t fucking study with him today.

“Aw, no, Lou. I thought—”

“I know, H,” Louis mumbles apologetically. “I’m so, so sorry. Mum’s got a call in the emergency department and needs me to look after my little sister. I know I said I had no plans, but she just messaged me and told me to pick her up from school and look after her for the night... I’m sorry.”

“You didn’t need to tell me everything, you know that? If you need to cancel, just say so.” There’s no disappointment in his voice, or anger. Nothing but sincerity and collectiveness. “But since you did mention it, we can just go back to your house, hm? I mean it’s just your little sister. Amelia isn’t going to mind having me over, right?”

Well, f**k. This didn’t go to plan.

“I... Uh.” Amelia loves Louis’ friends. God she admires them more than her big brother. She’d love Harry to bits. Amelia isn’t the problem though. It’s the fact both of them usually study in their bedrooms as a little hide away. Harry’s going to question why they can’t go up there if Louis says no. It’s the mason jars. Louis doesn’t want Harry knowing about the jars. If Harry gets too enticed to look out the balcony window, his secret will be exposed. He’s not ready to tell him about the jars. He doesn’t think he’ll ever be ready to tell him.

He’s been quiet for too long now. To say a lie now will only make Harry suspicious. That’s something he doesn’t want. He can distract Harry while they’re at home for sure. He can tell a little white lie about the balcony for today. He won’t be able to get away with it forever though. But it’s just for today.

“Yes,” Louis says, very unsure. “Come over. You can meet Amelia’s dollies.”

“Sounds fun,” Harry grins, stepping around Louis to open his car door. “Text me the address when you’re home. I’ll head over then.”

“Sure.” Harry jumps into his Range Rover and starts it up the moment Louis begins to travel to his car. On the drive to Amelia’s preschool, his mind theorises plenty of unfortunate events that could happen later this afternoon. If Harry finds the jars, he doesn’t know what else he’d do other than cry and tell Harry to get out. It’s too hard to explain without sounding more like a freak.

He knows he isn’t a freak to himself. He thinks of himself as normal, in some sense. However, his opinion isn’t the same as someone else’s. It’s certainly not the same as Harry’s. Harry is too much to lose over a secret. He’s going to protect the jars as much as possible in order to keep both his sane reputation and his... best friend.
Louis’ balcony being out of range isn’t first thing he tells Harry when he enters the Tomlinson house for the first time. But it is the second thing. He says it to him so casually that it wouldn’t be picked up by a lie detector. Harry shrugs off the request and smiles to Louis an “Okay!” before they both head upstairs to Amelia’s room.

Harry meets her. At the very moment Louis knows exactly why Harry chose a job surrounding kids. He picks her up, spins her around until she’s squealing against Harry’s neck happily. He greets every single one of the dolls she owns, asking for their names and their favourite colours. Amelia speaks out with no hesitation, reciting each name and colour of choice as if she had them written on the back of her hand. It’s so endearing seeing Harry shake each doll’s hand and listening to every single word Amelia is saying. He’s so good with kids. Louis wishes he had the same amount of patience as Harry with his sister. Or with anyone, actually.

“We’re going to have a private tea party,” she says aloof. Louis kicks himself and Harry out of the room, shutting the door behind themselves before Harry ends up snickering over to him. Louis questions him.

“What’s so funny, Mr. I wish I had dollies as prim and proper as yours?”

“Shut up.” Harry whacks him firmly at the bicep. “Your sister is like you, you know that? If it weren’t for the blonde I’d be mistaken.”

He cocks his head towards the end of the corridor, leading Harry to the bedroom. It’s nerve-wracking to know the unfortunate can happen inside there anytime soon.

“I think height would also be a factor to consider.”

“What about the height? You’re literally three foot like your sister.”

Louis spins on his heels, stopping them on their carpeted track. “Did you fail your Maths exam, Harold?”

“Yes, I did, actually, but it doesn’t take a genius to see that you’re not much taller than your little sister.” He’s trying to be funny. It’s so funny Louis forgot to laugh. He purses his lips together and raises his eyebrows, seeking an apology. Harry rolls his eyes and sneers. “Don’t be grumpy.”

“You’re lucky I let you in my house, twat.” He finishes their journey, opening the door and letting Harry take the first glimpse of the room. Louis makes sure the blinds and curtains completely conceal the window to the balcony. Harry notices them and opens his mouth to comment, but Louis gets in the way first. “Yes, that’s the balcony. Mum will kill me if we opened the door to it.”

“Right,” Harry nods, pacing towards the bed and star fishing into the mattress. He groans. “Soft.”

“Very,” Louis agrees, also flopping straight into the bed and trying to land his body on top of Harry’s arm. That’ll promise cuddles, or a tickle fight. Whatever it is, it’ll get them away from studying for a while.

Harry ends up pinching him at the sides a few times when they lay facing each other. Harry also rolls Louis up in his duvet and calls him a sausage roll. Louis admitted defeat before Harry tried anything
on him, so it left him vulnerable to most things. It’s why he’s immovable in a duvet right now. Oh well.

Harry releases him from the blanket after Louis whinges about the heat. Harry reminds them both that they actually need to study since this time was specifically allocated for cracking into the books and writing mercilessly. Louis finds an excuse out of plain air, telling Harry they needed to prepare some sort of dinner for his sister to eat. Harry’s eyes light up, excited and more than likely contemplating revenge for Louis’ previous attack with the egg shells.

It’s more than a disaster, Louis concludes when they hand Amelia a plate of spaghetti jaffles. Everything that could have ended up wrong while making mashed sweet potato and sprinkled pikelets went wrong. Louis has pikelet batter in his hair, Harry has mash potato on his face. Neither of them know how either food got onto their bodies.

The kitchen is clean by five, dishes all washed and put away, the wall tiles free from grime and the once full bin now empty. Louis checks up on Amelia upstairs, who is asleep with a full belly. He comes back down to see Harry sitting on the island counter tapping away on his phone, smiling shyly at the screen. Probably another cat joke or something from his mate.

“So,” Louis starts, bringing a hand down to the counter. The abrupt noise in the calm silence spooks Harry. “You staying for dinner?”

Harry sends him a lopsided smile. “It’s not going to be spaghetti jaffles, is it, chef?”

“I was thinking take away,” laughs Louis. He creeps near the island, feeling the counter top press into his stomach as he leans into it. He blinks up to Harry. “Got any ideas, H?”

“Well, I do have something. I get this really nice meal from this Thai place when I end up having a long shift babysitting,” Harry recommends. “Satay chicken, or garlic prawns with jasmine rice. It’s fucking beautiful. And delivery isn’t much at all.”

“Alright then.” He plucks Harry’s phone from his hands, daintily leaning both elbows on the counter and unlocking the phone. “You’ve got me all in. Give me the number, I’ll call them.”

Harry flicks his pointer finger at Louis’ cheek. “Taking things without asking, who are you?” Louis only shrugs. He rolls his eyes before saying the number out loud, Louis typing the number in and reciting the digits back to Harry before pressing the call button. Louis holds the phone to his ear, listening to the rings.

“I hope they hang up on you,” Harry mouths. Louis flips the bird at him and continues to hold it up while speaking to the Thai lady on the phone. She takes their order professionally, despite the small giggles slipping from Louis’ mouth when Harry tries to bite the tip of his finger. The woman thanks him for the order and Louis hangs up, slipping the phone into his pocket rather than handing it back to Harry.

“You’ll get this back when you eat your veggies,” he scolds.

His parenting guide doesn’t help him out, giving back the phone after Harry chases him around the island with dangerous dancing fingers. Of anything, being tickled is one of his worst nightmares. He doesn’t release that secret to Harry. It’ll only make his intentions grow. The passing of the phone is an acceptable gift of surrender, leaving Louis alone and delving into the next world closest to them, which is social media.

He’s scrolling through Instagram, double tapping every so often over a few aesthetic posts. He’s
surprised that Harry didn’t take a Media class for photography or something. He’s obsessed with the orientation of a photo and the lighting in the background and all that other shit Louis doesn’t understand.

He stands close to Harry’s legs, placing one hand on each knee and standing over the phone for a very restricted view of Harry’s Instagram feed. Harry scrolls past a few photos of people from school, liking a photo of Liam’s dog when it appears. His finger keeps moving on the screen, scrolling fast past photos and videos. The top of Louis’ forehead is suddenly knocked. He rocks back, stunned. Harry’s there to meet him with an impish grin.

“You’re actually horrible.” Louis only tracks back to stand between his legs and view the phone. This time, Harry supports his forehead against Louis’ bed of hair gently, both leaning against each other as Harry switches to the Facebook app. He scrolls through that a bit, hardly interesting and videos of nail tutorials or gardening appear more than anything else.

They’re saved by the bell. Both are alerted by the melody of knocks that ring through the house. Their meal is here. Both excitedly run from the kitchen towards the front door, body parts never colliding while galloping through small spaces. Both gather at the door, taking a breath to calm their words when they accept their food. Louis opens the door to three little girls and a mother.

Both would have fallen disappointed if the little girls with pigtails weren’t holding big brown boxes full of girl scout cookies.

“Hi,” Louis cheers, bending down to meet at eye level with the smaller girls. They all chime a “hello” back, the mother standing back and letting the little girls do their charming work. “You selling cookies?”

“Chocolate chip, caramel, or vanilla!” One of them says. She’s blonde and has four badges on her sash. Her toothy grin is missing a few front teeth. “Three bucks a box!”

“Nice,” Louis smiles. “Would it make you happy if I bought a box?”

“Yes, please!” All of them bounce merrily, Louis chuckling as he reaches into his back pocket where he had hidden his cash for the Thai. He pulls out a ten and hands it to the mother. He asks for three boxes, one of each flavour. Each girl reaches into their box and pulls one out, giving the boxes to Louis with a “thank you so much sir.” The mother hands him his change and thanks for his kindness also.

“If you have any left, come back and I’ll buy more,” Louis smiles down to the scout girls. All three shine smiles up to him, giggling as they waddle away behind the mother down towards the footpath. Louis closes the door behind him, three boxes of cookies cradled in his arms. Harry is standing with his shoulder leaning against the wall, a smug smirk plastered on his face. “What?”

“I’m not the only one who’s broody.”

“Oh shut up, will you?” Louis sighs out exasperatedly. “They had cookies! Did you think I was going to open the door and tell them to piss off?”

He walks over to Harry, who then snatches the first box on top. Vanilla. Harry’s favourite. “You didn’t have to buy them.”

“Yes, I did,” Louis scoffs. “Who are you, you cruel villain?”

Harry titters lightly, shaking the box of cookies and feeling their weight. “These are mine, right?”
“Oh yes, I bought vanilla for myself, surely.”

“Vanilla cookies are different from vanilla ice-cream, munchkin,” Harry reminds him, shaking the box in his face. Louis rolls his eyes and sends him a look. He needs to prove his point, it seems. “Don’t believe me then. I’ll just have a box of cookies for myself.”

“I’ll never let you live down the fact that you prefer vanilla over every other flavour in the world.” Louis falls back into the wall, leaning next to Harry with the two boxes of cookies still in his hands. “The caramel box had the most. I felt sorry for that girl. She’ll probably feel unaccomplished for the rest of the afternoon just because you like vanilla.”

“You’re the one that bought three fucking boxes, Mr. Clucky.”

“Are you just going to pretend that you didn’t just coddle my sister no less than two hours ago, loser?” Louis asks him with eyebrows high. Harry chuckles and slaps the smooth side of the box against Louis’ cheek. “Ha, so I win that round. My prize is a foot massage while I eat your Thai.”

“Feet? Gross,” Harry comments, horrified. Louis wriggles his toes mid air to hopefully enthral Harry. It only makes Harry dry heave into his hand. “You wouldn’t put me under that sort of torture.”

“You never know, Harold. Maybe I would.”

“You’re calling me the villain.” Louis waggles his eyebrows and simpers at the annoyance softly crossing Harry’s face. It disappears when mischievous little Louis kicks at Harry’s shin. His face fills with emotions of pain and regret in seconds. He squeaks out a, “Why am I friends with you?”

“Because you’re a twit and dropped your fucking USB and I was a kind enough soul to bring it back to you, rather than deleting every file that belonged on there and keeping it for myself.”

“Christ,” Harry shudders with doe eyes. “What type of kind soul thinks of something as diabolical as that?”

“Me, who is, as a matter of fact, buying you dinner and made you cook up a tragedy for my four year old sister. What’s not to love about me, hm? I’m the Brady bunch all in one person. A real treasure to have!”

Louis could have missed the endearment cross Harry’s eyes, but he catches it at the right moment. Harry’s lips twitch upwards. Not into a proper smile. A fond smile, he recognises. His eyes display vibrant green colours, lighting up with the help of the sconces from above. They’re smaller, as if they’re about to narrow into a squint. But they’re soft, not forced. His bottom lids are lifted by his cheekbones. They’re pinkish shade now. Louis has been staring too long.

Louis comments stupidly. “You’re staring.”

Harry doesn’t rub the fond from his face but looks up and down as if he’s planning the next move, as if he’s checking Louis out. “So are you.”

“Not my fault,” Louis argues childishly. Harry pokes his tongue out at him. Pink and wet. It leaves Louis’ mouth dry.

Harry’s lips... They’re the same perfect shape with the same perfect fullness. They’re wet from Harry’s tongue, glowing from the lighting above. They’re only puckerred open by the tiniest bit, the gap between his top and bottom lip forming an O. They’re... striking. Perfect He’s said that too many times to the point where the word could be meaningless, but they’re perfect. They’re really are.
“I...” Harry whispers out. It sounds too delicate, as if the silence shouldn’t have been broken. “I just...”

Suddenly, Harry’s in front of him with two arms bracketing him on either side of his head. His body caves in, stepping a foot between Louis’ legs to feel him closer. The impact of Harry’s thigh against his crotch freezes him up. But then, he sees Harry’s eyes flutter closed and his front teeth biting into his bottom lip. Harry takes his breath away. He doesn’t think he’ll ever find something that’ll make his heart race as much as Harry does.

The sweet smell of cotton candy fills his nose, Harry nearing closer to his face and letting their foreheads bump together. Harry’s hair brushes against his cheeks, thin trails burning against him. His eyes close, heavy. His heart smacks hard against his chest fuelled by Harry’s aura. Their lips slot together. The taste of cotton candy falls on his mouth, and it’s the sweetest he’s ever had. The most luscious, most soft... Harry’s mouth feels as soft as they look, as full as they seem. Feeling them on his own lips sends shockwave upon shockwave of electricity to his heart. If it stopped Harry would be able to bring him back to life. With nothing more than a timid kiss.

Harry shies away. Louis guiding himself forward to try and linger the warm feeling of Harry being so close to him. It goes away eventually, but the forest fire still blazes on his lips. Harry blinks his eyes open and notices Louis’ flushed cheeks and glistened cerulean eyes. He comes to realise that a mistake has not been made.

“I couldn’t…” Harry whispers, trailing off into silence. It sits uncomfortably in Louis’ stomach.

“Couldn’t what, H?” He curls a hand over Harry’s bicep, rubbing it soothingly to reassure him. It does the trick when Harry grins meekly.

“Couldn’t stop thinking about doing that,” Harry tells him. “Since yesterday... Since... A long time. I couldn’t stop thinking about kissing you.”

“Brave thing to admit, Harold,” he teases willingly, however, his knees are weak from the confession. “Might be braver for me to admit that I would very much like you to kiss me again.”

Harry deadpans a look to Louis, brushing his fingers over Louis’ silky cheeks. “I have to do all the fucking work, don’t I?”

“You’re complaining that you have to do all the fucking work when you said a moment ago that you couldn’t stop thinking about kissi--”

Harry’s mouth snaps him quiet, his fingers sliding under Louis’ chin to tilt his head backwards for Harry to kiss him deeper. He treats him like an antique, as if he was made of gold, the most prized possession in the world. He kisses him tender, mouths moving in against one another and each kiss feeling hotter and hotter. Louis falls pliant with the glide of Harry’s tongue across his own. He muffles the quiet moan buzzing in his throat, leaning his head to the right side to keep things interesting. As if they’re not interesting enough.

He doesn’t realise his entire body has been frozen since Harry kissed him again, his hand still gripped around his bicep and the other by his side not knowing what to do. He takes both hands and settles them on Harry’s hips, sliding his thumbs just above his hip bone and pressing the pads of his fingers deep into his smooth back. Harry drags a hum against his mouth and grazes his nose against Louis’ blushed cheeks. He pauses them, Louis breathing heavily into Harry’s ear, Harry trying to comprehend the world around him with his forehead clicking against Louis’.

It takes time for either of them to speak up. But when it happens, it’s short back and forth before
Louis’ hands are scratching for Harry to come near, so close to the point where he’s compactly
sandwiched between Harry’s chest and the wall. Harry joins them up again, as he should. He never
wants to be apart from him. He wants to be able to hold his hand or touch his hair or have his mouth
on him or anything. Just anything as long as it’s Harry. He’d never ask for anything else. He
wouldn’t be able to if Harry keeps kissing him quiet. If he keeps asking Harry to kiss him quiet.

Knock knock knock. It rips them apart, teeth clicking and hearts racing as if they’ve just been caught
red handed. Their eyes bore into the door, both surprise and frustration swamping their minds. Louis
looks over to Harry first, Harry turning his head too as he grins shyly, lips still bitten red and glossy.
He misses them too much already.

It’s their meal, unfortunately. Louis pays the rude man, who holds a twisted smirk as the money is
being handed over to him. A teenager with dishevelled hair and still panting for breath isn’t going to
be able to hide shit with an excuse. Whatever. He slams the door on the delivery man and faces
Harry with the plastic bag holding three takeaway containers. Louis pushes it forward, Harry
reaching for the bag and opening inside, despite the transparency of the bag.

“Don’t worry, H, it’s exactly what I ordered for me.”

Harry snatches the bag and strides towards the kitchen, snubbing Louis entirely. Louis follows him
with a giggle. He finds bowls and cutlery, finding Harry behind the counter wrapping the meals from
the bag and undoing the lids. Louis stands on the opposite side of him, where the meals steam
directly into Louis’ nose. The smell is incredulously fragrant.

He hands Harry a fork and spoon over the counter. “I thought it was for you,” Harry sneers, dipping
the spoon into the steamed rice and taking a large portion. It’s almost half of the container.

“I’m nice enough to share,” Louis shrugs off, “But that doesn’t mean you can take half the container
of rice, you ass.”

“Who else is going to eat it?” Harry asks, now carefully spooning the garlic prawns into the bowl,
taking only a few peach coloured prawns for himself. He leaves more for Louis, which is kind
hearted and what he should have done.

“Me, that’s who.” Louis forks a sliced carrot and points it at Harry’s face. Harry glares at it, puzzled.
“Eat your veggies.”

Harry bends over to kiss him quick on the mouth. Louis is left tight lipped with nothing else to say to
him.

Harry snickers. “Shut up and eat your dinner, munchkin.”

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Much to Louis’ dismay, both end up with heads tucked into study. Louis completes the corrections to
his failed exams, Harry jotting down notes for some class. Louis is stomach down to the bed, feet
resting against the wall with a pen tutting against his lips. Harry’s near him with a pillow behind his
back leaning up against the wired bed head. He watches Louis as he stares into open space
cluelessly.

“Need help?” Harry questions him. It takes Louis out of his trance as he nods helplessly. Harry
doesn’t crack anything but a pleasant smile. Louis always knew he could trust him not to judge. For certain things... anyway. “What’s up?”

“Just... Maths,” Louis sighs. That in itself explains everything. Harry pushes his notes to the nightstand and slants towards Louis, laying down also and squishing their shoulders together as if no space existed elsewhere. “I can’t figure out cubics still, H. And I-I know it’s such a simple thing but-”

“It’s not simple,” Harry whispers cordially, consoling Louis. “We all had difficulty with it once, Lou.”

“I know but it’s, you know, basic compared to the shit you do in your stage,” he frowns, tapping the end of his pen at the question.

Harry glowers at him and snatches the pen from Louis, reaching for a piece of paper from his notebook. He leans on Louis’ exam paper, scribbling down a few tips to remember. Most of it is gibberish to Louis. Harry starts branching off into quadratics and starts using terms like parabola and it’s probably the most simple fucking shit in the world but Louis does not get it. At all. He doesn’t know how anyone gets it.

But then Harry explains, and every so often he’d ask if Louis understands. There was no use lying. The first thing Harry had said, he’d asked if Louis had understood, and Louis lied. The bastard saw right through him and slapped his knuckles with the side of the pen, telling him once again that he’d be the last person on Earth to judge him for something like Maths. It’s not like Louis had forgotten that. But Louis did this to himself. He let himself become really fucking stupid and will never know how to Math.

“You said the same thing about Lit, and look at you. You passed the exam!” Harry encourages. Louis shakes his head and stares at the page with lips quirked into a tense frown. “You’re not stupid.”

“Tell my mind to stop convincing me that I am.”

“You’re not stupid, Lou,” he repeats. “Here, what about this.”

He writes more nonsense on the page, drawings lines and the parabola things, which he just learned was the fucking name of the graphs he’s been drawing. Harry draws four of those, writing dot points underneath them all with the formulas and other stupid fucking stuff. The entire page is filled with his chicken scrawl after three minutes. Louis is left more blank than he’s ever been.

“Step by step, alright?” Harry says softly. He points at the first parabola, a line with a small bump touching at the 2 on the x-axis. Can’t be too difficult to figure out. It looks harmless enough. “Can you tell me what that is?”

Louis immediately shakes his head no. It’s not because he doesn’t want to do it but because he doesn’t fucking know, Harry knows that.

He takes him through it, step by step as promised. It’s something in Harry’s voice that gives Louis the pure incentive to keep going. And by ten minutes, something seems to click. Whether it be the way Harry had explained it or if the gene to comprehend Math had just switched on, something seems to click, and Louis’ eyes go wide when he suddenly realises that what Harry is saying actually makes some sort of fucking sense.

So he asks Harry to draw him something. Only a simple parabola. Harry keeps it as so, Louis
figuring out the rule for it in one second flat. Harry grins over to him and draws another, in which Louis also completes the rule for.

He feels like a proud mother, Harry does. Louis squeaks and stares at the notes Harry’s made for him, and everything works in harmony in his mind. Puzzle pieces have been joined to fit into a perfect picture. All of the world’s questions have been answered. Louis feels as if his purpose in the world is real.

He’s over-dramatic, but it’s Maths for crying out loud. He understands Maths.

“You seem happy,” Harry comments, glancing at Louis giggling at his Maths exam. A rare sight.

“On top of the world,” Louis grins to him, but it falters soon enough. “You’re so smart. Then there’s me who’s--”

“Smarter,” Harry adds. “Maths doesn’t define shit. It’s just numbers and letters all mixed and made up by someone. You could do the exact same thing for yourself.”

“But none of it would make sense.”

“Eh, who gives a shit.”

Louis presses his nose into Harry’s shoulder, still giggling. “No offence, but you’re atrocious at life advice, let me tell you.”

“I don’t need you to tell me that,” Harry says, humorously. “But you shouldn’t let Maths creep up to you until it makes you go nuts. Or anything, in that matter. It only leads to bad things.”

“You do talk shit sometimes.”

“Yet you still call me and talk to me until one in the morning on week nights, don’t you, Mr. You Do Talk Shit Sometimes.”

He breathes out a laugh and tilts his head back to stare at Harry’s mouth. “That I do,” he whispers. Harry preens wonderfully, like a new spring blossom. “I’m not afraid to admit that I like talking to you.”

“Love,” Harry corrects. Louis rolls his eyes. “Our conversations about avocado are always incredible.”

“To know you love such a nasty fruit really puts me off being your friend.”

“Oh yeah?” Harry questions him smugly. “I thought it was the fact that I love vanilla ice-cream that drew the line for you.”

“Fuck off. That too.” Louis shoves at his shoulder, rolling him over onto his side. Harry’s face lights up with the chuckle that escapes from his mouth. “Vanilla boy.”

“Too ridiculous for my liking, you are,” Harry teases sheepishly, poking a finger at Louis’ stomach. He barks and smacks his dancing fingers away. “You and your chocolate chip cookies, your stupid choc-mint flavour of ice-cream, your aggressive infatuation and taste for anything that’s got a bit of chilli in it.”

“Spiciness make shit better!”

“Oh, you and your daredevil lifestyle. Do you live on the edge by rubbing chilli powder in your
eyes?"

Louis bounces upward to sit on his knees, grinning meekly. “How do you know I do that?” he questions maliciously.

Harry sits up and scoots himself to lean against his pillow once again, but he doesn’t retrieve his study notes. He doesn’t have time to. Louis is crawling up to him with a playful smirk, eyes squinted and body language very wanton.

“I saw chilli powder stashed in your drawer,” Harry sneers. Louis gasps in horror, pausing his movements along the bed. “It’s an addiction, Louis. You need to stop. I’ve called for intervention to take place Wednesday week.”

“I’ll never stop,” Louis says with a chortle, hands curling around Harry’s bare ankles. Harry doesn’t flinch at the touch. He creeps closer, settling himself bravely between Harry’s knees. “You can’t stop me. No one can.”

Harry places his hands on Louis’ biceps, hoisting him forward and through his legs, those spreading to accommodate him between his thighs. Louis ends up straddled across his abdomen, calves pressing against his hips. Harry’s hands graze from his arms down to his wrists, holding both of them gently and thumb brushing over the bone sticking out on either side.

“The chillies have rubbed off on you.” He rocks his hips up to bump Louis up on his knees. The wave motion doesn’t do much but grind his crotch against Louis’ bum. “You’re pretty hot yourself.”

“Oh, how flirtatious of you, never would have thought you could have pulled that one out of your arse, even if you tried.”

“You’re quick to take a compliment, aren’t you?”

“I take mine with a bit more kick to it,” Louis tells him, sitting back down against Harry. He glares at his mouth, Harry’s pink tongue swiping over his bottom lip. Obscene. “You know, something that doesn’t spit with your bland bullshit, let alone to come from a vanilla mouth.”

“Oi,” Harry snaps, hands now at Louis’ waist. “Next time I’ll make you eat your veggies.”

“Eat my mouth, maybe?”

Harry spits a laugh. “Gross, did YouTube teach you that one?”

“YouTube and the back of my hand, Harold.” He perches himself forward to kiss Harry gently on the mouth. He pulls away, saying, “It’s made me into the very man that stands before you.”

“You mean the very man that straddles my hips?”

“One day when you decide to take things not so literally, your life would be much more pleasant.”

He can’t take much more of his nonsense mouth and kisses him quiet, one of Harry’s hand lifting from his hip to only be found at the base of his neck, gently smoothing over the small tufts of hair. Louis hums while pressing his tongue into Harry’s mouth, letting their lips move effortlessly against each other in some sort of rhythm. Whatever the fuck that was.

It’s more soft than the kiss they shared by the front door. Every time their mouths were closed against each other, they’d linger their hold to feel one another. To know how their addictive kisses would feel like, taste like. Louis knows well enough he tastes everything and a bit more like cotton candy.
The way Harry’s hand twists in his hair, bunching up strand upon strand to pull at faintly, makes Louis weak at the knees. If anything, it makes his briefs feel tighter than they should.

He bears down onto Harry’s crotch accidentally, deeply inhaling as he kisses Harry even further. His mouth his lost with his, tangled in the hot atmosphere they’ve created together. Harry bites at Louis’ bottom lip, Louis seething bitterly through his teeth and smothering his mouth once more on Harry’s beautifully red lips. Harry ends up pushing them both down to the bed, mouths never disconnecting. Harry’s between his legs, his hips cradling Louis’ calves as he wraps his legs around his waist. Harry grinds down into him, not so accidentally. Louis giggles, their lips bouncing from one another as their teeth clicked uncomfortably.

Louis feels uncontrollable when he kisses him. He feels as if his heart is going to come out of his chest and swallow both him and Harry whole. His stomach might flutter from his body with the number of butterflies inside of it. His legs might wrap around Harry so tight that he’d lose circulation in the lower half of his body. The feeling of Harry’s tongue in his mouth will never get old, the way he curls it, the way it manages to lose itself to taste every part of what Louis has to offer. Louis only kisses him deeper, more willingly.

Harry doesn’t stop at his mouth. He’s soon at Louis’ smooth neck, Louis screwing his eyes shut hard enough to feel his eyelashes at the bags under his eyes. De ja vu hits them both, but neither of them stop him from attaching his mouth against his neck and sucking briefly. Louis fucks his crotch up to roll against Harry’s lower body, mewling into the air as Harry breaks into his skin, drawing the blood near the surface. Louis pulls back and sees the glowing red mark. It’s so pure, says nothing but lust. The strength to not create another becomes harder and harder the more Harry looks at it.

He noses at the love bite instead, lips brushing underneath. Louis slips his hand under the cotton t-shirt Harry sports, smoothing his finger tips along his spine. He can feel Harry shiver on top of him, moaning softly through his relaxed lips, noises vibrating against his skin. He drags his hand all the way up to his shoulder blade, twisting his head to the left to give Harry further access to him. Harry smudges a firm kiss against him before grazing his teeth over his collar bones and sucking in the dips. Louis clutches his hand, digging his finger nails into Harry’s shoulder. Harry can feel the half moon indents that’ll stay there for the rest of the night. He can feel Louis’ heartbeat through their heaving chests, their heat through their too-hot abdomens.

Louis purrs against him, curling his chin down to find Harry’s mouth. It’s been missing far too long from his own. Harry rocks against him again, his semi all too real against Louis’ crotch. He doesn’t mind though. He’d be a hypocrite otherwise. The moment Harry is at his lips again, they’re only breathing hot air onto each other’s faces, lips caressing one another. The minor touches send shock waves, tidal waves. Something splendid that reminds Louis all too much of a happier time down at the seaside collecting sea shells. Harry kisses him once more and endures the feeling, not disappearing until a few long seconds pass.

Both open their eyes. Harry’s are incredibly glossy, sparkling with bliss and desire. Louis slides his hand from underneath his shirt, scratching his nails down his back before withdrawing it away from complete contact. Then, Harry snatches both of his wrists, entwining their hands and pinning them above Louis’ head. Mind you, their crotches are in perfect alignment, Louis semi very visible under the thin material of the joggers. His legs are still secure around his waist and aren’t inclined to removing themselves any time soon. Neither of them seem to mind. But it has to happen at some point and that made Louis very unhappy.

“We don’t study a lot while we’re together,” Harry whispers down to him. Louis snickers and pokes his tongue out.
“Please, it’s not like you give a shit.”

“I do!” Harry squeaks defensively. Louis raises his eyebrows knowingly. “I give a shit, but like... It’s hard.”

Louis looks between them, smirking. “You’re telling me.”

Harry laughs, untangling their fingers and leaving his hands at Louis’ torso. Louis supposes it’s time. He unlatches Harry’s body from his leg prison. Harry ends up rolling next to Louis’ side nevertheless, both staring up at the ceiling with hard ons and some incapability to breathe properly.

“Just, I don’t know, think of your grandma naked or something, I guess.”

Louis immediately tenses up, feeling his nostrils flare and heart sink. It... *Okay.* Harry doesn’t know. Harry just doesn’t fucking know and he can’t blame Harry for not knowing. Louis can’t tell him, either. It’s not the right time to say anything about his Granny, or the fucking jars just... *Fuck.* It’s such a known term to say... and Harry got the phrase *right* this time. It isn’t appropriate. Because it’s Louis. Harry could have said that to anyone else and it would have been a totally different reaction. But it’s just Louis.

Harry doesn’t need to know. He conceals the emotions well enough, despite the heavier breathing and the entire world feeling like it’s about to crash down on top of him. It’s all alright, he guesses. Harry’s at his side with happy eyes, a happy grin and a very happy life. He’s not weird or anything. In Louis’ sense, anyway. He doesn’t have too many secrets, he supposes. Not something as big as Louis’. Something that is literally in the next room and has an excuse written all over it to stop any sort of intrusion. It’s sad it’s come to this. He should be able to tell Harry, but he can’t. Something’s stopping him. It’s not anyone’s business.

There’s a cute boy by his side gazing at him now. “All alright, munchkin?”

*No, not really.* But, “Yeah,” he lies. He doesn’t know if Harry sees through him, but Harry doesn’t comment on it albeit. “Why do you ask?”

“You haven’t spoken in a while.” Harry curls closer, like an affectionate house cat. “Just miss hearing your voice, is all.”

If there were any human being trying to stop Louis from liking Harry this much, they’d probably struggle alongside Louis’ inability to control his fondness. However, in reality there’s nothing stopping him. So he embraces Harry with welcoming arms wrapping around his torso. He dips his nose in the centre of his chest, giggling silly. He hasn’t found one like this one in a very long time.

:::

Harry leaves just after nine thirty that night. Louis ends up going back into his room there after, unlocking his balcony door and walking out to the jars. He picks up the one full of Harry and his memories.

He jumps back inside with happiness bouncing him across the carpet. He uncaps the sharpie, lid between his teeth as he rips it from his mouth, and scribbles on a strip of paper what had happened this evening.
He screws the lid back on and looks at the barely full jar. Yet it is filled with memories so intense it might shatter the glass from the inside out if anything else is placed inside. Louis holds it in his hands towards the light, bringing it down to kiss just above where the rim of the lid is. He puts it back where it rightfully belongs, simpering all the way back to his bed and dumping his body onto the mattress.

*Best day of my life*, he reminds himself, the exact five words written on a piece of memory paper.

He’s messaging Harry during the school’s lunch hour. Harry certainly brings out the rebellious side of him.

*maths last :( but at least i actually did my work this time :D*, he answers to Harry’s *what’s your final class?*. An unusual question to ask considering all senior students attend Maths at the same time on any school day. It’s keeping them busy. Also in trouble.

*all because of my fantastic tutoring ;)*

*you know it’s because of that. x*

The school librarian walks past Louis who’s sitting on the birch bentwood. He hides his phone behind a novel, which he later discovers is actually a old style dictionary that someone hasn’t used since the 19th century. It does the trick for him, however. He doesn’t get caught out and can keep texting Harry freely with no suspicious over lookers whatsoever.

*how should i feel that you actually complimented me without any sort of teasing beforehand?*

And how the fuck did he let Harry get away with a compliment so easily.

*it’s hardly a compliment. i just agreed with you.*

*do you know what the definition of a compliment is?*

He’s about to reply back with something more on the cheeky side, but best put this ancient dictionary to use.

*compliment: noun. a polite expression of praise or admiration.*

*so exactly what you just did! ;)*

*best know that this means war, and you won’t be expecting any sort of compliment from me any time soon, mate.*

Harry only replies back with a :O emoji and sends him a few x’s along with it. Plenty of kisses to go around. He should give them all to Louis. He thinks he’s in desperate need for a kiss right now, one blooming with enthusiasm to keep him motivated and to not knock himself out during Maths whilst learning some new important topic. He had enough trouble with the quadratic parabola things, whatever the fuck they are.

Both leave off their conversation when the lunch bell rings, the students flooding into their
designated classes. He heads into Maths to see his teacher sitting proper at her table, a coffee mug in her hands and a strict look tightening her face. The students in front of him pass the desk, placing their completed re-do exams on the table. Louis should proudly slam the fuckload of sheets onto her desk and walk off with all eyes on him and his swaying ass. Of course, that doesn’t happen. He courteously, more so nervously, places the exam on the pile and walks away with his head hanging down in despair. Any sort of high, whether it be from self-pride or artificial, will never make Maths more fun than it isn’t.

It’s exactly how he expected the day to end. He doesn’t fall asleep, but with his mind being in La La Land he might as well have slept through the entire lesson. He’s tired - exhausted actually. And it’s only Monday.

He goes to his locker to retrieve his day bag, slinging it smoothly onto his back and feeling his pockets for his phone. His hand hits jackpot, fishing for it in his right pocket and seeing a message from Harry. It was sent a few minutes ago. He doesn’t even look at the message as he frantically types out a reply.

"a bit clingy, babe? ;)

He reads the message above. Harry wants him to go to his car rather than straight to his own. However, Harry’s typing out a reply. It’s short and quick.

"you know i am. where are you? x"

He doesn’t bother messaging back. He’s already on the way to the carpark, making his way through tight groups of sophomores, finally being able to breathe fresh air when he reaches outside. Harry’s not too far away. In fact, he’s not even two rows from the front and Louis can clearly see him from the top of the front entrance stairs. He’s with his short haired prick of a best friend. Liam’s holding a footie in his left hand and his car keys on the right, dangling from his finger. They’re talking whilst leaning against the car, and it doesn’t seem to be private. So Louis makes his easy way down the stairs towards Harry’s Range Rover.

It’s the first time he’s seen Harry all day. He was late this morning, not being able to meet Harry in the car park to sleepily stumble into the school together. They don’t see much of each other at school. Or as much as Louis had hoped. They’re both busy with things and Harry’s got stupid clubs and all the like, despite saying he’d be leaving them earlier in the year. Bastard.

He greets Liam first just to be a dick. Harry frowns at him but the dandy smile returns when Louis kicks a small stone at his shoe. They don’t even say hello. The stone kicking was apparently their form of greeting; a new form of greeting. Harry ends up talking from where Louis supposes they had left off before he’d walked over. It’s some nonsense about travelling or some shit. Disneyland is mentioned at some point.

Liam ends up noticing Louis’ agitation for being left out of conversation. Instead of doing something about it, he says, “I have to go. Footie and stuff. Catch you two around, yeah?”

But he actually has done something. He’s now alone with Harry in an emptying carpark. They’re not as alone as he would have hoped but they’re secluded behind Harry’s big ass car. It’s as concealed as they’re going to get in this environment.

“Thanks for the rock by the way,” Harry says, rolling the stone under his shoe. It grinds against the bitumen and causes a sound that makes Louis’ skin itch. “It was a very lovely gift.”

“You looked glum. Thought I’d treat you with a present.”
“Glum?” he asks Louis. Louis nods nonchalantly. “I wasn’t glum. Liam makes me happy.”

“As happy as I make you?” Louis isn’t expecting a serious answer to that. He gets pulled into Harry’s chest, forearms upright against his torso. Harry’s made room for his tiny feet between his own and is looking down at him. He’s pretty in this Autumn weather, from the breeze that sweeps through the town to the way the leaves fall. Everything is settled and tranquil.

“You make me happier,” Harry whispers down, kissing him chaste on the nose. “Happiest.”

Louis grins up to him and whispers back, “PDA is disgusting, Harold.”

“Let’s make it disgusting-er.”

“One of the school’s most clever stage three Literature student,” Louis says vapidly, tracing his fingers up Harry’s left collarbone. “Quote Harry Styles - disgusting-er.”

He rolls his eyes at Louis but pulls him in for a kiss anyway, hands cupping under Louis’ jaw and thumbs resting close to his ears. He forces himself on his tiptoes so Harry doesn’t break his spine while trying to kiss the breath out of him or something. It might happen one day, it’s just when. He slides his hands up and around Harry’s neck to tug him further to his body, the car taking care of their weights leaning against the passenger door. The hands find Harry’s hair, miraculously, and fingers card through the softish curls, slightly sticky from God knows what. But his fingertips instantly warm up as if the curls were his personal pink mittens.

He’s going to pull back, stop the PDA when it’s controllable rather than waiting for a hooter to heckle their steamy performance. But it’s been a long weekend without Harry, a long day without Harry. They haven’t kissed since Friday, their only share of kisses. Any time apart nowadays is a lifetime and a half. Louis doesn’t know how he survived so long without this sort of fire on his lips.

Harry licks at his mouth and smooths his hands down to Louis’ hips, locking him into place and guiding their mouths in a soft open and close motion. Lazy, it is. Their cold noses brush often. Harry’s tongue prods into his mouth and Louis smiles into their kiss, pushing his mouth back to surprise Harry with his cheeky play. Despite Harry feeding him all sorts of electric sparks his mouth is starting to bite with fragility as the last of spring’s bitter cold winds draw through the town. He’s not going to freeze but the cooling air is quite uncomfortable to be in. Especially when he’s sporting black skinnies and a cut up tank.

He faintly pinches at the juncture of Harry’s shoulder and neck while pulling away from his mouth. Harry’s cheeks are flushed pink, Louis unable to tell if it’s from the sudden chill that had breezed its way through down or from the kiss. He’d like to think it’s because of the latter, albeit it’s always the first fucking option.

Harry’s silent for a moment, but chuckles lowly before whispering, “Busy today, munchkin?”

He shakes his head immediately. “Made plans with me?”

“Yeah,” Harry says. “I want to come over for a bit.”

His mum’s home but that’s never stopped him from bringing random people to his house. Regardless, Harry isn’t a random people. Person. He’s mentioned him enough times to his mum that his mum probably knows more than Harry had dared for her to ever know.

Besides the fact that Harry knows the balcony is out of bounds. Having him over is always a treat. Plus, it guarantees dinner.
“Alright,” Louis kisses him again, “You know about the rules, yeah? Mum’s home and stuff.”

Harry nods. He trusts his instincts to know Harry won’t go snooping about. He gives him one last kiss before stepping out of their kissing bubble and heading towards his lonely car far away in the third row of parking spaces. When he drives out, he sees Harry right behind him, driving closely behind him all the way back to his.

Harry parks up behind his car in the driveway before they both walk to the front door. He unlocks it with a jimmy of his key, his shoulder making contact to the wood as they push themselves inside. The first thing he notices is the faint smell of chicken broth wafting through the corridor. He looks over to Harry, who stands politely quiet, and cocks his head towards the door frame to the kitchen. Louis walks, and Harry follows.

Without any surprise, his mother is there behind a chopping board, a knife secure in her right hand and a carrot being pinned down with the other. Louis sings a hello and asks what she’s storming up in the tall pot on the stove.

“Chicken pot pie,” she answers with a grin, eyes darting to Harry. Louis is worried the look upon Harry maybe one of dislike. Sooner or later she would send him a glare to make Harry run home crying to his own mother. “Who’s this?”

“He’s--”

“Harry,” Harry introduces, walking forward with a hand out. His mum takes the offering and shakes his hand over the counter. “I’ve been tutoring Louis for a bit.”

“Ah, you’re him! Finally nice to meet you,” she says, her words very welcoming. “Thank you for doing that. I’m super proud of what he’s been able to achieve in the past few months.”

“Always a helping hand.” He glances over to Louis, his hand open in front of him. He’s almost willing to take it, lace their fingers together and curl up into his chest for a warm hug, head tucked into Harry’s neck. His entire will power refrains him from doing so; he gives him a high five instead.

“Harry’s got some Literature stuff from school, he’s helping me out today,” Louis lies. She hums to let him know she’s listening. “I hope you don’t mind.”

“Of course not.” she says to the both of them, staring from the julienned carrot to Harry. “Stay for dinner if you’d like. We have plenty for the fam.”

Harry thanks her for her kindness, Johannah letting Louis know she’s heading out to the store with Amelia in a few minutes. He grins too happily at that for anything to be considered unsuspicious but his mother doesn’t question him nevertheless. He guides Harry out of the kitchen, up the stairs and into his room. The curtains are flat in front of the balcony door, concealing the jars perfectly. He sighs with relief as Harry passes him to the bed, closing the door behind them to lock them away from any disturbance.

Now, where were they?

“Was that you lying out there, or did you really want to do some study this afternoon?” Harry asks him, his eyes following Louis to the bed. He plops down beside him and folds his legs, his knees appearing through the jagged rips of his jeans.

“What do you think?”
Harry shrugs. “I wouldn’t have a clue with you.”

He pounces onto Harry without warning, Louis propping himself up on Harry’s torso with his forearms. Harry looks at him sporting a double chin and a nasty grin. Playfully nasty.

“Yeah, I’d love to study,” he says so bluntly that Harry’s unsure if he’s being sarcastic or too serious. Louis helps his boggled mind out. “Could go with the study of human anatomy for a bit, have a test on Thursday.”

“I-- What,” Harry questions him, amusement in his voice. “You don’t even do human biology. I know well enough you don’t cover that in regular bio.”

“Funny that.” Louis quirks up an eyebrow and pouts out his lip in thought for a moment. “I should study up on it anyway, just in case. You know, for science and stuff.”

“I don’t even know basic human anatomy. I struggle with my own two left feet as is.”

“You can still help me,” Louis whispers down, leaning himself over to kiss Harry square on his pink lips. He mumbles against him, “I’d like to study up on the mouth first, thanks.”

“Oh my God.” Harry shoves him from his body to his side. Louis ends up giggling while squabbling excitedly to try get back on top of Harry’s body. Harry ends up rolling over to his side, gathering Louis around his chest to bring him in and smother his cunning mouth.

“You made that entire thing up to be a cheeky shit and play a move, didn’t you?” Harry asks him. Louis mutters an *I would never!* into his shirt, words stuffed with cotton, and giggles mercilessly at Harry’s sternum. Harry kisses the top of his head. “No kissing.”

Louis freezes in Harry’s arms, craning his head back to glare at him. “The twat’s speaking bullshit again.”

“I know you love talking about yourself but right now, it’s proving you more wrong than--” He’s cut off by a kiss at his chin, an odd feeling that. “No.”

“Yes,” Louis answers back.

“No.”

“Yeah.” He wriggles between his arms to near even closer to Harry’s face then smooches him just below his mouth. “C’mon lean down. I’m not supposed to be shorter while lying down too.”

He gives him what he wants just because he can. He’s waited too long to kiss Louis so any opportunity to do so won’t pass him by. They’re mellow and warm against one another, it reminds Louis of all things wonderful and pretty, like chicken pot pie. He could substitute his dinner for Harry. Although that wouldn’t be the most appropriate thing to say out loud.

Harry’s mouth is fragile moving with his own, and Louis wonders why that is. A sweet and slow kiss is nice, however, so he doesn’t try and speed things up. Their lips brush against each other more than they come together for a full locking. It’s... really nice. So different. Indolent. Harry’s hands are spread across the small of his back, fingertips pressing against his curved spine. He’s being touched in the right places. It’s nothing sensual, nothing sexy. It’s something that brings Louis to a happy place, something else. Louis could lose his mind with this.

“Mhm,” Harry purrs, hands sneaking under Louis’ tank. They don’t go further than where they were before, but are settled closer to his hips rather than in the middle. “I’ve wanted to kiss you since I saw
you in the library... the first day.”

He keeps his eyes closed but giggles when he shifts his face a little bit from Harry’s. “My eyes aren’t even open but I can see through that little white lie of yours.”

“It’s true!” Harry confronts, with little offence pointed towards Louis’ accusation. “But you’re here now. I have you.”

“You have,” Louis murmurs, closing in to Harry’s mouth again and feeling Harry’s breath his against his wet mouth. He searches for Harry’s hand at his hip, holding it tight in his own before picking out the smallest finger of the bunch. “Got me wrapped around your little pinky.”

Harry huffs out a quiet laugh and kisses him quick. “Fuck, you’re adorable,” he tells him.

A few lazy kisses and the throwing of Louis’ shirt to the floor later, both of them stop with the sound of Harry’s stomach moaning louder than a whale’s bellow. Louis simpers and sits up, feeling a lot more exposed than he is, but scurries to the bedroom door before twisting his body around and looking at Harry.

“Make yourself at home,” he jokes, eyeing Harry dig deep into the covers of his bed, ruining the neat sheets. Louis leaves the room rolling his eyes, making his way down the stairs to retrieve something of the sort. Crackers, biscuits, apples?

By the looks of it, his mum’s headed out with Amelia to the shops as told. So Louis raids the pantry of anything that seems edible but pleasant. He picks out cabanossi and cheese, cutting those up to side with a few water crackers. He doesn’t bother with the slicing of the apples; they have fucking front teeth for a reason. He also finds the cookies he bought the other day, the caramel ones. If Harry doesn’t like those he can very much leave.

Heading back up the stairs with a bowl containing two apples and a plate of snack-ons shouldn’t be so difficult. It’s why Louis never plans to become a waiter, since he has the skills similar to a plant. To make matters worse, he has the corner of the cookie box between his teeth which is blocking his view of the steps. His feet are slow up the stairs, the creaks low under his weight. He makes it to the top, eventually. He’s surprised nothing had fallen, including himself. He adjusts his balance and exhales hastily, walking into the room.

All his attention draws to the balcony curtains drifting wispy into the room.

“Hey, Lou,” his voice is very distant in his head, despite only being a few metres away, “What are the jars for?”

The jars. The curtains are blowing because the balcony door is fucking open. The jars are exposed, there is no more secret behind the curtains. Harry has seen the fucking jars.

He drops everything. The plate of snack-ons, the apples, the fucking cookies. His mouth is wide open, jaw completely slack, and hands are frozen in place as if they’re still carrying the ceramic plates. His heart could race from his chest like a bullet and kill a person. He’s completely out of function, out of order, like some damn machine that could only operate if his sanity wasn’t abolished.

“Lou? Was it... Shit, was it something I wasn’t supposed to ask or?” Harry can’t stop staring at his agape mouth and pale cheeks, hiding his own face between two shaky hands. “Fuck, of course it wasn’t something to ask about. I-I didn’t mean to pry. I’m so sorry.”

What’s he supposed to do? He didn’t plan for Harry to know about the jars today. He didn’t plan for Harry to know about the jars at all. He’s been confronted about them so suddenly. He could step
backwards out of the room and fall down the stairs, further break himself into the tiniest of pieces. He could avoid the question forever. But he can’t. There’s something inside him that tells him he can’t.

“Munchkin, please say something.”

He can’t find the words to say, so he pulls them from the air. “I-I...You...” This whole pulling words from the air thing is going great! “You shouldn’t have seen them.”

“I know, I-- Fuck. I know, I’m so sorry,” Harry apologises again. He can’t even bat his eyes up to Louis, trained to the carpet in remorse.

He believes him, is the thing. There’s too much sincerity in his voice to excuse it. Louis lowers his hands, finally, and shoves them both into his pant pockets. He glares at Harry still focused on the carpet, looking for answers to the situation.

“It’s... fine, H,” Louis says, unconfident with his own answer. “I was just hoping you wouldn’t see them.”

“I’m sorry,” he whispers again, eyes lifting from the ground. He stares at Louis. “I didn’t mean to pry.”

Louis exhales loudly. Annoyed, clearly. Harry shrivels between his shoulders again, feeling like nothing more than a fuck up. Louis can sense that with the way Harry shrivels up, a hand running anxiously through his hair. He licks over his bottom lip in thought, soon stepping over the fallen plates and padding across the carpet to Harry’s tense body.

He puts a hand up on his shoulder, consoling him. He musters up his exasperation and replaces it with composure. As long as Harry doesn’t ensue any further questions and forgets about the jars altogether, things will be okay.

“I know you’re sorry, and I don’t want you apologising to me every few seconds because you saw something that you weren’t meant to see. But it’s just going to make it easier for the both of us if we just forget this happened, alright?”

It sounds so fucking ridiculous because Harry has no fucking clue what the jars are for. Louis is putting all defence on some mason jars. He’s hiding the secret further away than he’s ever done before.

“If it makes you happy,” Harry says to him.

“It will,” Louis reassures. “Please don’t tell anyone either. No one knows except for my family and my best friend.”

Harry looks up to him and nods earnestly. “Yes, of course... I’m just...”

Louis blinks at him, concerned. “Just what?”

“I’m just confused, is all,” Harry mutters. “I saw them there and I wanted to know what they were. I thought they were maybe tea lights or something but there’s jars with things written on them. Like middle school and other happy things. Do you collect things?”

At least he’s being truthful. Maybe nosey, but truthful.

“Yeah,” he murmurs back, sliding his hand from his shoulder to his bicep, giving it a squeeze. “Yeah I do.”
The side of Harry’s mouth lifts into a small smile, now much calmer and breathing easily. “That’s really nice,” Harry admits to him. “What do you colle-- Wait.” Harry pauses suddenly, then slumps his shoulders again, miserable. “Fuck, sorry. I shouldn’t be asking so many questions. You said forget it--”

“Memories,” Louis blurts out, hand so tight on Harry’s shoulder his fingers could bruise into him. But he needs something to hold onto in fear he may fall over and pass out if he doesn’t. “I collect memories.”

Harry audibly swallows, watching Louis’ eyes as they strain wide open. He’s looking for something in Harry to hopefully reassure him that he’s just made the right choice. By telling him one of his deepest secrets. He has full trust in Harry and knows he’d never judge. Harry has said that enough times that Louis shouldn’t even be questioning if he would judge him for something like this.

But the silence between them is unsettling. As each cold second passes, the thought of Harry shouting out loud that he’s a freak is doubling. The thought of Harry running away and never coming back to him again is tripling.

Until Harry speaks. “You have fifty mason jars sitting outside with memories inside them?”

There’s nothing in his voice that vibes off disgust, so Louis keeps collected. “Yeah. Sometimes I open the jar and take in the atmosphere and close it, or I write on a piece of paper if I don’t have the jar with me at the time.”

Harry nods, understanding. Or... Trying to understand, at least.

“I’ve never heard of anything like that.” Harry could be invalidating his idea, but he quickly adds on to steer Louis from the thought. “That’s a really beautiful idea, Lou.”

It wasn’t his idea, he wanted to say, but if there’s one thing he’s not ready for, despite spitting his major secret to Harry, it’s to talk about his grandma.

He didn’t expect Harry to accept him, let alone his crazy scheme to collect memories in hundreds of jars. There’s got to be a catch to this. Harry can’t certainly think it’s a beautiful idea, or think he’s normal. Harry just can’t.

“Are you being serious?” Louis asks him, worried. He wants to believe Harry but his words are unbelievable. Harry is hiding the fact that he thinks Louis is a freak, without a doubt.

“Why wouldn’t I be serious?”

Harry laces his hands with Louis’, trying to secure his sincerity. “To not hurt my feelings,” he says softly.

Harry tilts his head at him, lips curving into a gentle, genuine smile. “If you’re thinking I’d ever call you a freak, in my head or out of my mouth, you’d be more wrong than you’d ever would be right about anything in the entire world.”

“Harry--”

“We’re all normal, Louis. Just because someone else doesn’t do what you do doesn’t make you abnormal, or make you a freak,” Harry says to him, curling his fingers tighter around Louis’ palms. “You’re every bit gorgeous and to know you want to keep memories forever makes me want to make plenty more with you.”
His words are so brilliant, so endearing. There is no one he wants to kiss more than Harry, no one he wants to spend time with more than Harry. He dips his head in the crook of Harry’s neck, breathing in, breathing in his earnestness, exhaling his relief and letting it splash all over his body. He feels Harry’s hands slip from his and perch at his hips, thumbs digging in beside his pelvis.

“If there’s anyone who deserves the title of freak, it’d be me,” Harry continues.

Louis shakes his head and laughs heavily. “That’s not true.”

“Alright, so tell me what type of person would purposely drop a USB in front of a hot guy to maybe, hopefully, see them again the next day because they didn’t have the guts to say a proper hello.”

Louis peels himself from Harry’s body, staring with humour stricken eyes. “You dropped your USB on purpose?”

“Liam told me it wasn’t a good idea, but I went against him anyway because who the fuck listens to Liam.” Louis giggles fiercely, both hands rising to ball up at Harry’s chest. Harry laughs with him. “So yes, I did drop it on purpose to get your attention. Like I said, I’m a freak.”

“No true,” Louis repeats. “We’re all normal, just because someone else doesn’t do what you do doesn’t make you abnormal.”

“You can’t use my own quote to prove your case.”

“I just did,” Louis grins, tucking his head back into Harry’s neck and kissing him at his collarbone. “But look what you did, where it got us. I’m here with you now.”

Harry hums and leans his cheek against Louis’ scalp. “Exactly,” he whispers while slipping his hands behind Louis’ back, palms warm at the dimples of his spine. “See, I did a good.”

Louis chortles. “You did do a good,” he says. “A great, even.”

Listening to Harry breathe is something Louis wants to do for the rest of the afternoon. Just to be pressed up against his chest and hear nothing but the soft exhales that could work deep into his muscles, further than any massager could. He wants to kiss his mouth to feel the slow draw of exhilaration seeping into their systems, making their hearts race and stomachs flutter.

“Thank you for not thinking I’m weird,” Louis says weakly, gripping at Harry’s shirt and sighing through a smile.

“Never could, never will,” Harry promises.

They drift to the bed after Louis had picked up the scattered snacks and bruised apples. Harry ends up opening the packet of cookies, the only thing that’s not coated in soft carpet fibres. He feeds Louis, who’s on his back with the duvet half covering his body, cautiously, worried he might choke on a dry biscuit and die or something. The kisses come back too, first on the nose, then on the forehead. There’s a few peppered kisses at his temple that drag all the way down to his chin, following his jawline, before there’s anything on the lips. They’re the best of all.

Somehow he ends up on Harry’s lap with bum nestled nicely on his crotch, legs extended on either side of Harry’s body. His mouth is inseparable from Harry’s, arms thrown around his neck and eyes screwed shut. Harry’s hands are spread across Louis’ back again but are not there for soft, pure touches. They’re gripping, needy, clawing. As if Harry can’t get enough of him.

Harry bites at his bottom lip, already too full from the time they’ve been kissing. He bites it, pulls it,
until it turns angry red. Louis’ tongue darts into his mouth to hopefully gain remedy for his sore, love bitten mouth from Harry’s own. He grinds into him voluptuously, mouth hanging open as he groans breathlessly into Harry’s mouth when he feels his cock hard underneath his arse.

And Louis tries to keep going, rising up and down to induce friction against Harry’s cock, to make him feel good. Harry only stops him with hands at his hips, firm and controlling. Louis whines softly and closes their mouths together one last time before he lets Harry speak, foreheads together and mouths near, so near that Louis can feel the words against his lips.

“Next time, munchkin,” Harry says. Louis doesn’t respond, only continuing to breathe heavily. “I have to go out after dinner. Can’t get my jeans... Like, you know.”

He could take them off, Louis thought, but he only realises how fast they’re moving, and is glad Harry had stopped them before things turned much more erotic. He kisses him once more before rolling away from him, his hard on swelled against the left side of his jeans, very noticeable. Harry’s is too, when Louis looks over at him. He wants to undo his zipper and take out his cock and maybe just suck him off a bit-- No.

Not today. Next time.

As promised, Harry stays for dinner. The chicken pot pie is to die for, and Harry tells his mother he’d be coming back much more often in the future. Louis smiles at him when Johannah tells him ‘he’s welcome to come over any time’. Harry’s going to take that way too literally and probably come into his room at midnight to spoon him one night. Not that he’d mind, of course.

Harry has a babysitting job on the other side of town at 8 o’clock, so he’s off just after he finishes his meal. Louis walks him out to his car, only because it’s the only place where they could kiss without being caught. Not that his mum would care about Louis fancying Harry, or boys, but he’s allowed to keep things for himself. He wants to keep Harry all to himself and no one needs to know about them.

Harry kisses him goodbye and drives off into the darkening evening. Louis lets out a huge huff, somber. But he’s going to see Harry tomorrow. And the next day. And the next.

Who would have ever thought Louis Tomlinson would be excited to go to school.
It’s the first Friday of the new month, midday. Louis is stuck in his Biology class with his marked test paper in front of him. It’s not too bad, albeit could be better. It’s an easy topic they’ve studied over the past few weeks; DNA. Regardless of the average score, he’s proud of himself.

His class is going through the test paper, reading down the endless, or thirty, multiple choice questions to pick up any hidden errors and explain any confusing questions. His teacher drags her voice out, projecting as much enthusiasm as Louis is showing on his face. Louis almost falls asleep ten minutes before class ends but he holds himself steady and manages to pull through. The lunch bell rings, and Louis is the first out of class, placing the test paper on the teacher’s desk before storming out of the room.

He’s at his locker, switching his books for his lunch. There’s a tap on his shoulder when he’s about to slam the door shut. He turns around to find Harry with a super massive grin splitting his face.

“Hi,” Louis says, very giddy. Harry response is similar. “Lonely?”

Harry frowns at him, both starting to walk towards the end of the corridor where a secluded lunch garden sits. “You’re making it seem like I think you’re my second resort.”

“Aren’t I?”

“No!” Harry objects. “You know I can’t just leave Liam by himself when he’s around. I’m one of the few good mates he’s got.”

“I know, Haz,” Louis laughs at him, bumping shoulders as they step from linoleum to the outside asphalt. “I’m only joking around.”

Harry stops him mid-walk with an arm in front of his moving body. Louis freezes, as requested, looking from the empty garden to Harry’s eyes. His eyebrows are furrowed as if he’s agitated.

“What?” Louis asks.

“You don’t really think that, do you?” Harry questions him, face twisted with all sorts of emotion. He’s trying to confirm that Louis isn’t lying to him. Louis would never.

“Of course I don’t,” Louis says. “I don’t care about priority or that shitty nonsense. Liam’s gone for two weeks, of course you’re going to come to me for lunch and stuff. We’re the only other people in our lunch group.”

Harry shuffles uncomfortably, but he’s more willing to believe Louis than he was earlier. They continue to walk to the wooden bench surrounded by the greenest of foliage. They remind Louis of Harry’s eyes, which is why this is his favourite spot and their designated lunch spot.

It kind of just happened. Louis had stopped going to the library to start spending time with Harry
outside of classroom hours, and morning teas and lunches have never buzzed by him faster. As already thought, Harry only spends his lunches with Liam, sitting in any spot around the that feels comfortable. Louis started to follow them around, and Liam and Harry adopted him into their little group with no worries or arguments. In return, Louis found them a nice lunch spot hidden from most of the school and is fairly quiet, therefore relaxing.

Last week, Liam had announced to Louis that his mother was taking him to Disneyland with his grandparents and extended family for two weeks. Louis had connected the dots from a previous conversation earlier last month between Liam and Harry, so the entire Disneyland thing didn’t spark surprise, but jealousy instead. Liam had messaged both Louis and Harry on the morning of the 27th before form room started, declaring his arrival in Paris. Louis flipped the bird at him via emoji. Harry sent Liam a pet hate; a picture of Louis cuddling up to Harry in bed. Liam threatened to block both of their numbers, leaving Louis and Harry cheering for victory beside Harry’s range rover.

So it’s the two of them for one more week, the first week passing by them way too fast. The ability to hold hands without half a sandwich being ditched at their faces is such a freeing feeling. To chat about movies they’ve watched together on Netflix, to giggle about inside jokes formed while they spent their weekend together. Nothing’s holding them back.

Once they’ve sat on the bench, Louis curls his head into Harry’s neck and breathes sluggishly, as if he’s exhausted.

“You alright?”

Louis doesn’t have much to say but kind of, because he’s not really overly happy or sad or angry. He doesn’t feel any sort of emotion, but he just wants to breathe Harry in and take a bite out of his sandwich.

“Yeah,” Louis whispers, “Bio was boring, is all.”

“Same as Psychology,” Harry says to him, unravelling his lunch from the plastic wrap and handing half to Louis. Louis takes a bite, handing it back. It’s a systematic routine between them, they’ve both decided. “You have plans for tomorrow?”

“Nah.” Louis takes out his own lunch and begins to devour it, speaking with his mouth full. “Can I stay over tomorrow?”

Harry laughs. “Is there a need to ask that anymore?”

“I did ask yesterday. For tonight,” Louis reminds him with a pout. “And you said no because you have to take care of some tiny people.”

“Children.”

“Whatever.”

Harry laughs while sliding an arm around his waist, pulling Louis closer to him to snuggle him up to his side. He presses a firm kiss into his hair, nuzzling his nose deep to rub against his scalp. Louis murmurs something along the lines off go away into his sandwich but Harry isn’t keen on doing that anytime soon. He’s only kidding, anyway. Louis loves the attention just as much as Harry loves giving it to him, loves handling him. He’s a fun one to rouse up.

“And yes, you can,” Harry answers him, finally. “I’ll get some snacks for a movie night then.”

“Get enough so I am able to have at least two handful of lolly snakes without reaching in for the
second time to find it empty, this time.”

“You eat slowly,” Harry tells him, pointing at the half eaten sandwich to prove his point, although, Harry hasn’t touched his lunch either. “It’s a competition, munchkin. You should know about the survival of the fittest.”

“Not my fault you’re a limitless hog,” Louis teases through his mouthful of food. He chews slower than usual while looking at Harry, eyes darting into his with pure scorn. “I’ll fight you for the last snake, to the death.”

“It’s a battle I’m looking forward to, Lou.”

Lunch ends and so do their peculiar conversations for the time being. Louis walks to the auditorium for his Drama class. The class doing nothing more than work on their laptops designing for a possible sophomore year production being performed at the end of the second semester. It’s not tough work, so Louis ends the day with a relaxed sigh and drives himself home after school is dismissed.

He sends messages to Liam, Harry and Niall for the rest of the afternoon. Harry, as always, ends up replying to him most frequently. Liam’s having a blast in Paris, sending Louis a few photos of him on the Tube, which... yeah alright, isn’t that interesting. But he feigns his interest to keep his friend happy. Niall’s got family over, so he tries his best to reply to Louis when he could. They end up organising something for Sunday afternoon; a much needed catch up. It leaves him to Harry.

Louis is having dinner when Harry messages him a photo of his shopping basket. Louis sees three bags of lolly snakes and a few goodies underneath. He smiles, sending three thumbs up emojis to him before relocking his phone and tending to his dinner.

His mother sparks up conversation just as he forks a bit of his salmon. “Who’s that you’re smiling about?”

Louis didn’t realise the smile was still plastered on his face, the salmon hanging from the fork towards his suspiciously happy grin. He lowers the fork, and his smile, and stares at his mum as if he has no idea what she’s talking about.

“Nothing,” Louis says, voice high with amusement. “Illegal to laugh at a funny text?”

“Almost as illegal as not telling your mummy about a certain someone making my son a happy chappy.”

Louis rolls his eyes in endearment. “You know who it is, clearly.”

“She wouldn’t have a clue.” His mother couldn’t lie to save her life. If it weren’t for the constant talk about Harry over the past few weeks, not to mention how much time Louis has spent with Harry, Johannah wouldn’t have a clue about who Louis is gushing about. “He’s a nice boy, Lou.”

“I know,” Louis agrees, pointing his fork at her. “We’re kind of finding our way.”

“No worries, love. I approve. He helps with the dishes.”

“And like I don’t?” Louis argues, vexed. His mother raises her eyebrows, staring down at her plate of food and stabbing a string bean with her fork. “Fine. He can be your son then, since you don’t love me enough.”

“Oh!” Johannah squeaks. “Marriage already? Is he... He’s going to be my son-in-law? Louis!”
“Mum!” Louis groans into his hands and listens to his mum’s loud snickering. “You’re the worst at dinner.”

The bantering continues, most attacks on Louis rather than the other way around, but he lets his mum have the victorious glory for once. He finishes his dinner and does the dishes to prove her wrong. Just this once. He kisses his mum’s cheek, letting her know that he’s, in fact, going to Harry’s tomorrow afternoon. She does nothing but nod in approval.

Louis is at Harry’s after five thirty the following Saturday evening. Harry’s at the door the moment he arrives, nuzzling a kiss into his hair and tugging at his wrist to follow him up the stairs. Louis can hear Harry’s mum shout for them to quieten down their obnoxious stomping all over the house, but they’re both in his room by the time Harry could yell anything back. They’re happy and breathless.

Louis looks at the bed, where Harry’s laptop sits open in the middle of the bed, screen facing away from them where they stand at the door. Snacks are scattered and drinks are on the nightstand. Only one light is on in the room, the shade lamp on the same nightstand as the drinks. Though, Harry’s window seeps in a considerable amount of light into the room.

Louis grins at Harry, who fixes a warm kiss on his mouth before he could speak. “Proper set up and all,” Louis praises him in a whisper.

They cuddle up in Harry’s bed together, taking up less room than Harry would do by himself. They change positions approximately fifteen times. At one point they end up lying the opposite way with their entire bodies tucked underneath the duvet, the laptop hidden with them like a secret cubby house. By seven at night, Louis is laying between Harry’s legs, back leaning against his chest and Harry’s arms loose around his body, laptop snug on Louis’ thighs. Half way through the second movie, Louis declares he’s bored, Harry ignoring him until Louis decides to slap his cheek with a lolly snake.

Harry finally looks down to him, pausing the movie meanwhile. “What do you suppose we watch then?”

“We’ve watched everything on Netflix,” Louis exaggerates, biting at the snake’s head and pulling it from his mouth, chewing whilst talking. “Youtube or something. Cat videos are a blast.”

“Cat videos?” Harry glares at him, wondering if he’s just heard the most absurd sentence correctly. “You want to watch cat videos with me. On this Saturday night.”

“Be more logical. Youtube is a lot more than cats, Harold. Dogs, otters. You name the lot!” Louis bats Harry’s hands from the laptop and exits the movie Louis has paid no attention to. He searches for Youtube, clicking on the link to take him to the homepage, where he sees Harry’s recommended videos.

There’s nothing more than stupid gaming videos.

“Told you Youtube’s useless,” Harry mumbles, mouth close to Louis’ ear.

“You told me nothing.” Motivated to prove Harry wrong, he scrolls down to recommended channels and videos that are similar to ones he has watched. Nothing appeals to Louis’ eye, until his cursor falls onto a video made by Buzzfeed. “We’re very much alike, Harold.”

“You say, as if there wasn’t another 100 million or so people who watch Buzzfeed videos.”

“Pfft,” Louis scoffs and clicks on the video.
It’s a 5 minute short by the Try Guys, a video which both Louis and Harry discover belongs to a series called *Motherhood*. After the video is finished, Harry encourages Louis to click to the next video within the series. Part two and three are just as intriguing as the first. Part four is loud, Eugene moaning left and right inside the clinic and holding Ned’s hand. Louis slams his hand down to the mute button and silences the abrupt noises that could bubble up suspicion in Harry’s mum’s mind.

Louis brings the volume up again little by little, the noises a lot safer. There is an explanation of what’s going on in the episode, a physician who tells them they’re going to be hooked to an electric stimulator to simulate the feeling of childbirth. Louis grins maniacally and relaxes into Harry’s chest further, more than interested in what’s about to come.

Somewhere during the final minutes of the video, Louis asks behind him, “Would you try that?”

On the screen is Keith struggling with the electric stimulator stinging his abdomen. Harry shakes his head, arms tightening around Louis’ waist as his head dips down to touch his chin on Louis’ shoulder.

“Not even for a million dollars?” He whispers into Harry’s ear.

“For a billion dollars, maybe. Look at the situation at hand. Look at Keith for God’s sake. Look at all of them. They would all rather choke on a dead fish while reciting a Shakespeare play reprinted in Comic Sans.”

He giggles and kisses Harry’s temple. “Let’s go to the pier now and catch a fish, let it rot for a few days in your old socks or something, and then you can do exactly as you said. I have Shakespeare plays from drama you can read-”

“Oh,” Harry says, “Alternatively, we could not do that.”

“Mhm.” Louis slips his fingers in between Harry’s from behind, grasping him warmly. The video ends, and the next video automatically plays. It’s a random 2 minute video still by Buzzfeed. Neither of them try and change it.

They’re silent for no longer than a minute when, “Would you do it?”

Louis blinks away from the screen and directs all attention to Harry. “It’s not like I would ever experience childbirth for real,” Louis says to him. “So yeah, I probably would. If I was paid to do it. I’d rather have someone kick me in the balls.”

“Then I could kiss you better.”

Louis snorts, squinting at Harry. “Kiss me, or my balls better?”


“I talk about my balls and your statement was vague enough to direct towards you wanting to kiss them.”

Harry shakes his head and opens his mouth around Louis’ shoulder, biting him gently. He slips a hand from Louis’, sliding it down just so his fingers are past his belly button. He kisses the small bump raised on Louis’ shoulder, humming softly.

“What have I ever done to you to receive this type of cruel backlash?” Harry says, lips murmuring against his shoulder. “Will you ever let me live?”
“Probably not.” He feels Harry’s hands dip down further, thumb now passing his navel. His mouth leaves pixie pecks towards his neck, tip of his tongue running up his neck juncture. “You have specific tastes I can’t deal with.”

Harry stops his hand and pinches at Louis’ abdomen. “You’re the worst,” he whispers against him. Louis smirks with his mouth brushing against Harry’s cheek, bringing his unoccupied hand up to cup underneath Harry’s chin. He forces his face closer to him, pressing a kiss to the corner of Harry’s pink mouth.

“The devil, even,” Louis adds.

Buzzfeed decides to play another Try Guys video and draws both of the boys’ attention to the screen. Harry’s hand is still spread across his lower body, fingers tapping lightly against his skin. It’s heart warming, soothing. Like his mother’s chicken noodle soup on a Winter evening. The video is more informative than comedic. It leaves Louis just as bored as before, so he makes things more riveting by leaning back further into Harry’s chest, tilting his head backwards and nuzzling his nose into the side of Harry’s neck.

“Bored?” His voice vibrates his entire neck, and they buzz through Louis’ lips and makes his body feel warm. He closes his eyes and continues to dot kisses down Harry’s neck.

“Not of you,” Louis whispers, enamoured.

Harry gruffly snickers and peels his hands from Louis’ front. He has them on his hips instead, guiding Louis to sit up and turn around to face him. He’s raised up on his knees, still between Harry’s legs, the blanket hanging loosely around his waist as he easily straddles Harry’s thighs. Harry doesn’t have another second to breathe before Louis attacks him with a handful of sweet kisses, the taste of cotton candy filling Louis’ mouth.

His hands cup under the swell of Louis’ arse, supporting him as he shuffles them further down the bed. Mouths are still warm and wet, attached to each other. His tongue slides into Louis’ mouth and smother his soft mewls as Harry’s fingertips dig into Louis’ bum. Harry falls back, bringing Louis with him, their torsos molding together and hearts slamming hard against their ribs. Louis can feel Harry’s heartbeat in the right of his chest. It’s not rhythmic to his own, but they create a beautiful melody together.

Warmth travels from his arse, around the curve of his hips before it burns his thighs. There’s no pressure, only a touch lighter than a sea breeze. Harry nips at his bottom lip, pulling back, wiping his tongue over the bitten area and giggles when they press their mouths together again. The playfulness rises in Louis’ chest, fingertips scratching at the base of Harry’s neck as he wiggles his bum to try and sit comfy on his new throne.

The blanket starts to burn heat to Harry’ legs. He lifts them to both support Louis and his restless body with his knees and to wash the cool air over his body. With it Harry’s laptop, which is still playing pointless Buzzfeed videos, is knocked off the bed, landing screen side flat. Louis pulls away from him, concerned, glancing down to the laptop, now closed and no longer making any noise.

Harry’s hands are at his cheeks, turning him and forcefully making Louis look at him. “Forget it.”

Harry forces him into an open mouthed kiss with hands sliding from his face down to his thighs spread beautifully across his lap. They’re silk smooth and itching for Harry’s attention, so he gives it to him, fingers light on his skin to scratch down to the curves of his knee caps. The touch tickles Louis, sending butterflies into his stomach to come out as lighthearted giggles between their kisses. Harry smothers his giggles with multiple kisses, keeping him quiet besides the slight smacking of
their lips moving together.

*This time,* Louis thinks to himself. It’s *this time.* His hands are curled tight over the tops of Harry’s shoulders, lifting himself from Harry’s lap and settling down again, arse deliberately grinding against Harry’s cock still soft in his sweatpants. However, it isn’t unnoticeable. Harry has a hand under Louis’ chin, tilting his head backward to expose his clean neck, spotless from tender love and tender bruises. Louis raises himself up again just as Harry’s mouth latches onto his neck, Harry dragging his tongue down his Adam’s apple to the dip between his collarbones.

A hand comes into contact with Louis’ crotch just as he sits on Harry’s lap again. “Fuck,” he groans to Harry, rolling his arse against Harry’s dick. “Mhm.”

“Sh, babe,” Harry whispers to him from his neck, cupping his hand around Louis’ crotch. Louis’ cock twitches left as Harry’s fingertips form around the shape. “Mum’s downstairs still.”

“Naughty,” he teases, his body being pushed from Harry’s own and back slamming against the mattress. Harry’s between his legs before he could suck in a breath. *De ja vu.*

Harry buries his face into Louis’ neck, crotch fucking into him and pressing himself in deep. The friction is incredible, the feeling makes Louis insatiable. Arousal is tugging at his stomach and it fuels his desire for Harry’s mouth and touch and warmth and everything. His cock is twitching and legs are tight around Harry’s waist, thighs probably capable to leave bruises at Harry’s delicate hips. Harry mouths something against him but Louis can’t make out the inaudible muffle, too caught up with his own pleasure to hear nothing but their shaky breaths.

He meets Harry’s eyes after a few short minutes, sweatpants tenting and foreheads starting to gleam from the sheen of sweat covering their skins. Harry’s hands slip under Louis’ shirt, sliding it off easily and letting it crumple by the bedside. Harry’s also comes off in the process, but Louis is too focused on how Harry’s cock is straining hard in his grey pants, needing to escape, needing to release. The sight of his cock itself is enough to make Louis dry at the mouth and all-too-wet down below.

He’s gorgeous. Purely gorgeous. Harry’s hair waves down to fall just above his nipples, his body is so slim yet so defined. Before him is the prettiest boy at school, that he’s ever met, and Louis has managed to be underneath him with their cocks pressed against one another, only hiding behind a bit of material. It’s everything he could probably ever want and need in his late teenage-hood life. To spend this time with someone who feels the same way as he does makes Louis both more endeared and aroused.

Harry’s hands lace with his above his head. “The number of times you’ve made me this hard,” Harry moans, rocking his cock against Louis’ crotch. “Fuck, I can’t even say, I’ve lost count.”

His eyes roll to the back of his head when he feels the tip of Harry’s cock press into his inner thigh. He’s so hard, harder than he’s ever been with Louis. How many times has Harry left himself blue because of how fast paced they were going? How many times has Harry been hard but concealed it? At school? During the drives back home? When they’re just sitting together, studying? *No matter,* Louis thinks. It’s happening now.

His cock keeps prodding into him, at his thigh, between his legs, sometimes at his perineum where the feeling of release is so strong Louis has to clutch at something to prevent coming inside his pants. It’s almost overwhelming. His fingertips fall from Harry’s back down to the mattress where he bundles the sheets in his hands. His abdomen lifts from the bed to increase the friction between their crotches, Harry’s tip nudging so close to his hole that Louis gasps desperately into the air, hands pulling wildly at the sheets to distort them completely from their neat format.
Harry’s hands touch at the softness of his hips, whispering, “Keep quiet, munchkin.”

More intimate grinding. Harry’s hands are still curled around his hips and he’s bucking his crotch up into him as if he’s fucking him hot and dirty into the sheets. Louis tries his best to keep quiet, but it’s hard when Harry’s got his hair damp with sweat falling over his face and sticking to his flushed cheeks. His face speaks nothing but desperation for release, mouth hanging open with tongue slipping out to lick over his bottom lip. Louis screws his eyes closed.

“Fuck you’re--” Louis tries to speak but he’s cut off by Harry’s honey mouth collapsing on his. His entire body falls to Louis’ own and their chests are once again lined up, heartbeats raging inside their bodies. His tongue is lusciously wet. It’s better to taste. Harry moans into his mouth and fucks up into Louis again, exhales coming out sharp through his nose.

“God, tell me when- ah, you’re close,” Harry croaks. “F-Fuck, Lou.”

He is. He is really, really close. “Yeah I’m close, H,” Louis admits to him, body so struck with libido that he begins to hump up against Harry’s body for the friction he’s missing out on. So, so desperate. “Make me come.”

He sits up on his shins again, arms under Louis’ knees and hands irremovable from his thick thighs. He spreads out his legs and brings Louis closer, their cocks closer. His eyes are fixed on Louis’ radical movements, stomach clenching and hands twisting into the sheets, head falling back with eyelids sewn shut in pleasure. Harry snickers gruffly, a hand slithering from the boy’s thigh to span over his stomach, sticky from sweat. Louis groans, the touch feeling like ecstasy bleeding into his skin.

“You’re so hot when you moan,” Harry whispers, voice wrecked. Louis moans appropriately in response. “Gonna come, Lou.”

Louis rips Harry’s hand from his stomach and tangles their fingers together, holding Harry impossibly tight. “I wanna see,” Louis says lethargically. “Wanna see you. Kiss you.”

Harry kisses him desperately while rutting into him, moans lost between their messy mouths and tongues. Louis has a handful of Harry’s hair, tugging and forcing him down to keep his mouth busy. Harry loses his breath entirely, leaning on his forearms beside Louis’ head and gasping for air, hips coming down into Louis once more before Harry’s face relaxes, jaw slack and nose flared. He moans out his name lowly. Louis doesn’t focus on anything else, he wouldn’t dare.

He grunts weakly through a series of breaths, soon whispering, “Fuck.” Louis looks down, a visible damp patch at the front of Harry’s pants. Louis swallows carefully.

The heel of Harry’s hand presses into his cock, the sudden contact making Louis jump and buck his hips up. Harry’s palms him firmly, rubbing frantically as Louis’ mind turns to static. He leans forward and sucks at Louis’ bottom lip, never letting him have the chance to moan Harry’s name fully or mumble out small erotic mewls. Until Louis bites devilishly at Harry’s lip, coming undone under Harry’s touch and soaking into his pants, still rutting up against Harry’s hand to ride it out.

His mind is lost for a bit, body warm all over and his extremities tingling. The tingling sits in his stomach too, and Louis assumes its his orgasm still shaking its way through his organs. Until he notices Harry’s hair brushing against his skin, soft kisses being peppered at Louis’ lower body. Harry’s fingers slip under the waistband of his sweatpants, pulling down to reveal the pink tip of his cock, wet from his come.

“W-What are you--” Harry’s mouth curves around the tip and he suckles gently, tongue pushing
against his slit. Louis almost smacks him over the head but instead grabs a fistful of hair and pulls Harry up. Harry’s smirking, the bastard, when he meets eyes with Louis’ sarcastically miffed expression. “Fuck, give me a chance to breathe, you fucker.”

He frowns and brings up Louis’ sweatpants to secure around his hips once again. “Wanted to taste,” he shrugs.

Harry will be the end of him.

They lazily roll out of bed after a few brief minutes, minding the laptop on the floor, and changing out of their soiled pants. Harry throws him a fresh pair of sweats, kissing Louis on the forehead and telling him he’ll wash his pants and give them to him later in the week. He thanks Harry, for both the sweet chore and an “alright orgasm”. Harry licks him on the cheek like a dirty animal in return.

Louis falls asleep tucked by Harry’s side while they watched the second half of the boring movie Louis couldn’t give two shits about. Harry kisses him plenty, as if he doesn’t do that enough when he’s awake.

Louis doesn’t, and will never, mind.

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Louis wakes up with his arm strung over Harry’s lower waist, nose buried deep into a bird’s nest of sweet smelling hair. It could smother his breathing, maybe murder him one day. He rolls to the right, onto his back, sitting up in bed and watching Harry breathe peacefully with his back facing towards him. He’s still fast asleep with the culprit that aided his almost-suffocation spread wildly across their pillows.

So Louis being the big spoon isn’t really working out for him.

Faint beeps ring into Louis’ ears, the rustling of an object against wood too annoying to listen to at this time of morning. He peers over to the nightstand beside Harry’s side of the bed, seeing his phone light up and buzz with a contact number, no caller ID. Louis has the thought of picking up the phone himself, or letting it ring out to let Harry sleep, but Harry gets to it before Louis could even send one more blink over to the phone.

Stretching his limb over to his phone, he picks it up and presses it to his ear, never moving from his position on the bed.

“Hello?” He doesn’t sound impressed, voice gravelly and unmistakably tired. Louis slides back down to the bed, shifting the duvet over his shoulders as he listens to Harry. “Oh hey, how’re you?”

It sounds like a woman on the other end. Despite being in Harry’s bed, in Harry’s reach, on Harry’s mind, Louis has the twisted feeling in his gut that makes him want to clutch onto Harry. He doesn’t want any female coming for him, anyone coming for him. He turns onto his side and keeps listening carefully, taking the muffled words he can hear come from Harry’s phone and scrambling them into ridiculous assumptions.

“Yeah, I’m just a bit tired. I know it’s fucking ten in the morning, shut up.” He’s laughing, and that’s quite about enough. Louis settles his arm around his waist again and presses every part of his body against Harry’s, making sure he’s well aware that Louis is still here and still likes him very much a
lot. The clinginess startles Harry.

“Oh,” he gasps. “I-I... Um, send me a text, yeah? With the details and all. I’m free tomorrow.”


“Alright, bye,” Harry ends, hanging up the phone and slipping it under his pillow, immediately pushing his arse back into Louis’ crotch and giggling. “You know what, I would love to bet you were a octopus in your past life. One that couldn’t get enough of their prey and always wrapped its tentacles around the prey’s most obscure body parts.”

“You calling your giraffe legs obscure? Finally, you admit to it!”

Harry spins around, body facing Louis. “I let you sleep and eat in my bed for free. I would rather you not bully me otherwise I will kindly kick you out and never let you return.”

“Didn’t get a full course meal, though. So your services are lacking,” Louis teases.

Harry rolls his eyes, sitting up and star fishing his legs to hit the sides of his feet against Louis’ shins. “You’re referring to my dick, aren’t you.”

“Please,” Louis scoffs. “Lolly snakes... your dick? What’s the difference?”

“One’s longer.”

He hums happily, eyes looking up in thought as he says sophisticatedly. “Yeah, the lolly snakes have been incomparably large this season--”

“You asshole.”

Snickering, Louis also sits up and shuffles across the bed to reduce the space between them. He kisses Harry square on the nose. “My favourite.”

“Ooh, favourite?” Harry grins meekly and pulls Louis back down to the mattress with a hand behind his neck, Louis colliding chest first into his body. Louis has his head buried into Harry’s neck, with his face, yet again, being shoved into the endless amounts of hair he cherishes. Harry presses his cheek to his temple and cuddles him into his chest. “That’s the best one yet. I might use it.”

“So favourite is better than munchkin? Damn, I was getting quite used to munchkin,” Louis says, turning his face to stick his nose into Harry’s neck, breathing him in. “Take a pick, Harold. Munchkin or favourite. There’s only one.”

“Shut up, you can be my favourite munchkin.”

“That indicates you have more than one munchkin,” Louis mumbles dryly. “Who’s been tickling your fancy other than me?”

It comes out more dire than planned, but Harry laughs gravelly into the air. “No one, of course,” Harry whispers honestly. “You’ve been tickling my dick though, so I guess that makes you the only one I fancy.”

Louis pushes himself away immediately, albeit relieved, rolling to the same side of the bed he woke up on. “You’re terrible.”

Harry’s right up against him with no second to spare, gathering Louis in with frantic arms and bunching him into his chest. Sunday morning cuddles. And he’s not the big spoon this time. It’s
something Louis has always wanted, and has had for a while, but today felt a little more perfect than the other Sundays he’s spent with Harry. There’s a larger thump in his chest when he feels Harry draws circles around his left nipple, a bigger smile that creeps onto his face when Harry breathes into the back of his neck, placing gentle kisses to the smooth skin.

The woman on the phone sparks uneasy interest to Louis’ mind. Louis knows how much he’s got now. He’s got Harry and his sweet, sweet presence. The thought of losing Harry and his company swells nervousness in his stomach. So little could be done, within a few easy seconds, and Louis could lose it all. And as much as he’s realised this, he didn’t realise that it could happen sooner than expected, especially if there are other people that Harry may find attractive. People that could replace him.

But it’s all common thought. It’s easy to grow jealous and overthink something as simple as a phone call from a woman who clearly wanted Harry for a babysitting job. Then again, it might not only be just that.

“No study date tomorrow, munchkin,” Harry says to him, adding on, “I might have to babysit a little tot.”

As if Harry’s read his mind and wanted to settle his thoughts. Odd that.

“We have all day today, right?” Louis asks him softly, melting into Harry’s body a little further, relishing in his warmth. “To spend in bed, watch more stupid videos and other stuff.”

Harry chuckles cheekily. “Other stuff, you say?” he asks, very intrigued.

“Of fucking course you ask about the other stuff. You never know, I might be talking about doing the dishes or something but you go right into assuming I’m talking about coitus.”

“I didn’t say a thing!” Harry says, poking at Louis’ stomach. He squawks and kicks back his heel into Harry’s shin. “But dishes could be our secret word for coitus?”

Louis laughs, keening his bum into Harry’s crotch, the outline of his semi prominent between his cheeks. “How about you stop thinking about sex, boy?”

“How can I when you’re here?” Harry whispers, voice smoother than honey, sweeter than honey. “My favourite.”

Harry’s noses into Louis’ hair, tip of his nose pressing into his scalp. His hand slides from Louis’ chest down to his hips, guiding his arse to his cock, Louis rolling his hips to create friction against him. Harry’s breath comes out short, breezing through Louis’ hair. Louis sighs contently, closing his eyes and letting his entire body relax, sinking into the mattress.

Harry’s fingertips slide underneath the elastic of his sweatpants, moving the elastic from his hip. He shifts it down to expose one side of his arse, the fullness of it holding the sweatpants in their spot. He grinds into the exposed area with a soft grumble just behind Louis’ ear.

“H,” Louis breathes out, laying still and letting Harry do the hard work. Harry doesn’t mind, it seems.

Five minutes later, Louis is still laying on his side with bum out and sweatpants down below his knees with Harry’s cock wet and hard between his legs. It slides between his arse crack, against his perineum, tip nudging into his balls every so often when Harry ruts deep into him. Harry’s hand is wrapped around his cock, letting Louis fuck into his hand with whimpers falling to the pillow supporting his sex-stupid head. He feels the thickness of Harry between his thighs, hears Harry grunt
how tight he is into his ear, Harry’s hand squeezing around him when Louis pushes into his hand from tip to base.

Harry comes first between his legs, white stripes painting between his thighs, onto the sheets. Harry kisses his neck, sucking just under his ear, and rides off his high by fucking the sticky mess between Louis’ legs. Harry calls him his favourite, again, and Louis shoots into his hand with the inability to contain a desperate moan. Harry releases his grip around his cock, jumping out of bed to fetch a towel to clean themselves off. He returns asking Louis to hop out of bed, handing him the towel, before he rips off the sheets and bunched it into a crumpled ball. He throws it to the side, leaving the bed as naked as themselves. But Harry only encourages Louis to jump back in bed for a rest, despite having twelve hours of sleep beforehand.

Louis is the one to wake due to a phone call this time. He picks it up hesitantly when he notices the caller ID is his mother. His mum never calls. It’s messages. Always messages. If it’s a serious enough emergency, she’d call. Paranoia fills Louis’ system.

Nothing more than a hello comes out of Louis’ mouth before his mother is speaking to him, voice purely one of scorn and disappointment, “Get home, right now.”

She hangs up on him. Louis gulps.

He’s out of bed and changing into something of Harry’s. Anything of Harry’s. He’s in an oversized t-shirt and all-too-big skinny jeans with the rips at his shins. Harry wakes up as Louis slams his drawer closed, the confused pup staring at Louis from his pillow.

When he notices Louis clothed and very distressed, he sits up and instantly asks, “What’s wrong, munchkin?”

“I need to get home,” Louis tells him. Harry’s eyebrows knit together, and Louis hopes to God he doesn’t think that he’s walking out as if Harry’s just a one night stand. As if Louis just wanted to use him for his hands and then get rid of him. “Mum needs me home. She just called and didn’t sound too happy, so I better see what the fuss is about.”

“Oh,” Harry says, his entire face falling into a frown. “You... I... Um--”

“I’m sorry,” Louis apologises, walking over to his side of the bed. “It’s such bad timing, I know, but I promise I’m not one of those people. I really promise you.”

He leans down to kiss his forehead. Harry grabs his hand meanwhile, sandwiching it between his two.

“I really promise,” Louis whispers one more time.

Harry nods. He believes him. As he should.

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Arriving home was a mistake.

He loves his mum, a lot. His mum helps him, encourages him, tells him that if something doesn’t go the way you’d like it to, there will be another opportunity to make things right. But everyone has a
limit to which they can put up with someone who keeps making the same mistakes, who keeps fucking up to the point where it almost seems deliberate.

Louis’ mid-term report came through, and his mother is not happy, at all.

“I pay thousands for you to go to this school, Louis,” she growls at him. He’s sitting at the dining table, head tilted low in shame and his eyes even lower. His feet glare up to him, disappointed. The floor looks disappointed. Harry’s jeans that he sports are disappointed. Everyone is disappointed. “What happened with trying this year, hm? I don’t understand it.”

“You know I’m trying!” Louis argues back, fed up. It may be his fault for not trying as hard, but at least he tried. He did something to help himself. He passed his Literature exam. That’s something that his mother lived off happily for the past few weeks, but suddenly, that doesn’t matter anymore because the rest of his overall school grade is equivalent to a piece of shit.

“Doesn’t seem like you are.” She jabs her finger aggressively to the three C’s and two D’s on the report card. “How do you expect to get a living out of this? You don’t have the grades for university! The money I’ve been saving up for your tuition is worthless if you can’t get in.”

Louis looks up at his mum, who’s still pacing around the room angrily. “I’ve been trying, mum! Far out, you have no idea how hard I’ve been trying. There’s other ways into Uni, it’s okay--”

“It’s not okay, Louis. It’s a bother when I’m paying this much for your school and I’m not getting results. It’s disappointing, really disappointi--” She notices Louis’ eyes well up with tears, Louis falling into his hands and letting out an exasperated exhale.

He can push himself, Louis knows. But it’ll lead him to breaking point. To stress, to anxiety. It’ll lead him to a place he really doesn’t want to fall into, a place that’ll be worse than the current state he’s in now. He’d expect a fail from one of his classes if he pressured himself, if he reused the same technique he did in Sophomore year. His mum knows very well that it can happen again if she pushes him too far.

“I’m sorry, babe,” his mother sighs, pacing over to Louis and crouching down to her knees. She wants to get a good look at her son, to see what she can do to make it better. She knows it’s difficult, but she wants Louis to do well, as all parents do. “I know you’re trying, sweetheart. I’m sorry.”

“Just...” Louis mumbles weakly, embarrassed and despondent. He stands from the chair, the legs squeaking against the tiles, and hangs his head low. “I don’t really want to talk about it anymore.”

She respects his wishes and lets Louis walk solemnly to his bedroom. The slam of his door gives away that he won’t be coming back out any time soon.

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He doesn’t expect a knock at his door. His mum would usually leave him alone, let him have time for himself. The only thing that’s going to come from him is a shout for her to go away.

He proceeded as so, shouts silenced slightly by the pillow he’s stuffed his face into. His door knob rattles and stops the moment the person on the other side realises it’s locked. He exclaims once again, this time with his head raised from the pillow, to be loud and comprehensible.
“Piss off.”

“Munchkin, it’s me.”

Fuck.

“What are you doing here?” Louis speaks up, not moving from the bed. He doesn’t want to see anyone. No one. Harry included, which is even a bit of a shock to himself. “Look... Actually it doesn’t matter. I don’t want to talk to anyone.”

“You can talk to me?” Harry tries to encourage. It doesn’t change Louis’ firm decision. “I’m worried about you, love. You didn’t reply to my texts after you arrived home and you said your mum was angry just before you left off our conversation so I was just... I thought maybe you wanted some company.”

If Harry would stop worrying about him maybe things would be a lot easier for the both of them, be a lot easier for himself. Except Harry’s care and compassion is what Louis loves the most, the fact that Harry won’t judge, the fact that Harry is always there and if he isn’t he’ll make time for you in the near future. He’s the odd flower out from the rest of the bunch, but it’s the most beautiful flower that had bloomed with the rest of them, the one that needs to be treasured the most.

“I’m just not up for talking.”

“You don’t have to talk if you don’t want to,” Harry tells him through the door, attempting to open the door again. It remains as locked as it has for the past two hours. “We can just cuddle and I’ll massage your feet, if you’d like?”

Louis snickers silently, closing his eyes in thought. “Tempting offer, Harold.”

Harry knocks softer on the door this time, using his knuckle rather than his entire hand this time. “Please, Lou?”

He’s disappointed his mum already. The last thing he needs is to disappoint Harry as well. So he picks himself up and trots over to the door, unlocking and opening it to reveal Harry in a plushy grey hoodie and similar black skinnies that Louis’ sports. After all, Louis is still wearing Harry’s clothes.

Harry takes him into his arms, Louis sighing out shakily as he lets himself relax into Harry. “Stand on my feet, babe,” Harry whispers into his ear, and Louis complies without a second thought.

Harry walks them over to Louis’ bed, letting Louis fall into the mattress before he does. They lay side by side, angled diagonally across the bed, and Louis hides his face into his bicep. Harry stares at his hidden face, lips contorting into an unfortunate frown.

“What’s on your mind?” Harry asks him quietly, watching Louis move his arms away from his face and huff out tiredly. His eyes are trained to the ceiling, as if he doesn’t know what’s on his mind at all. “If you don’t want to talk, you don’t need to. I’m available for cuddles, for kisses. You know I am.”

Louis’ mouth tilts into a smile. He can’t help it. “A lot’s on my mind right now.”

It’s leading them somewhere, Harry thinks. “Want to talk about it?”

“I guess,” Louis says, uncertain about his decision. “It’s a fucking mess, I would say. Like if everything was a giant rain puddle and I splashed right in the centre of it, and then I avoided all the water until a car decided to drive over it and wash me over with everything that I didn’t want to
come back to me.”

It’s one way to put it, and hopefully Harry understands him. He’s never been good with expressing himself unless it’s through metaphors or similes or over-exaggerated impossibilities. It’s a wonder how Louis is failing Literature.

“You wanna break it down for me a bit?” Harry asks with his fingers walking over to Louis’ stomach. His hand then lies flat on the bed and his fingertips graze the little bit of skin showing underneath the oversized t-shirt. “Only if you’re comfortable. I’m here to listen.”

Louis doesn’t look over to him. He doesn’t need to. He sighs again. His body feels heavy, his limbs feel like concrete. Right now, his soul is more fragile than his tears. His value is seeping through every escape his body holds. It makes him feel empty, so, so empty. There’s too much to break down. If he was able to break it down, Louis would have been able to move past a lot of things in his life. He would have been able to not keep the mason jars, he would have been able to simplify his life by not wanting to capture every memory and remembering the ones he didn’t want to remember. Even if he doesn’t catch them in the jar, he has them in his mind.

He would be able to not feel disappointed because there would be no disappointment to begin with. He dwelled too long on his grandma’s death. Too long. All the way through until sophomore year, maybe even possibly until now. There’s been no difference besides the fact Louis has been trying. He’d be able to make his mum proud, his sister proud. Anyone and everyone proud. Except he’s anything but successful, anything but an achiever.

There’s too much.

“I’m a failure, to put it simply,” Louis breathes out, words choking in his throat for too long. They still feel like they’re there, clinging at his wind pipe to suffocate him. “I’ve really just... fucked it up, Haz.”

Harry shakes his head, propping himself up on his elbow. “You really haven’t.”

“You don’t know what’s going on in my life. You’ve been here for what, five months? Do you think that compares to being in my life for the almost 18 years I’ve lived, Harry? You wouldn’t know if I’ve failed shit, but I have. I know I have. Mum knows I have. I fucked it up.”

“You really haven’t,” Harry repeats, very determined to convince Louis.

Why did Louis let him in his room.

“You said it yourself. You’ve lived almost 18 years and you think that because of a report card that you’re a failure? That you’re going to be a failure for the rest of your life?”

He really doesn’t fucking get it, because Harry knows jack shit about him, about his past. “It’s more than just a report card. Fuck, I could only wish it was a fucking report card.”

“Then what is it, Lou? I can bet 100% that you can fix it, and that you’re not a fuck up. No matter what it is.”

The best thing about Harry is that he knows what to do, he knows what to say. As if he’s been through helping other people millions of times before. It’s a slim chance he has been in the same situation, resting next to a sad boy laying on his back, sobbing miserably to the ceiling.

As confident as Harry does sound with his words, that things will be okay, that it can be fixed, Louis can’t believe him. Harry takes his hand, entwining their fingers, and gently circles Louis’ first
It’ll be okay, Harry keeps saying. When will Louis believe him.

“I can’t go back in time and change things. If I could, I would have, and I wouldn’t have fucked myself up...” Louis trails off, swallowing nervously. His palms begin to sweat, their hand hold slipping slightly. “I would have tried harder if I didn’t have the jars.”

Harry is very confused, but as ridiculous as Louis sounds, he doesn't laugh at him as if he’s foolish. “Do you want to tell me what you mean, love?”

“I let myself go. In middle school I just... fucked myself up,” Louis says. Then, he sits up, hands still interlocked. He uses his unoccupied hand to point to the balcony. “My grandma gave me my first jar.”

“Really?” Harry questions him. Louis nods weakly, lowering his hand. “So, is that why they’re really special to you?”

“Yeah,” Louis answers him, tilting his head down to the mattress and tangling his fingers in the duvet. “She meant the world to me, Harry. It was so long ago, but she meant the absolute world to me.”

“Meant,” Harry repeats after him, eyes softening when he realises. “I’m sorry, Lou.”

“She still means the world to me. But she passed away when I was nine and left me with the jars, like... a legacy? I couldn’t let her down. She gave me a duty to keep the family tradition up so I did as so, keeping the jars and collecting memories...”

Harry keeps staring at him, listening intently. He’s told him too much. Way too much. Harry really didn’t need to know why Louis has the jars. Harry doesn’t need to know about the other things.

But he tells him anyway, because it’s Harry. There’s no one else in the world who deserves to listen to how he feels deep inside.

“I don’t have the first jar anymore. The one that grandma gave me. After she’d passed away, I slept with the jar beside me, because I believed that she’d always keep me safe, that things will be okay. I started middle school and I was picked on because of my size. You know, the whole childish bullying type of bullshit you’d see within the year 8 cohort. It wasn’t the worst now that I think about it, but at the time, I just wanted it to stop, you know? Because I didn't want to be seen as small, seen as weak and pathetic.

“So one day, I took the jar to school. Because if everything could be okay at home with the jar, I would certainly be okay if I had the jar with me, took it around with me. It was in my hands and at the time I didn’t think anyone would think less of me because I had a fucking mason jar in my arms. So the moment I walked past the school gates, the few top-dog guys who picked on me just took it out of my hands and threw it on the ground.”

He chokes up so hard that he needs a few moments to recover his voice. He can’t see what Harry’s doing, if he’s still staring and listening to him, or if he’s fallen asleep from how unimportant the story is. But their hands are still together, and Harry squeezes. It’s silence from him.

“It just... fucking broke. My entire world fell when I saw the glass on the floor. All the guys did was laugh and walk away while I was on my knees absolutely fucking shattered. They didn’t care at all, they didn’t know that everything and a little bit more was inside that jar.”

Harry quickly put two fingers under Louis’ chin, lifting his head up and eyeing him. Louis could barely see past his tears. “Munchk--”
“They didn’t fucking care, Harry,” Louis cries out, ripping his chin from Harry’s touch, refusing to keep his head up, because he can’t. He’s tired of trying. “I had that jar for almost five years, from the person that meant the world to me. Do you think that it’s all going to be okay now? That it can be fixed? Because I would love to see you try go back to year 8 and glue every fucking piece of that glass together and give it back to me.”

“Louis,” Harry snaps, hands unlatching. Louis supposes that this is it. Now is the time that Harry’s finally had enough of his nonsense, enough of his stupidity. Harry can’t do this anymore. “If I could, I would go back in time and not only find every piece of that glass for you, but I would find those people who did that to you and make sure they never lived another day.”

Louis snorts sadly. “Yeah, right.”

“Alright, maybe not to that extent,” Harry chuckles softly, trying his best to subtly lighten the dark atmosphere surrounding them. “But there’d be bruises, I can be sure of that. You being sad is my weakness, Lou. I never want you to be sad. I never want you to feel disappointed in yourself, to feel disappointed in general. I never want you to feel like you’re a failure, because you’re not.”

Louis shakes his head, batting Harry’s words away like they’re meaningless. “I didn’t try hard enough because I didn’t believe I would be okay ever again. After the jar broke, there was no point. I stopped trying at school, I was diagnosed with mild depression. I was fucking 13. I was so young, Harry, and everyone just said it was a phase because what 13 year old has depression because of a fucking jar?”

Harry curls his palms around Louis’ thighs. Warming him, repairing him. “Plenty of 13 year olds have depression for many reasons. Anyone can get depression because of any reason in the world. Just because you had it because you lost something so important to you doesn’t make you abnormal. We talked about this, remember? Just because someone doesn’t do the same thing as you, doesn’t make you abnormal.”

Harry loves convincing him that he’s not alone in the world, that he’s never going to be alone in the world. He doesn’t know why Harry loves to do it. He doesn’t know why Harry likes him the most and chooses to spend time with Louis when he has so many damn unfixable problems. Harry could make his life even easier by stepping away from Louis and his fucked up problems.

“You’re one of the most humble and sweetest human beings I’ve ever met, Louis Tomlinson,” Harry whispers to him, tucking two fingers under his chin once more and guiding Louis’ head upwards. He doesn’t restrain himself from it, eventually looking up and watching Harry’s very green eyes smile to him. “No matter what, you’re never going to disappoint me. Never going to be a failure in my eyes. Never.”

He mewls ever so softly, unable to hold back how under-appreciated he felt before Harry came into his life. His heart swells, his eyes open wider and his lips curve into the smallest of grins. But it’s all there. Harry helped him. Harry would do absolutely fucking anything for him and will always be there for him.

Louis suddenly believes that as long as Harry’s there, he’ll be okay.

Harry kisses him. It’s the most gentle, fragile kiss he’s had with him. His tears continue to burn trails into his cheeks, his entire face a bashful pink. His mouth is the only body part he can feel right now. Harry’s mouth is full and tingling, a hand cupping under Louis’ jaw to close his favourite boy in even further. Louis decides there and then that he doesn’t want to kiss anyone else for the rest of his life. He doesn’t want to be anywhere else but here with Harry, kissing him. To never be apart from him. He wants his infatuation for Harry to keep growing forever and for nothing else to fill his heart
up, to fill his mind up.

Louis moves their mouths together, breathing in as he deepens their kiss. He brushes their lips together and whispers, “You make me really happy,” into Harry’s mouth, sliding his left hand to Harry’s right and interlocking their fingers again. “My favourite.”

He kisses him once more before he grins and nudges his knuckles under Louis’ jaw, caressing him. “I’m glad.”

They hug for another ten minutes, both silent apart from Louis’ calming breaths. When Louis peels himself away from Harry’s chest, Harry doesn’t let their bodies stay apart and captures his hand straight away. Louis blinks down to their hands then to Harry’s face, where Harry is presenting a beatific smile.

“C’mon,” Harry stands from the bed, still holding Louis’ hand tight. Louis glares at him, perplexed. “I’m taking you out.”

If there’s anything he doesn’t want right now it’s to be seen in public. “Do you really think it’s a good time for that?”

“Not out-out,” Harry reassures, Louis’ enthusiasm decreasing as time passes by. “I’m taking you for a drive. Just a small one.”

He agrees, eventually, following Harry out of the house and into his car. He notices his mum’s car isn’t in the driveway, probably out with his little sister. Louis buckles himself up and picks up Harry’s phone attached to the AUX cord. The best thing about Harry’s phone is there’s no passcode, so he can take a million selfies and post inappropriate things on his Facebook. He unlocks it with a swipe and searches through the thousands of songs Harry has stored in his music library.

“How did you get in the house anyway?” Louis asks him, clicking into the albums section on Harry’s phone.

“Your mum was home earlier, she let me in and told me you were upstairs.” Harry shifts his gears and reverses out of the driveway. “She mentioned something about taking Amelia to her Aunty’s, so I’m guessing they’re there now.”

Two questions answered.

*The next.* “Where are we going?”

They’re driving slowly down the street now, the usual way Louis would drive if he were going towards the centre of town. Harry smirks while keeping his eyes on the road.

“For me to know, and for you to find out.”

Harry drives them to the local ice-cream parlour not too far from his house. He parks on the curb, asking Louis to stay in the car before he walks inside. It doesn’t take him long to reappear with two pints of ice-cream, one in each hand. When Harry’s back in the car, he hands them both to Louis, including two plastic spoons. He inspects the tubs.


“Of course I would,” Harry chimes.
He starts up the car again and drives the way they came, now going towards the outer districts. The countryside. It’s a rare occasion to find Louis driving into this side of their province, and there’s no really good reason as to why he hasn’t come out here as often as some other people. It’s not as popular of a location as the seaside, or the town in general.

He ponders as to why Harry’s driving him out here. When Louis notices the lack of houses and street lights, he sees the sun touching base with the horizon. Louis checks the time. It’s 5:47. They’ve been driving for ten minutes. He’d never thought he’d be out here on a silent drive with Harry on a Sunday evening with two pints of melting ice-cream in his lap.

Harry begins to slow down the car when they’re approaching a gravel road cutting between the tall spruce trees. He turns onto it and continues to slowly pass the trees. It’s another four minute drive, and Louis asks multiple times where they’re going and what they’re doing, before they arrive beside a lake. Harry shuts off his engine after he parks in the open space said to be available for campers. He relaxes into the car seat, leaving his hands hanging in the steering wheel holes.

Louis hands him his ice-cream and his spoon, Harry taking it graciously. “So, are you going to tell me why you brought me here so I don’t think you’re going to take me into the bushes and murder me after I finish this ice-cream.”

Harry opens his pint, revealing a layer of what used to be solid ice-cream. Harry scrapes it away and eats it. “I wanted to show you where I’m going to be taking you this weekend.”

Oh. “And what if I have plans this weekend?”

“You do,” Harry says to him, spoon in his mouth as he grins. “With me.”

“Shut up,” Louis laughs, getting his hands around the lid of his ice-cream and opening it. “I guess I can make time for you. I’ll just reschedule my time with my laptop and bed and see if they’re alright with it.”

“I’m sure your porn watching can be rescheduled without consulting, babe.”

“I wasn’t planning on watching porn, Harold.” Louis rolls his eyes and digs his spoon into the green ice-cream. He picks up a spoonful large enough to cause an incurable brain freeze, but he puts it in his mouth anyway.

“Whatever, Lewis,” Harry starts. “It’s not rescheduling if you’re with me anyway.”

He chokes on his ice-cream, and the spoon, and basically everything in his mouth. Harry’s giggling like an idiot with his knees raised up to his chest, shins touching the steering wheel. Louis manages to swallow the ice-cream without choking on anything else, taking the clean spoon out of his mouth and whacking Harry’s forehead with it.

“Naughty,” Louis barks.

“You found it funny,” Harry simpers. He reaches over and spreads his hand over Louis’ thigh.

They finish of their ice-cream and drive home by half six. Louis asks Harry to stay the night, or really forces him, since Louis really doesn’t like letting go of Harry once they ensue warm cuddling.

By the end of the night, Louis thinks that vanilla doesn’t taste half bad. Especially if it’s mixed with the taste of cotton candy.
As promised, Harry takes him back to the lake later in the week.

Louis knows nothing of what Harry has planned for them both on this late Saturday afternoon. He noticed the backseat of Harry’s car is missing, the majority of his range rover now a makeshift bed. The mattress is probably from Harry’s room, and God knows how he managed to get that in the car. There are a few folded blankets over a smallish esky all under Louis’ feet.

Louis doesn’t know what to expect.

They’re here much earlier than when they came six days ago, so Louis can see that the lake is a murky, nauseating green. However, there are a few kids swimming in the shallow spots, more than likely unaware of the diseases bubbling up inside the water. It’s probably not as poisonous as it looks. Probably.

Harry doesn’t park too close to the water. He reverses so the boot is facing towards the water, cutting the engine once he’s happy with what he can see in the rear mirror. Louis smiles over to him, creeping a hand over to his thigh and rests it not too far from the knee. Harry turns his head to the left to watch him.

“Get your dirty paws off me.” But Harry slowly moves his hand on top of Louis’ to keep him there.

Harry ends up telling him what the plan was. They’re here to camp for the night in the back of Harry’s car, thus why there is a mattress taking up most of the back space in the car. Harry jumps out of the car to stroll towards the back, opening the boot and lifting the top of the two doors above his head. The other is unfolded just as Louis joins Harry in the back.

They sit on the back for a bit to breathe in the secluded air. It’s a tad humid this evening. It makes Louis feel sticky under his light clothing. There are a few grey clouds in the distance, but they aren’t far away. Neither do they appear angry where they could bring a night of relentless thunder and no sleep. A possible shower, Louis predicts, a nice touch for a romantic evening. Or something romantic. Probably sexual. Louis supposes they’ll incorporate the two together.

Both decide to head out for a small walk down one of the trails. Harry holds a water bottle in one hand and Louis in the other, the track challengingly small and almost impossible to complete with the two walking side by side. So they walk one in front of the other, still attached to each other. They come across things like tiny ferns and colourful native wildflowers and Harry ends up picking a few flowers despite a sign clearly telling hikers to respect the damn vegetation and maybe not unroot them from their only source of survival. He’s always had the feeling Harry would be a murderer if not a silly school boy who loves Literature as much as he does his vanilla ice-cream.

The trek falls short as the sky begins to darken above them, the sight of grey clouds passing over the peach sky. Their marked trail leads them to their home for the night, the first few raindrops tapping the top of Louis’ head as Louis jumps up onto the padded surface and crawls to the mattress, falling into the plush with a soft huff.

“Make room,” Harry says from behind. Louis shakes his head, spreading his legs out further to take up an unnecessary amount of space.

“You have mother nature to sort out your problems now.”

If there was one thing he should have expected, it’s that Harry either gets the space he asks for or he
will smother you with his own body to the point where suffocation will solve the issue at hand. The latter is what Harry decides over arguing for a ridiculous amount of time. He falls, his chest colliding straight into Louis’ back. Louis feels his lungs concave as if they’d just collapsed, his entire body pinned to the mattress with no way of escape.

“He-Harr--”

“Sh, pet.” Harry is petting his hair with delicate strokes and breathing into his ear. “You’re ruining the moment.”

“The moment where I may suffocate at this mysterious, secret location because of your inability to shift me over? Despite you being ever so desperate for a spot on the mattress?”

Harry laughs lowly in his throat, kissing behind Louis’ ear. “To know you kiss me with that mouth makes me question if I should really kill you or let you live for a few more hours.”

A murderer. “Hm, sound hot while my lungs are being compressed into mush, do I?”

“You always say that I take your breath away anyway, so--”

“That wasn’t supposed to play out literally, Harold! We’ve discussed this!” Louis tries to roll to the left to throw Harry off and maybe knock his silly head against the window or something. “You are one of the worst people I’ve ever met.”

He feels Harry lift up from his back. A miracle, that is. He’s not sure if the sudden joy he feels is because his lungs are filling with the fresh taste of air again or if he’s half way dead and falling back to Earth from heaven. Harry sits on his waist instead, reaching to Louis’ sides to scoop his wrists and pin them above his head.

“Am I, though?” Harry retaliates. Louis knows that Harry clearly knows the answer to his own question. “Wanting to spend a weekend with one of the worst people you’ve ever met? Math that one up for me, Louis.”

Harry tightens his grip on Louis’ wrists. Louis admits defeat with trying to determine an escape route, letting himself relax with his nose pressed into the mattress.

“Well, I’m hot, and you’re not. Add those together since they always say opposites attract--”

“I will eat your dick.”

“Now that’s a literal phrase I can get behind!”

Harry buries his face into the back of Louis’ neck, laughing into the curve and biting gently into his skin. Louis rips his wrists from Harry’s touch and using the strength of his forearms to lift his body from the mattress. Harry is pushed away from him and lands beside Louis with a grin so radiant that it could be their second source of light for the night. He’s so, so beautiful that he has to compose himself with a large exhale before being able to speak a syllable to Harry again.

“Out of breath again?” Harry asks him.

“Yeah,” Louis laughs airily. “Because of you again, unsurprisingly.”

Louis crawls over into Harry’s space and slots himself into the small spot between his side and his left arm. Harry curls his arm around his back and lets him rest. He breathes a laugh into Louis’ freshly washed hair.
“How can you blame me for it this time? I wasn’t sitting on you. As a matter of fact, you’re much closer to sitting on me than I am if I were planning to sit on you.”

Louis slings an arm over Harry’s stomach and tucks his fingers under his body on the other side. “You just take my breath away, always.”

“Too pretty for your liking?”

Louis closes his eyes and presses his nose between one of Harry’s ribs. “Too pretty for me.”

“Never too pretty for Lou.” Harry spreads a hand across his back, curling his fingers slightly to rub circles against his skin with his fingernails. “All the pretty is in you.”

“A fantastic couplet written by Harry Styles.”

“Not only a couplet. I could write an essay about you,” Harry whispers to him, fingertips slipping under his shirt to caress along his spine. “A novel. A fucking novel. About how gorgeous you are. A world seller, it’d be. It’ll make us millions.”

Us. “And what would you do with your riches?”

“Spoil you,” Harry tells him. “Buy you all the ice-cream you want, tubs and tubs of choc-mint, with wafer sticks and cherries on top. With gold leaf sprinkled over each scoop and I’d feed it to you with a diamond encrusted spoon. Anything you want.”

“What if everything I want is already here?” Louis asks him, fingers poking into his side and body inching closer to Harry’s. He opens his eyes and tries to look up to Harry. “What if all I wanted was here next to me.”

Harry hums contently and squeezes Louis’ hip between his pointer finger and thumb. “Atrociously romantic, you are.”

“Oh, you thought I was talking about you? I was actually talking about that bottle of vodka I see standing up on our right there--”

“And for that,” Harry removes all contact from Louis and reaches for the bottle of Absolut beside the mattress while sitting up, “I’m going to drink all of this vodka and make sure that even my drunken mind doesn’t try and suck your dick.”

Louis snorts and snatches the bottle from Harry’s hands once he’s taken it from it’s spot. Louis cradles the litre bottle in his arms, trying to remember the last time he had alcohol with Harry and yeah, that was a good time, despite the tequila being a nightmare to Louis’ liver. It’s just them this time. Alone. They were quite alone the first time they’d gotten drunk together too but this time there’s no one. No Liam, no other friends, no Andrew. Just them.

Louis takes the first sip from the new bottle and cringes at the tangy taste. It burns his entire mouth. His regret comes out in short squeaks as he speaks.

“I hope to fucking God you brought something to mix this with.”

“Of course.” Harry takes the bottle from him and takes a swig himself. He too regrets his decision. “Hid a bottle of lemonade by the blankets just here,” he points to the other pile of blankets just beside Louis’ tensed body, “otherwise you always have my mouth to mix it with.”

“Fuck off, give me the lemonade.” His hands dive into the blankets and he pulls out the bottle. He
immediately uncaps it and drinks from it, washing down the bitter aftertaste with the cool sweetness of the soda.

“You know,” Harry says whilst Louis heavily drinks the lemonade. “You’ve tongued that soda more in the past five seconds than you have me today.”

“You don’t tongue a drink, Harold,” Louis argues, handing the bottle over to Harry. Harry swaps him and gives him the vodka. “But now that you’ve mentioned something along the lines of tonguing, I would really like to have your mouth.”

“On what part of your body?”

Louis glares at him as if he’s wearing an octopus as a hat. “My mouth, babe.”

“Or...?” Harry drags out, quirking up an eyebrow as he gestures for Louis to spit out other options. “Your...?”

“Oh.” Louis drinks a bit more of the vodka. He hopes the effects hit soon. Stars are starting to appear in the mauve sky and he wants to touch Harry and watch him while the dim but natural light radiates his skin. “Need porn to get you off?”

“Hardly nowadays,” Harry says. “I think about you, that’s all I need.”

“What about me?”

Harry claws for the bottle of vodka, Louis taking one more swig before handing it over to the boy. He’s like a baby craving his mummy’s milk.

“So much about you,” Harry says after another drink. He leans into the back of the passenger car seat, stretching out his legs in front of him. “Whatever comes into my head. Mostly your face and how you look when you lick your lips when you’re thinking, or that one time you wore your glasses because you said your contacts ran out. Fuck, you shouldn’t wear contacts. You’re hot when you’re pushing your glasses up your nose especially when you’re taking the piss out of me at the same time.”

Louis sits back and fuels his ego. It thrives with Harry’s confessions. “What else?”

“The other night,” Harry starts. “When I made you come. I will never stop thinking about your face and how you fell apart and your entire body just glowed. Like a fucking supernova in my own eyes. I came so hard last night thinking about that.”

Louis’ heart grows louder in his chest. “After our phone call?”

“During,” Harry says. “Came after you hung up though. Would have been too noticeable.”

“Fuck,” Louis huffs. He involuntarily pushes the heel of his hand down to his crotch and finds that he’s not even hard yet, despite having the butterflies in his stomach and heat pulsating at his thighs.
“Look at me, you’re making me delirious... Thought I was hard.”

“Vodka makes you horny. It’s a fact.”

“Tequila does it for me, actually,” Louis tells him. “Does it for you too, apparently, since you gave me seven love bites while off your head. Remember when we were naïve and thought we could keep our hands off each other while drunk?”

“Still wonder how I managed to do it while sober.” Harry pats next to him, Louis scooting over to Harry and leaning against the passenger seat also, thighs pressed together. “Wanted to kiss your thighs that night. It’s one of the things I remember thinking about.”

“I wanted to kiss you so bad that night. When you had me pinned down. I wanted you to lean down and kiss me until I was more drunk on your kisses than I was on tequila. Instead, you attacked my neck.”

“You’re making it sound like a bad thing.”

“I polished off an entire bottle of foundation to cover up the hickeys! It was 20 quid. If we’re going become millionaires I hope you’re planning to buy an entire box of that foundation per month to cover up your bites since I’m drawing up the plans for my sweet, sweet revenge on you.”

Harry waggles his eyebrows while holding the Absolut’s rim to his lips. “Sounds kinky.”

“You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”

Harry gropes at his thigh with his left hand as if it’s the last time he’ll ever be able to touch him. “So much,” he says, siding the vodka and putting both of his hands on Louis’ body, both on the thickness of his thighs. “Let me kiss your thighs. Please.”

Louis opens his legs for him and Harry climbs over his right leg to settle between them. “Have a thing for my thighs?” Louis questions.

“Have a thing for all of you,” Harry whispers to him, mouths so close to touching. Louis can smell the vodka fresh in his breath, the scent as captivating as Harry’s hands massaging deep into his inner thigh. “But especially your thighs.”

Louis kisses him hastily. He then feels Harry’s lips at his chin.

“Now you can kiss me all you want, touch me where you want,” Louis whispers back, hand securing around one of Harry’s wrists. Louis lifts Harry’s hand from his thigh and guides it further up his leg. “Because you have me wrapped around your little pinky.”

“Gonna be wrapped around my little pinky,” Harry sneers to him, pointer finger grazing his clothed cock. “And a few of my other fingers too.”

“Fuck.” The heel of Louis’ hand presses into the back of Harry’s, desperate to hold him there as if Harry is contemplating pulling away. Except, Harry has no intention to. He slots their lips together and kisses Louis quiet, hands clutching at Louis’ thighs and fingers digging into the sides.

Harry pushes Louis’ legs apart further, enough room for two of Harry to sit between them. He sits on his calves, knees touching Louis’ inner thighs. He opens his mouth to slide his tongue between Louis’ lips.

Louis breathes out sharply through his nose, being pushed into the back of the car seat with enough
pressure to almost push him through to the front. He licks at Harry’s top lip, coaxing him in to press their stomachs together, to touch as much of each other as possible while sitting up like this. His arse is starting to ache, the need to shift and sit in a more comfortable position growing. Louis wants his throne.

He shoves at Harry’s chest, the sudden blow deliberately drawing Harry to think Louis is repulsed by what they’re doing. Though, Louis clambers onto his lap immediately, attaching his mouth and sucking kisses into Harry’s wet lips. Louis wonders if anyone could see them, or hear them. He wonders if they’ll be caught. That shouldn’t make him as hot as it does.

He lets Harry lay down, Louis remaining upright straddled on Harry’s stomach with hands flat on his own thighs. He looks at Harry, the ends of his curls spilling over the edge of the mattress, his marvellous green eyes glittering up to him as glossy as the day Louis first spoke to him. He smiles down to Harry in awe. If there ever be a day where he’s able to comprehend that this boy wants him the same way as Louis wants him...

“Should we wait for the alcohol to kick in first?” Louis asks him.

Harry’s hands slide over Louis’. “Kinda in the mood to suck your dick.” Louis laughs, lifting his bum and sitting himself down on Harry’s groin. “Whatever you want, Lou.”

Whatever he wants.

Louis doesn’t move away from him, but he does reach over for the bottle of vodka and drinks from it again. Harry joins him upright with Louis still sitting comfortably in his lap. Harry’s staring at him as Louis swallows, his entire mouth tingling and vodka clawing at the back of his throat. He squints his eyes closed and shakes his head, holding out the vodka out to the side for it to be as far away from him as possible. Harry snatches it from Louis with a laugh, recapping the bottle.

“Why do I always think it’s a good idea before I end up doing it?” Louis asks himself.

“Because you’re an idiot, munchkin,” Harry answers for him. “And you clearly can’t handle alcohol.”

Louis cups Harry’s chin and presses their noses together. “I can so handle it,” Louis snaps, offendedly, eyes going cross eyed as he watches Harry’s eyes flicker with humour. “You’re lucky that you’re cute, otherwise I’d have your head.”

Harry’s grin turns promiscuous.

“Shut up,” he barks as Harry laughs, dancing his fingers up and around his shoulders. He lets his hands meet behind Harry’s neck. Harry leans in for a small kiss. “Can I suck you off.”

Harry gawks. “Is that a question?”

“I dunno, is that an answer?”

Harry shakily breathes out a laugh. “Yes,” Harry whispers to him, lips meeting with his. “To both things, yes. Yes, yes.”

Louis shucks off his shirt for no good reason, but Harry thinks otherwise. Harry’s hands touch at his sides and firmly caress his gentle curves. He asks Harry to lay back down to the mattress, lips coming together and leaving one another with soft pucks. Louis undos his clutched hands and places both flat on Harry’s pecs, thumb pads grazing the nubs of his nipples hard under his shirt and making Harry gasp into his mouth. Time to get to work.
He scoots himself backwards, legs still spread on either side of Harry’s body. He leaves a trail of kisses from his mouth, down his sternum, at his navel, to the peek of stomach Louis can see showing under Harry’s cotton shirt. He’s now in the space between his legs, hands on Harry’s thighs, and tongue running across the little bit of skin just above the elastic of his Adidas sweatpants. Louis is sure Harry’s wearing his joggers. They’re a bit too tight for him in every place, and even tighter now with his cock tenting to the left.

A sudden rush floods Louis’ mind with blurriness and adrenaline. His skin feels warm and fuzzy. His hearing is more vibrant but selective. He can hear Harry’s soft grunts but the crickets have miraculously stopped chirping into his ear. Has the vodka settled in, or is thinking about having Harry’s cock in his mouth making him insanely delirious.

He hopes it’s the vodka. He doesn’t want to be remembered as the boy who prematurely shoots into his pants just because he touched a hot boy’s dick.

Harry’s looking down at him, a finger dipping under Louis’ chin to tilt his head up. “Your mouth is so pretty,” Harry compliments as Louis’ pointer fingers slide the elastic past his thighs. Harry thumbs at Louis’ lips. “Want you around me so bad.”

His briefs are on show, cock straining underneath the material. Louis noses at his groin and grins as his hands skim up Harry’s thighs to his sides. Harry sighs gently and rests his head back again, eyes screwed closed and pink mouth hanging open slightly.

He’s nothing but gorgeous, as always. Louis wants to touch him and never stop touching him. It sends waves of sparks through his fingers, up his arms, shocks the rest of his body in the best way possible. Touching Harry is addictive. Maybe dangerously addictive. Each time he’s with him the dose to touch and only touch is higher. But the feeling of having Harry sprawled out under him like this, completely relaxed and trusting of Louis, beats anything and everything. It beats winning a game of Scrabble against his Mum. It beats passing his Literature exam. It won’t ever get better than this.

He pulls Harry’s briefs down to expose his cock. It’s not the first time he’s seen it. But it’s a different story seeing it hard. His tip is deliciously wet and the prettiest of pinks; the pure remake of his lips. He curls his hand around his shaft right at the base, his girth thick but capable to manage. The underside of his hand is pricked by the missed spots of Harry’s shaven pubes. Harry’s big in his hands, soon to be choking his little mouth. He stares at it as if he’s intimidated, but it’s not like he hasn’t sucked a dick before. Harry knows that. But this is Harry’s cock, and somehow that makes a lot of difference.

“Been treating him well, Harold?” Louis asks him, sliding his hand up his shaft. It’s an uncomfortable stroke, dry and rough. Louis spits at his tip and drags it down with three easy strokes to coat him evenly.

“My hand and him go pretty well together. I don’t see either of them complaining.”

“Looks like I’ll be giving your hand a break for a while, hm?” Louis leans in to lick a stripe at his underside, tongue flicking over the tip ever so slightly. Harry gives a small grunt, clearly struggling to stay as quiet as possible. There’s no need for that. “What? Afraid the bears are going to hear you?”

“What bears?” Harry laughs, a hand shifting to brush against his clothed nipple. He seethes through his teeth, readjusting his hips on the mattress.

“It’s barely light outside, H,” Louis tells him. “No one else is here but us.”
He hums softly as he opens his mouth and sucks Harry’s tip into his mouth, eyes watching Harry’s face contort sharply from shock to pleasure. Then, he groans. Loud. It would have sounded forced to any other human being but themselves. Harry keeps doing it over and over when Louis sucks him all the way down to the base. His vocal chords would be straining by now if it weren’t realistic, if Harry were faking it. Louis knows he gives a good enough blowie to never be discredited with something as curt as a fake moan. The quick spills from previous occasions say enough.

He pulls off him with a gasp, grinning above his cock as he strokes him. His thumb swipes over his head, slit peeking timidly at him. Louis goes down on him again, half way this time, and gently twists his hand around his girth as he bobs up and down. His eyes are closed and pricking with tears - the nice kind of tears that burn bliss into Louis’ blush dusted cheeks. Harry’s underneath him with legs widen and knees lifting, eyes now trained to the top of Louis’ caramel hair. Then Louis looks up, eyes glossy and ocean blue and Harry forgets his own name for a second.

“L-Lou,” he stammers sweetly, voice high pitched and broken. Louis hums around him, pulling off and kitten licking his head. The tip of his tongue dips into the slit, and it’s enough for Harry to whiplash his head to the side and moan tiredly. “Fuck, c’mere, please.”

“I haven’t finished yet.”

“I know,” Harry says, opening his eyes and lifting his arm, beckoning Louis with a finger to come closer. Louis complies, still between Harry’s bare thighs and letting his body breech above him. Harry sits up on his elbows, mouth ever so close to touching each other. Louis can feel the heat burn against his lips. “Want you to sit on my face, kitten.”

Louis widens his eyes, but says without hesitation, “Is that what you want?”

“Yes, yes,” Harry moans deeply. “Want you in my mouth too. While you have me.”

Shit.

He doesn’t try to hurry. But all the adrenaline in his body, all the excitement... It doesn’t let him act otherwise. He falls backwards onto his arse and tugs off his pants and briefs in one go, Harry removing the rest of his clothing and throwing it to the side also. It baffles Harry a bit when Louis jumps on him and straddles his waist once again, but now naked with a hard, leaking cock lined up on his stomach. Harry’s cock is prodding gently at his left cheek from behind. Harry puts his hands on him instantly, as if he can never get enough. In which he can’t.

“Think I like it like this,” Louis smirks. Harry frowns, tongue licking over his bottom lip before he pouts it out. “But just to make you happy, I’ll sit on your face.”

He climbs around the mattress to turn his body around. His vision’s a little more impaired than it once was but he’s yet to see the doubled vision affects from the alcohol. He feels Harry’s hands barely graze under his thighs just as he’s about to scoot back to position himself.

“Eager?” Harry laughs, warm breath hitting his arse. Louis squeaks unintentionally when Harry’s hands cup around the front of his thighs. “You cleaned yourself up, right?”

“You really think I’d come out here unprepared for you to stick your tongue in my arse, especially when you said that I’d have to reschedule my porn watching for yo--”

“Hey,” Harry squeezes his left thigh, “if you’re going to be a little shit I might just wank off to a lakeside view instead.”

Louis hovers his arse over his mouth, wiggling his hips to be a tease. “Lakeside view is surely better
than this view, yeah?’

“Yeah,” Harry irks cheekily. An annoyed Louis heaves as Harry urges him to take his seat, Louis refusing to lower himself any further. “The lake doesn’t tease me for my ice-cream preferences.”

“I told you once already that vanilla isn’t that bad. That was last weekend. Do you need someone to keep reminding you? Is your 86 year old mind too full of ancient memories of when vanilla ice-cream first came out?”

“Calling me an slow, old man now? This old man could have finished walking around the entire world before you manage to sit down on my fucking face.”

He shuts him up by smothering his mouth with the weight of his arse, Harry’s tongue licking at his rim without a moment to spare. Louis moans wildly and falls nose first into Harry’s crotch, lifting his bum back into the air as he muffles his cries into Harry’s groin. He feels his hole clench, the warmth of his tongue lingering around his rim. It’s like the electricity buzzing in through his arse, as if Harry’s tongue is pressing into him over and over to send impulses over impulses of sparks through his body. But Harry’s mouth is no where near him right now. The porn stars could never express the emotions that equate to how Louis feels right now. To how fragile and disadvantageous Louis is right now.

“Harry,” Louis whispers out, eyes closed and mouth opening to lick at Harry’s cock nuzzling against his cheek. Harry’s hands tighten around his thighs. “F-Fuck, it’s... It’s too much.”

“It’s alright,” Harry comforts with another squeeze to his thigh. “Feels good, though. Hm?”

“Yes,” Louis admits. “So good-- fuck.”

He needs a few moments to breathe, another few to make sure he doesn’t come on the spot when he feels Harry’s nose nudge between his cheeks. He settles down onto his face again, deciding to take Harry’s tip into his mouth and suck gently. Harry flattens his tongue against his puckering hole, Louis squirming under his touch and pushing back into him. He writhes and mewls with Harry stuffing his mouth.

He kisses his rim and uses his tongue to circle around the outside, the tip of his tongue flexible and pressing into sensitive spots Louis never knew existed until now. Butterflies in his stomach are growing. Expanding. Exploding. They’re rising in his throat and tingling at the back of his neck, his mind fuzzier and head over heels sex stupid. Harry licks into him once again, velvet tongue slipping in and out of his rim and making Louis groan vehemently around Harry’s cock.

It’s so intense. He’s rough but smooth and fierce but soft at the same time and if his high wasn’t so close then maybe he’d sit up and let Harry fuck his tongue into him and ride his face. He tears his mouth away from Harry’s tip and uses his right hand to jerk him off, other hand reaching behind to spread his left cheek to the side and open himself up. Harry laps at his rim and buries his face deeper, probably not being able to breathe with how much Louis he’s smothering himself with. Louis can hardly breathe in the open air.

He’s so wet, he knows he is. Anything could slip inside of him without any struggles and Louis contemplates spinning himself around and fitting Harry’s cock into him. His tipsy mind knows well enough that’s something they need to discuss before they act on it. Instead, he listens to how Harry’s eating him out with the sounds from behind so pornographic that Louis almost forgets that this is their reality and Louis is being tongue fucked by the hottest person he’s ever come across.

“So close, babe,” Harry groans with lips still at his arse, hips bucking up to meet Louis’ hard strokes.
“S-So close. So hot.”

Louis whines in response, the desperate need to rut against Harry’s mouth and also get his own mouth around Harry. So he follows up with one of the two needs, Harry sliding back into his mouth and twitching when Louis draws his head back up, tongue circling around his head. Harry accidentally jerks his hips up and slams the head of his cock at the back of Louis’ throat, choking him up. Louis pulls his mouth away and leans all of his weight back onto Harry’s mouth, something so good punishing him, torturing him.

Harry takes it all without any struggle. “Fuck me, Harry,” he cries.

And Harry comes.

Louis watches as it spills out of his slit and all over his abdomen. Louis has his hand around his girth once more, stroking him through his orgasm and letting his awe magnify how glorious his favourite boy is. He’s paused his licking from behind, mouth brushing against him slightly as he feels his cock empty and soften in Louis’ hand.

Louis hasn’t come yet.

He pushes Louis forward with hands behind his thighs. Louis lands on his elbows and knees, bum exposed and mouth-wateringly wet.

“So good to me,” Harry praises, a hand ghosting over Louis’ arse. Louis feels his cock twitch, still remaining untouched. Both of them wonder if he could come this way. “Taste so good on my tongue.”

The pads of his fingers press at Louis’ rim. Louis lets his head sink lower, cheek now firm on the mattress.

“Think you could come just from my fingers?” Harry circles the tips around his rim, feeling Louis clench up around him warmly when he starts to push in his index finger. “Think you could have come just from my tongue, love. You wanted to ride me so bad, didn’t you? Could feel it in your hips.”

He doesn’t respond with anything else but a long moan that falls onto the mattress. Harry’s finger filling up his arse, slowly guiding itself in. Louis has had endless wet dreams about Harry’s fingers. How long and slender they are, and how many of them could fit in his arse. Harry’s good with his hands - he’s known that for a while. He just didn’t expect it to be this good especially since all he’s done is push a finger into him that’s barely nudging against his prostate.

“Want me to fuck you one day, love?” Harry whispers down to him, a hand squeezing a handful of his arse. Louis nods into the mattress. To spend a weekend away together, just like this one. Where Saturday night will last forever, and Sunday morning would be even longer. Oh God, it was a fucking dream. Harry wants to give him a dream come true. “You can fuck me too.”

“Yes,” Louis replies weakly. Harry drags his finger out, replacing it with two and shoving them inside Louis’ hole. His back arches and hips keen backwards, penetrating his fingers further into himself and desperately needing that nudge against his prostate. He whimpers when Harry doesn’t reach it. “H-H, please. I want to come.”

“Do you?”

Harry’s fingers are out of him, but not for long. They’re wiggling back inside of him, Harry’s lips pressing a hot kiss into his cheek.
“Don’t be a twat,” Louis growls, too on edge to cooperate nicely with his shenanigans. “Please don’t be a twat.”

The nudge is so fucking gentle, the most gentle press but Louis loses it. He collapses into the mattress and feels Harry’s fingers slip out of him. He can feel it build up, his cock so close to releasing. He scratches at the mattress and lifts his bum up, asking Harry for more. Harry gives it to him with the same two fingers fucking into him and purposely avoiding his prostate, fingering him open and watching Louis writhe helplessly under Harry’s touch.

Harry is snickering so crudely behind him, speeding up his fingers and twisting them, changing the angle up. “Gonna come for me?”

_**No, of course not,**_ he wants to say, but he feebly groans, “Fuck yes, H.”

He brushes against the nerves once more, biting into his arse and sucking a love bite into him. Louis quietly screams and babbles as his cock spills out endless strings of come between his stomach and the mattress. Harry slips his fingers out and massages the back of Louis’ thighs, waiting for his high to suppress and for his breathing to calm down.

It feels like a long time, as if time had stopped for a while and made everything a lot more everlasting. It’s five minutes later that Harry peels Louis away from the soiled mattress and kisses him deep, so lovingly, so sweet. They both clean each other off with a water bottle Harry had stored by the lemonade, rinsing themselves off outside of the Range Rover and letting the cool air dry their wet bodies.

Louis is in the same sweatpants he threw off earlier, sitting on the small glove box in the middle of the passenger and driver seat. Harry’s cleaning off the come Louis left behind on the mattress with a wet towel, soon covering the dirty spot with a double bed sheet from home. Louis flops down to the mattress, exhausted.

Harry flops down on top of him.

“We’ve discussed this, Harold,” he says scornfully. He can feel Harry shrug. “Hey, I need to do something.”

“Is that your way of getting me to roll off you? Good try, munchkin.”

“No,” Louis laughs, though, doing this certain thing does bring the benefit of not having Harry’s lanky body suffocating him. “I brought a jar with me tonight.”

Harry jumps off him excitedly, sitting cross legged and eyes glassy as they smile at Louis. “You brought a jar with you?” Harry questions happily. “Our first memory together!”

Louis scoffs as he reaches for his small bag on the passenger seat. “Babe, I’ve been collecting memories with you for months. I have like... ten jars with your name on it.”

“And I didn’t know about this?”

“If you did, you wouldn’t have said it’s our first memory together,” Louis giggles, taking the small mason jar from the bag and sitting back down in front of Harry. He holds the jar in front of his eyes, Harry’s eyes glaring at the jar intently. “You’re staring at it as if the last spore on Earth was inside it.”

Harry raises his hands and rests his palm on top of the lid, lowering the jar so he can look at Louis. “You know,” Harry starts off, reaching over to take Louis’ hand to tangle and rest between them. “To think that I’m a worthy enough of a memory to keep forever means so much to me, Lou.”
Louis’ cheeks fire up with blush, feeling Harry’s thumb caress the side of his thumb. “Your fault for doing something that’ll never be forgotten,” Louis says in a humoured tone. “Even if I didn’t put it in a jar, I’ll remember this day for the rest of my life. Without any doubt.”

Harry lets a fond smile take over his face. “Let’s see how you do it then,” Harry says.

Louis is hesitant to let Harry’s hand go, but he does it for the sake of capturing this memory. He follows his usual procedures, undoing the lid and keeping it in his left hand as he scoops up the air with the mason jar. He feels Harry’s eyes on him the entire time, watching how Louis’ eyes light up like fireflies as he feels the memory seep into the open jar ready to be captured forever. He draws the jar back to where the lid is and quickly caps the jar, setting it in his lap and looking up to Harry.


Harry puts his hands on each of Louis’ cheeks and plants 30 kisses all over his face. Louis has never felt more safe with another human being in his entire life.

He settles last night’s jar next to the other 12 purely dedicated to Harry (he had to recount, and he messages Harry after he finds out to really tell him it’s 12 fucking mason jars that he has full of their memories. Harry replies with a :DDDDDD xxx). He locks the balcony door when he walks back into his room, concaving into his bed and fishing out his phone in his pocket. That reminds him, he should change his clothes considering he didn’t bring a spare change to the lake. He didn’t smell or anything, therefore he can conclude that there’s one more day left of freshness in these sweatpants.

Harry’s not going to come over and sniff him. Harry’s not coming over at all, actually. He’s babysitting little tots belonging to some person that remains unnamed to Louis. So he has to endure hours of boring instead. Or he could study.

He calls Niall.

He’d spoken to Niall earlier on Friday, the night before the lake trip. He’s heard plenty about Harry because Louis wouldn’t give them the chance to talk about anything else. He’s used to it now. Or it’s what Louis thinks. It’s hard to say he isn’t up for new information especially when Niall’s always anticipating for more details about every date they go on, every night they spend together.

This time, it isn’t any different.

“You guys fucked, didn’t ya.”

“We did not,” Louis scoffs. “We didn’t have protection. We couldn’t have, and we wouldn’t have.”

“Ah, so no sinning at all, then?” Niall questions him. Louis suppresses a laugh into his palm, shaking his head. Though, Niall can’t see. “That means you did sin! You know what, right now you’re acting like the two strange seniors who always follow each other around by the fountains at my school. Maybe I should investigate.”

Louis flops over onto his back, eyes tracing the ceiling. “Surely they’d appreciate you investigating their private matters, Niall.”
“They’re either weed dealers or fucking.”

“Weed dealers who’re fucking?” Louis suspects, earning a questioning hum from Niall. “Placing a 10 quid bet on that one. Let me know what the verdict is, and if I’m wrong I’ll get a pizza delivered to your house.”

“Get fucked,” Niall hisses at him. “Wait, don’t. For the love of God I’d love for my best friend to stay as innocent as possible for as long as possible. Harry must know a pure being like you must be cherished—”

“His fingers were up my bum, Ni.”

“Ah!” Niall screeches psychotically. “Stop, I’m... Stop! You bastard! You’ve tainted my ears!”

Louis pisses out with a vicious laughter, curling around his stomach on the bed. “You’ll never understand, I’ll tell you that much.”

“I’ll never know. I’m not really expecting m’future girlfriend to put a few fingers up m’bum when we’re fooling around,” Niall says to him, his grin heard within his voice. “Just glad you’re happy, Lou.”

“So, so happy,” Louis adds on, hardly exaggerating. “He makes me so happy, unbelievably happy. When you’re not busy with your footballing or camping shit, I’m going to make sure you meet him and you’ll see it in his eyes that he’s... he’s just... unbelievable—”

“A’right, a’right, you sap. Make it official or something, why don’t ya? You’ve been at it for a good few months now. Doesn’t seem like you two aren’t aiming to go anywhere else but for each other.”

He’s never really thought about it, surprisingly. Harry as his... official boyfriend? Where he can walk around with Harry in his hand and introduce him to everyone as his boyfriend. As his. Harry’s already kind of his. He thinks he is... anyway. He’s sure Harry doesn’t go around telling everyone else that Louis is just a friend. And surely Harry doesn’t fool around with any other human being at the moment. He’s 99.9% sure on that one because Harry wouldn’t lie to him, or do something as shitty as that behind his back. It’s cheating... or half cheating. It’s some sort of cheating. Whatever.

“I’m not sure,” Louis ends up saying. He needs more time to think about it. Becoming exclusive is a big thing for him. It’s a big thing in general. He should discuss it with Harry as well, to see if it’s something they really want without being too scared of what a relationship could bring them in the future.

“You seemed sure when you’re talking about him and how happy he makes you,” Niall says.

“We don’t have to be boyfriends to stay happy. Besides, how can you be sure that Harry wants it too? I don’t even know if I want it. I like fooling around with him and kissing him and everything with him but what if it’s for the best? If we just stayed this way?”

Niall sighs. “What if you do stay this way and then you find someone different?”

“Do you really think that I’d replace Harry?”

“Not necessarily replace him, Lou. It’s like... you’re friends with benefits and then there’s another guy that comes along and you’re interested and then Harry gets jealous and then you fuck things up—”

“You’re getting a bit ahead of yourself,” Louis admits firmly. Though, he’s not necessarily wrong
about what could happen if they do keep things up the way they’re going. What’s going to happen when Louis heads off to Uni? When Harry goes to Uni? “Besides, it’s more about what could happen if we were in a relationship. What if Harry has enough of me one day and leaves?”

“He won’t, Lou,” Niall reassures. “You told him about your jars, your Nan, your past. And he’s here putting fingers up your bum and making sure you’re okay to the point he forces you to message me to tell me you’re okay after a bit of a cry. He cares about you a lot. I don’t know why you think he’ll have enough of you after he’s been through so much with you.”

Louis exhales frustratedly, slapping his palm to his face and dragging it down. “There’s only so much someone can take.”

“And Harry’s going to keep loving you even after going through so much with you.”

The L word. If relationships were a big issue to deal with, then the L word is definitely something Louis finds impossible to handle. It’s not a bad word, or a disgusting word. Louis doesn’t hate love. He loves a lot of things. He loves Niall, his family. He loves his grandma. His mason jars. But it’s a big, big word that bigger than a lot of things. It’s a word that’s hard to swallow if it’s thrown around pointlessly.

Louis doesn’t realise that he’s been silent for a few seconds. “He doesn’t love me,” he says, eventually.

“Ha ha, bullshit—”

“No, like...” Louis interrupts. “I’m not in love with him, Niall. He’s not in love with me. It’s a bit early for that word, don’t you think? It’s been five-ish months. We’re not in middle school where you can just drop the love bomb with no meaning attached to it.”

It’s not unusual for Niall and him to have small disputes on things that could easily be solved if they just shut the fuck up. Except, Louis isn’t about that. He’d rather run his mouth and get it out instead of bottling up his emotions like he would do with the memories in the mason jars. Unfortunately, Niall is the exact same type of person and while the common trait connects them as a friendly pair of pals, it sometimes brought a bit of fire between them.

Today isn’t a day where the arguments are ablaze and form the desperate need to strangle something other than each other. Niall leaves it where it stands, thank fuck. He knows Niall knows that Louis knows Harry best, considering Niall hasn’t actually met Harry before. That’s a bit of a problem going to different schools in different districts. He’s sure Harry faces the same deal with his other friends that are not Liam or himself.

For thirty minutes they talk about anything and everything not to do with Harry which is almost a relief. They’re silent for ten seconds, enjoying the small amount of peace even though either of them could hang up and spend the rest of their afternoon without disturbance. Louis contemplates actually hanging up, but there’s a sudden annoyed grunt on the other line and Louis knows it’s one of those things.

“Let it out, boy,” Louis says.

“There’s this fucking moron at school,” Niall hisses. “He thinks he’s a top lad, totally hot and all. Ever since he got Champion boy at the swimming day for school. Loads of girls admire him and asks if he polishes his trophy every day. I’d like to hope he does, because he seems like a well enough conceded prick. He’s comin’ for me to try and make himself look tough.”
Jesus fucking Christ. “Sounds like a prick,” Louis agrees, though, he doesn’t know anything of him. He does it to make Niall happy. “What’s his name? Bet his name matches his personality.”

Niall gives a small laugh to him, bitterly saying, “Andrew. Andrew Martin. Heard of that name around town before?”

Oh... shit.

Niall knows him. Andrew goes to Niall’s fucking school. “What a fucking prick!” Louis shouts aggressively, anger building up in his system for no good reason at all. “Fuck I hate him. He’s a fucking... Fuck, Niall. You have to deal with him?”

“He’s in three of my classes! Means I have to deal with him three periods a day. He also hates me for God knows what reason. He’s trying t’pick a fight with me and I want nothing to do with it.”

“Like... full on, fists out?” Louis questions worriedly. There’s a tiny agreeing hum from Niall and it’s everything that he was hoping not to hear. “Niall, you can’t fight him.”

“Did you think I was going to fucking do it anyway?!” Niall screeches at him, settling himself down with a few large breaths. Louis huffs out a good Christ and pinches the bridge of his nose. “How d’ya know him anyway? I’m not surprised if he tried to pick a fight with you outside of school just because you walked passed him with a funny attitude.”

“Harry,” Louis answers with as much repugnance in his voice as possible. “He’s one of Harry’s mates. Probably friends from primary school or something like us. Met him once and I can still hear the whininess in his voice complaining that I was sucking up all of Harry’s attention.”

Niall drags out a small Ah! and buzzes a sinister little giggle over the line. “Complaining that you were getting all of Harry’s attention, eh?”

“He probably had a thing for Harry,” Louis shrugs. It’s probably not an idealistic situation to be putting himself in, considering that Andrew probably hates his guts because of Harry’s little weekend months ago. Bubbling up a nasty rumour that could potentially get him in trouble isn’t something Louis wants to risk doing.

Then again.

“Yeah, he totally had a thing for Harry,” Louis speaks up, voice humoured. “Think that maybe he’s lapping up the attention with the girls to get back at him, or maybe to make him jealous, or to hide something.”

Niall gives a contemplative hum through the phone. “Has Harry been talking to Andrew?” Niall asks him.

And that he... isn’t sure of.

“I don’t know.” And that shouldn’t make him nervous. That really shouldn’t make him nervous. “I hope not.”

Niall complains some more. And that’s okay because he’s finding every bit of information useful for what to talk about to Harry next. Niall ends up cutting their conversation short with his mum yelling at him for not helping with the groceries, and Louis ends up laughing at him until the reversing truck ends their contact to one another.

But he lies in bed for another twenty minutes, highly strung and confused on what to do next. He’s
sure Andrew wouldn’t be talking to Harry nowadays. He’s even more sure that Harry wants nothing to do with Andrew, or nothing to do with him in the way he wants Louis. Andrew is his friend so they would be talking occasionally. Because they’re just friends. Only friends.

He doesn’t let it eat him up. He goes downstairs to find his mum in the living room. He zooms past her after saying a quick hello, entering the kitchen, and searches in the pantry for something to eat.

:::

He lasts ten minutes before he’s scrambling to find his phone drowning in his bedsheets.

His apple was supposed to maintain his sanity, but unfortunately, Louis is a bit of a worrier. When it comes to losing Harry, that little bit becomes so supermassive that the entire world might implode inside his worries.

*can we talk pls asappppppp xxx*

He’s hoping Harry’s not doing anything, or messaging anyone else. He hopes Harry was waiting for him to message, for him to be sat down reading an interesting book with Louis in his mind. That would be nice. Really nice.

The reply doesn’t come for another three hours. When it does, Louis almost shits himself when he hears the special message tone jingle from his phone. He scoops it up and opens the message.

*Sooooo many p’s!!! :P Sorry munchkin i was still babysitting. I have a dinner tonight with my cousins from over east so i can’t talk over the phone until later. xxx*

*is messaging alright? x*

He hits send before he realises how serious he sounds. Usually they talk about serious things over the phone, or in person, so hopefully Harry gets that vibe rather than thinking something’s off between them.

*Always alright. but everything all good in the hood babe ?? xx*

He guesses Harry kind of gets that Louis is not being all that serious. Harry is also expresses that while being an idiot but he adores him so, so much for that.

*everything all good in the hood :P something’s just kind of up?? i guess. xx*

*Something kind of up where you need cuddles or something just kind of up....... Literally ;) x*

*shut up pls x*

*I’ll help you with both later if you’d like. Just need your name and issue/s and i can put you into our appointment database to see when i can see you for a check up. x*

There are all sorts of questions going through Louis’ mind right now, like what if he was sombre right now and Harry didn’t realise, only continuing to take the piss because he thinks that everything is alright between them? He supposes Harry just kind of knows, because Harry always knows. Harry knows Louis really fucking well that it worries him that Harry might know him better than himself.
name’s munchkin and my issue is having to deal with a boy who thinks he’s funny and cute when he’s really not ;)  

Sounds like a serious case !! might need some serious medication like endless amounts of kisses and tickling under the pits. also might need to learn how to laugh at when your FAVOURITE BOY ATTEMPTS TO BE FUNNY. xx  

His favourite boy. The fact that Harry would more than likely tattoo that nickname on his forehead makes Louis’ heart swell a bit more. Because Harry is his favourite boy. Harry will always be his favourite boy and that is every reason why Louis never wants Harry to let go of him. For anyone else, especially for someone like Andrew.  

That was the entire reason as to why he messaged Harry in the first place. Because of Andrew. Though, it’s not the first time Harry’s got him sidetracked from a task he’s supposed to be completing.  

so when’s my appointment doc? x  

8PM DON’T BE LATE  

you’re the one coming to visit me :)  

DON’T SASS ME I’LL DO NINE LOVE BITES THIS TIME MR TOMLINSON  

He lets Harry go and be with his family. It’s only three hours until he’s seeing him in the flesh again, anyway.  

:::  

While they’re cuddling, he finds out that Harry hasn’t spoken to Andrew in weeks, and even then, it was only to ask for a calculator for his Maths exam. It makes Louis breathe a lot easier, and Harry doesn’t really know why, but all that matters is that he is happy and Harry is still his for the time being.  

It’s 10pm when Harry decides to tell him that he’s staying over for the night. Louis is unhappy about school tomorrow morning, already sleepy for the week upcoming, albeit being the final week before a two week break. He snuggles into the bed with Harry and lets him tangle their legs together. Youtube is playing between them on Louis’ laptop screen, both hidden deep in the bedsheets in the dark.  

The laptop ended up falling off the bed again by coincidences. They get each other off because it’s a coincidence that they’re both hard and both horny teenagers and have a thing for each other. Louis might have moaned a bit too loudly when Harry takes both of their cocks in his hands and jerks them off together while rubbing up against one another. He might have also squeaked the bed a little bit too much when he squabbled to sit up, asking Harry to come in his mouth, in which Harry does.  

Whatever happened that night was definitely not discussed at the dining table the following morning.  

:::
He receives a message from Niall that Monday afternoon. It’s when Louis realises he failed to mention to Harry that Andrew hated his best friend’s guts.

Louis would say this calls for action, but what action. Niall’s just confirmed that Andrew wants to fist fight his arse in his school’s parking lot after school Wednesday. Niall can’t fight. As much as he’d love to keep telling himself that he can defend his body with the little amount of karate skill he has, Louis really does not want to see his best friend being beaten to a pulp. Neither does he want to see him suffer if some pissbaby middle schooler hands him effortless amounts of humiliation for the rest of his senior year.

_You’re a very good best friend_

_i know, Louis responds proudly. pls just run away or something. hide away at my place after school. u’ll be alright._

Niall doesn’t reply to him after that. He hopes he’s driving home now, away from Andrew or any other people in his stuck up piece of shit posse. He doesn’t understand his deal. If Niall didn’t like him, so be it. Not everyone has to like someone. Dislike is a common thing in the world. Sometimes it’s because of pure disconnection between two people. Andrew needs to stick his nose deep in some common sense.

He doesn’t realise he’s grovelling out loud until Harry pinches his cheeks and tries to lift a smile from his glower.

“Need some carrot sticks?” Harry questions him, tucking his index fingers and thumbs under Louis’ bottom and upper lip, spreading them away from each other to look at his teeth. Honestly, what the fuck is he doing. “You’re going to have no teeth if you keep grinding them like that.”

Right. He needs to control that while he’s angry too. “You’re going to have no dick if I keep grinding you the way I do. Maybe we should cut down on the sex--”

“Woah.” Harry rips his fingers away from the inside of Louis’ mouth, drying them off on Louis’ jeans. “You’re a little snippy today. What happened to the quiet boy reading on my lap during lunch time?”

They’re at Harry’s sitting in the very lounge room he first met Liam. The Great British Bake Off is playing softly from the TV to softly alleviate any silence that may pass between them. Though, that doesn’t seem likely to occur now that Harry keeps prodding fingers in places where fingers don’t belong. That is... where they don’t belong as of the situation right now.

“You should know I wasn’t actually reading. Liam just told me to shut up, so I did. And since I couldn’t kiss you to shut myself up, I had to occupy myself with something less exciting.”

Harry snickers briefly from his throat, leaning in to whisper close in Louis’ ear. “We should ditch Liam,” he schemes.

“Your choice. But Liam gifted me sweets from Paris. I’m not sacrificing mine and Liam’s special bond to help with your horny needs during lunch break,” Louis says to him, tilting his head back to fit his lips with Harry’s. He gives him a soft peck. Nothing more than a few seconds of meeting mouths to elate Louis’ mood. “I do like you very much though.”

“Likewise,” Harry admits. “And that’s the very reason why I don’t want to deal with his shit. He gave me Mickey hands. Unless I was really fucking cold I won’t ever need them. I wanted sweets,
but no. He got you sweets.”

“Jealous?” Louis cocks up an eyebrow and grins at Harry’s scowl. “Liam likes me better than you.”

Harry fists his shirt in his two hands and wipes the smirk off Louis’ face by gently biting the tip of his nose. “I like you better than Liam. And I know you like me better than you do Liam. You know why?”

“Why?”

“Because I make you come.” Harry prods a tongue at Louis’ lips, licking into his mouth and sucking in his bottom lip. “That’s a lot more sweet than any sort of treat Liam can give to you.”

“I guess you’re right,” Louis sighs defeatedly, though, he doesn’t feel all that defeated. He has Harry between his legs and working his mouth open and it’s almost like Harry didn’t just get off 12 hours ago with Louis also in his hands. He wonders if Harry’s stamina will ever run out.

Louis kisses him because he can. He kisses him like he’s proving to everyone that Harry is his and that he’s Harry’s. He kisses him full and wet and slides a hand up the back of Harry’s sweater with nails scraping down his baby smooth skin. Harry pulls away for a quick breath, but Louis stops his antics and whispers blasphemy.

“We should do some Lit homework.”

Harry noses into Louis’ cheek and kisses his chin. “Recite your three poems from Seamus Heaney’s collection while I eat you out.”

“Fucking hel-- Do you think Seamus died knowing that someone would one day read a poem of his while being rimmed?” Harry shrugs at him. “You’re going to condition yourself to get hard whenever you see my arse, Harold.”

“It already happens,” Harry says. “But with the right pants and a decent amount of odd thinking I can make sure that my boner isn’t visible to the public, or to you, in that matter. You wouldn’t be able to resist if you saw it, and if we’re the only two with hard dicks in class that’s going to cause us a bit of trouble, innit?”

“A lot of people already know we’re fucking.”

“What I mean is we’re going to have to battle two or three periods of class before we could get each other off somewhere--”

“As much as I’m open to new ideas,” Louis starts with a small kiss to Harry’s nose, “Public sex, let alone public sex on school grounds, is definitely off limits, babe.”

Harry frowns but finds Louis’ hand and holds it. “How do you know a lot of people know about us, Lou?”

This is a topic Louis had hoped that wouldn’t be spoken about until he was ready. He might be able to veer the conversation away by flipping over onto his stomach and presenting his bum in front of Harry’s face so he could eat away both of their troubles. He doesn’t want to talk about them. Talk about us. Niall said he should try and see if Harry wants to turn this into something more. Make it into a relationship. Except, Louis doesn’t know what he wants or if he wants it now.

So he does exactly what he had planned, following the scenario he had formed in his head, turning onto his stomach and slapping two hands on his arse. Harry replaces them with his own after ripping
every bit of clothing covering Louis’ gorgeous body. Harry hands him the poem book from Louis’
day pack, and he struggles to read through his second chosen poem before he comes wildly with face
buried in a throw pillow.

:::

The next afternoon Harry has a babysitting job. And Louis is alone.

Louis calls Harry not too soon after 5 when his mum comes home from her work. Harry asks Louis
to drive to the house he’s keeping for the next few hours, soon texting him the address. Louis drives
to him, seeing Harry at the front where two young toddlers, a boy and a girl, played with a small
soccer ball on the lawn. Harry waves and stands from where he was sitting on the porch stairs,
trotting over to Louis and giving him a small kiss on the forehead.

Louis looks over to the kids falling onto their peachy arses. “Keeping you busy?”

“Nah,” Harry laughs, snaking an arm behind Louis’ back and guiding him over to the porch.
“They’re keeping each other busy though.”

They sit on the stairs, Louis tucking himself closer to Harry and slotting his nose into the dips of
Harry’s collarbones. “I wish I had a play date before I came to see you. I was bored and all alone.
And sad because a certain someone didn’t see me before he left school.”

“Aw, is my favourite boy all sad because I didn’t see him for a cuddle,” Harry coos softly. Louis
nuzzles his nose deeper into Harry. “We have all night, munchkin. We have right now. No need to
worry.”

“Nothing not too not safe for work forming up in your mind. Right, Harold?”

Harry giggles meekly. A horrific scream tears Louis’ attention away from Harry, eyes snapping to
the boy toddler on the floor with a massive grin on his face. The girl is running around on her two
tiny feet, stopping before she falls onto her knees and topples on top of the boy. Harry shouts out a
humoured hey hey! before standing up from Louis and walking over to the troublemakers.

They end up climbing all over him and Louis takes a video of Harry being taken down by two three
year olds for future blackmail.

Louis’ house is where they both decide to go after the toddlers’ dad comes home from work.
Johannah greets Harry with a hug and kiss on the cheek, telling the two boys that dinner is on the
stove if they wanted to help themselves. They take their warmed meal upstairs to Louis’ bedroom,
sitting on the carpet as they go through a stack and a half of school shit. Louis finishes up both his
dinner and school work before Harry, moving onto the bed where Harry joins him not too long after
with a textbook open in his lap. He’s highlighting some text and jotting a few things on some sticky
notes, peeling them off and sticking them all over the glossy paper.

Louis is lying back with his foot raised in the air. His toes are pointed and are nearing closer to
Harry’s chest. He prods where his heart is a few times. He wonders if Harry’s still able to read the
text being significantly covered by his distractingly hairy leg. Or if Harry is pretending that Louis
doesn’t exist.

Harry launches and captures Louis’ foot within his arms, bending down to close in his shin between
his torso and crossed legs. Louis squeaks at him to let go, but Harry shakes his head, lips dotting kisses along his shin bone.

“M’gonna get pins and needles, H,” Louis complains. Harry continues suffocating Louis’ leg between his body parts.

“That’s your fault,” he says to Louis. “You distracted me. Now I want to keep your leg forever. It’s a very pretty leg, might I say.”

Harry tucks his head in to press his nose into Louis’ calf muscle. Louis sighs. “I need my leg back. It’s an important part of my body that I need to do day to day activities.”

“Finders keepers.”

“Harry, you bastard!” Louis pokes his toes into his enemy’s stomach causing Harry to push himself away and free Louis’ leg. Louis snatches Harry’s school work, noticing it’s his Psychology class’ text book. “Ooh, these are some pretty notes,” he says after observing a few highlighted parts, all different colours ranging from green to blue to yellow.

“Give it back,” Harry demands. “They’re some of my best notes.”

Louis smirks, holding the closed book to his chest. “Finder’s keepers!”

Harry wraps two hands around his ankles and pulls him across the bed, Louis’ duvet crumpling underneath his bum as he’s swept over to Harry’s bubble. Harry’s got his hands on his waist now, Louis’ thighs over Harry’s. Louis drops the text book between them to declare mercy. But Harry doesn’t want the text book anymore.

“You’re very, very lucky you’re cute,” Harry whispers to him, stealing a gentle kiss from Louis. His hands slide from his waist and up Louis’ thighs. His fingers are spread so they’re almost covering half of the circumference of his thick thighs. Harry absolutely treasures them. “I’m also really angry that you made me hard.”

“Get off when I talk shit to you?” Louis sneers happily. “When I call you bastard? Or make you frustrated? Need me to steal all your text books and make you go on your own little hunting adventure with Dora the Explorer--”

“Shut up.”

They don’t do anything about their half hard dicks pressed unbearably compact against each other. That’s a big enough of a surprise for Louis. The surprises become bigger as the night ventured on. Louis feeds kisses to Harry as he studies further, where Harry doesn’t become even the littlest bit angry when Louis distracts him beyond a million times. They also watch Louis’ favourite movie on Netflix after Harry finished up with his text book. With Louis so close to Harry, he kept on wondering if Harry’s going to make a move, or maybe pin Louis down to the mattress and dry fuck against one another to soil their pants again.

None of it happens. The movie finishes and Harry gives Louis a small kiss on the temple before closing the laptop and sliding it under the bed. He sits back up and brings the duvet closer to his chest. The biggest surprise of them all awaits.

Harry collects Louis in his arms and spoons him after he shuts off the bedside lamp.

Louis already knew Harry wasn’t here purely because of the sex they have. But tonight proves that Harry really wants him for a lot more than what they have now. If talking about it in the near future...
isn’t enough to prove how Harry feels, tonight definitely proves that he’s feels enough.

Louis closes his eyes and smiles gently as he listens to Harry’s heartbeat hammer behind him. He thinks tonight’s one of the best nights he’s ever spent with Harry. Maybe even the best.

:::

It’s almost a relief hearing the words from Niall the next afternoon.

Andrew’s postponed the fight. He heard Niall walk to his car after phoning him while leaving school grounds. The moment the door slammed through the phone, Niall started shrieking. Louis almost considered that Andrew was hiding in Niall’s back seat launching forward to hold his best friend hostage with a knife at his throat. Though, Niall tells him the few comforting words that settle Louis’ mind from it’s dizzy spell.

It’s not all sunshine and rainbows. Postponed. Meaning it will happen sometime that is not the now, but it will happen. And if Louis knew Andrew well enough, which he doesn’t but he’s a dick, he won’t back down a fight. He’ll keep it in his schedule, remind himself every day and every night that he needs to pick on the blonde kid one day, he’ll write on sticky notes and post them on every surface of his house so he won’t forget.

“Do you think he’d forget?” Niall asks him conveniently. He wishes he could say yes.

“Sorry, mate,” Louis sighs to him. Niall sighs back. It sounds low and defeated. “If I know anything about wanting to smack some guy from my school, it’s that I would definitely not forget.”

“Private school fights are so rare, Lou,” Niall says. “Like... It’s not stereotyping-- Well, it kind of is. But we know statistically public schools have more student fights. They would probably put a carved stone in the ground the day after Andrew has me in a headlock about to snap my neck.”

“You know, something you should do. Tell someone!”

“Oh shit, yeah. Because it’s always easier done than said, innit, Tommo?” Niall hisses sarcastically. “You know how schools and bullies work. They literally don’t give a shit. Private school or public, they’re not paid to treat you and harmonise the community. They’re paid to teach and some other useless shit.”

Louis slaps a hand on his forehead before unlocking his locker and pulling out a few notes from Literature class. “You pay extra in private school fees. I’d figure they’d probably care a bit more than what you’d think. Just because half of my teachers don’t give a shit here, doesn’t mean your school’s the same.”

“Let’s do this then,” Niall begins. “You be me for a day, and I be you. Then we see who has the better life.”

“Is that your way of trying to make me be you so you don’t have to face Andrew’s fight?” Louis asks, voice high with disbelief. “Wow, now I kind of don’t want to help you out and hope you get a black eye that lasts weeks.”

“Lou, don’t. That’s not what I meant,” he says seriously. “But honestly, what’s good. I can only hope he forgets.”
It’s not like Niall’s wrong with the whole school system being f**ked up and not helping the students as much as they should. Louis doesn’t know what it’s like being in a private school. Louis doesn’t know what it’s like being Niall and having attended the same private high school for six years. Louis knows that if Niall just told someone that it’d be much easier to sort out, much easier to reach out, if something does happen. Because he knows that Andrew might just turn it all against Niall in the future. He will be the hated bully who tried picking a fight with a popular asshole.

Niall has to drive home so Louis hangs up the phone and stuffs his Literature notes in his back pack, heading off school grounds.

:::

The countdown until the two week break ticks away slower than Louis could ever imagine.

He’s staring at the clock for most of the Literature lesson - as are most of the other kids in the room. The teacher shouldn’t have expected much else from over-worked senior students who want nothing more than two weeks of constant sleep. So she too sits back and babbles on about things that they should know about the texts they’ve read this month.

Things they *should* know about. Things that Louis doesn’t know about *at all.*

The class is dismissed once the bell rings through the school. As Louis exits to the corridor, kids are flying out of the classrooms screaming from the top of their lungs as if it were their last days of school ever. He laughs and shakes his head at the naïve children and slides past them, walking in the opposite direction to his locker.

He zips through the code and reaches for his phone in instinct. There are several messages from Niall all in caps lock.

**HE DIDNT FORGET**

**LOUIS FUCKING PICK ME UP I CANT WALK OUT TO THE CARPARK**

**HE’S GOING TO PUNCH ME OUT**

**EVERYONE IS OUTSIDE ANDREWS BY THE TREE PLEASE COME PICK ME UP**

“Shit,” Louis murmurs. He slings his backpack on his bag and slams his locker shut. Whatever’s in there will be locked away for two weeks, and Louis hopes to God everything important was already stuffed into his bag. There’s no time going back now, no time for anything, or anyone.

He almost reverses into some person’s scooter while getting out of the school’s carpark. He’s also close to getting T-boned by another car as he zooms past a red light, but what matters at the moment is that Niall doesn’t get murdered within Andrew Martin’s hands.

He drives up the side of the curb and stops the car, but keeps the engine revving just in case he needs to speed off. He messages Niall.

**i’m here you loser. can’t fucking believe you would’ve thought he’d forget**

**THAT IS THE LEAST OF MY WORRIES RIGHT NOW TOMLINSON WHERE THE FUCK ARE**
YOU

He looks at his surroundings, noticing a large building, no more than three storeys high, coloured
dark navy. He sends a photo to Niall and says he’s parked up beside the fence around about 50
metres from the building. Not too long after he sees his best friend frantically dashing across the
grass. He’s like a skittish deer who knows of the predators that surround him with rifles. As if they’re
aiming and resting their finger on the trigger, counting down to the time the bullet strikes and pierces
through his heart.

Niall evades bullets, avoids being sighted again, jumping into Louis’ car and buckling himself up
within a few seconds. He screams at Louis to drive. Louis does.

They’re a few streets from the private school now. It’s then when Louis realises he has no idea
where the fuck he’s going. There’s no plan. Where are they supposed to go?

“Do you want to go home?” Louis asks.

“Like fuck I want to go home. He probably knows where I live. He’ll come for me and slit my throat
in my sleep.”

Louis rolls his eyes and tightens his hands around the wheel. “He’s not going to murder you, Ni. Not
like that anyway,” Louis laughs. Niall glares at him from his seat with his frown deepening. “Don’t
look at me like that. I saved your life just now, you ass.”

“Cheers,” Niall says bluntly, expressing the same amount of gratitude Louis would expect from a
mushroom. “Can we like, go to your park or something. Go somewhere? He won’t find us on the
other side of town.”

He could have only wished a bit more that Niall would have been right about that assumption. They
drive back to the other side of town to the park close to Louis’ house. Louis shuts off the engine
when they’re in the carpark, turning on the radio and reaching into the middle compartment box for
his phone. The first thing that pops up is a message from Harry.

“Haz messaged me,” he says to Niall. Niall hums, eyes not peeling away from his own phone in his
hands. “If he’s sad that I didn’t see him this afternoon because of your little shenanigans with
Andrew, I’ll murder you myself.”

Niall shrugs. “He’ll live.”

“You won’t,” Louis hisses, opening the message from Harry.

*You looked cute running off today. Superhero duties to tend to munchkin? xx*

He’s kind of sad he doesn’t have to kill Niall now.

you betcha ;) coming over tonight for dinner or must you attend a super secret assassins meeting
in the next town over? x

“You guys are fuckin’ weird,” Niall laughs over his shoulder. Louis whacks his cheek with the back
of his hand. “It’s a match made in heaven. I’ve never seen someone as dorky as--”

There’s three taps on the passenger window. Louis is the first to shout with Niall following not too
long after.

“What the fuck!” Louis shrieks, silencing Niall’s curses at Andrew through the window. “What the
fuck are you doing here."

There’s a muffled chuckle coming through the window, Andrew’s grin widening as his laugh falters. “Open the door, you sly twat. Too chicken to come fight me?” Andrew barks at Niall. Niall shrinks lower in his seat, pretending not to listen to the ass. “You want to play this game then, hm? Fucking douchebag.”

“Oh,” and Louis really needs to shut the fuck up but he really can’t because this is Andrew who’s fucking with them, “You listen here, pal. How about you stop acting like a little bitch yourself and fucking call this entire thing off.”

“I’m the little bitch? Your friend here can’t even show up to a fight. Even better, you helped him out of it, making both of you cowardly pricks,” Andrew laughs maniacally.

If it were anyone else in the entire world, anyone that Louis knew he couldn’t take down with a few words, he would stop and apologise for whatever’s happened. But with Andrew there’s strong hate. After so little time of knowing him through Harry, after so little time knowing him through Niall, Louis cannot fucking stand him. Something about him makes Louis want to wrench and push Andrew to fall face first into his lunch puddled on the floor.

Louis unlocks the doors and gets out of the car. He tells Niall to lock them again but Niall protests, only telling Louis to get back in the car and leave him alone. Ha, like fuck that’s going to happen.

“I’m going to tell you one more time.” Louis points a finger at him and moves around the front of the car, eyes locked onto Andrew’s and jaw tight with anger. “You fucking leave my best friend alone. Call the entire thing off and I won’t lay a finger on you.”

“I’d like to believe that you’d be up for fighting me, Tomlinson, but I don’t think your precious boyfriend would like the fact his best mate got into a fight.”

Louis is right in front of him, face to face. He’s a bit taller than Louis, but that means nothing. He rolls his eyes and stands his ground, watching Andrew for any sudden movements.

“He’s not my boyfriend,” Louis hisses through his teeth. “Neither is he your best mate, from what I’ve heard.”

Andrew scoffs with a sneer again. “Whatever. You’re all a bunch of fags anyway.”

His entire body tenses, his throat tightens, his jaw locks. The name. He’s never been directly confronted with the name before. The anger is rising within his chest every time he breathes, his pupils swelling so large with anxiety that he almost blacks out from how much light he sees. He remains standing, remains so fucking mad. His bones feel like they’re shaking.

Louis fists Andrew’s shirt in his hands and twists him so his back cracks hard against the side of the car. The passenger’s door opens, and Louis can hear Niall’s voice shout at him to leave him alone and to get in the car. But the voice is so faint. Louis can’t hear him. Only the sounds of his raging breath and Andrew’s smirk creaking as it shrinks behind his fear.

“What was that, Martin?” Louis asks him, hands twisting up further in his shirt so the hem rides up his stomach. He can tell Andrew’s trying too hard to remain calm, his nervousness paling his face. “You oughta say that again if you want this fist down your fucking throat.”

“Lou, c’mon, he’s not worth it,” Niall’s saying to him, panic clear in his voice. Louis’ eyes don’t remove themselves from Andrew’s. “Louis, please.”
Louis grinds his teeth together as Andrew opens his mouth. “Listen to the man, Tomlinson,” Andrew sneers at him. “I’ll call off the fight, whatever. Done deal.”

As much as Louis would love to, he doesn’t believe him. He can sense that Andrew is made of lies and nothing but. After quick contemplation and a small growl to lower Andrew’s ego, he lets him go, and Andrew runs off way too fast for him to be totally okay with what just happened.

Louis storms back to his side of the car after watching the private school boy walk over to his own car, where he sees one of his friends sitting in the driver’s seat waiting for him. Louis narrows his eyes at them before opening the door and jumping into the car. He’s met with a frustrated blonde who’s hair explains the stress radiating from his body.

“You’re a fucking moron!” Niall exclaims as Louis turns on the engine. “You could have gotten hurt. What if something happened and Harry found out what’s been going on. You’re a fucking idiot—”

Louis revs the car so hard he thinks he might have completely run down the engine’s gears. “Shut the fuck up,” Louis snaps, knuckles white and eyebrows furrowed as he stares at the park in front of them. He hears Andrew’s car drive off behind them and Louis has never been more close to reversing and ramming into the side of someone’s car in his life.

Niall does shut the fuck up for once. Louis wonders if he knows if right now is the angriest he’s ever been in his life.

“Harry’s not going to find out from you or me,” Louis continues, voice so terrifyingly low that Niall fears to speak over him. “And you’re going to make sure that you don’t fucking get involved with that son of a bitch again.”

The nod he gets from Niall is nothing but a promise.

:::

The fight leaves him tense for the rest of the evening. He’d dropped Niall home straight after driving out from the parking lot and heads back to his own place to smoosh his face against a pillow and sleep everything off.

It doesn’t work because he wakes up at six in the evening grumpier than ever. He wakes to the sound of someone knocking at his bedroom door. Louis calls from the bed that whoever’s lurking at the door can come in and test his patience. Harry opens up and enters with in his hands. Something oily that’s soaking transparent patches into its paper bag.

The sweet smell of cinnamon hits his nose when Harry sits beside him. Donuts.

“Gimme.” Louis launches himself at him and rips the bag from Harry’s grip, shoving a hand into the bag and pulling out a warm donut. He cradles it for a moment before taking the first bite. It’s the goodness that replaces Louis’ blood with happiness. “You’re an angel.”

“I know,” Harry admits teasingly, taking his own donut and scrunching up the paper bag. He basketballs it into the trash can on the other side of the room. He misses. “Damn.”

“Ha,” he laughs with mouth full of donut. “Angels can’t do everything, hey?”
Harry shrugs it off. “The things that I can do, though, I do them perfect. I give the best cuddles, ones that make you feel like you’re earning your wings and about to be lifted into heaven.”

Louis laughs and says, “Pretty sure that means you’re going cuddling me to death, love.”

“Exactly,” Harry grins, purring as he slides his hand over Louis’ thigh and squeezes it gently. “I’m going to show you after we finish up.”

They both finish their donuts quickly, licking their fingers to make the taste last. As promised, Harry cuddles him good for a few minutes before they head down to the kitchen, where Harry makes him and Amelia and really lovely dinner without burning through pots or destroying a week’s worth of food. It’s a nice replacement meal from the normal home cooking. They all eat around the table and Louis does the dishes as Harry colours with his little sister upstairs.

Everything seems so in sync. So perfect. Louis walks to Amelia’s room and stands by the door frame. Harry spots him, shooting him a wink, and says to her that he needed to run off and complete some older people school work. Surprisingly, she takes the news very well. She’s continues to lie on her stomach while she colours outside of the lines in her book, Harry standing from the carpet and walking over to Louis. Harry closes the door behind them and takes Louis into his arms, warming him up with a very affectionate hug.

Louis melts into it because there’s no other thing he could do when Harry’s pressing their chests together and brushing his hand up and down the curve of his back. Harry keeps doing this because he wants to. As if... Harry doesn’t want anything else. Doesn’t want anyone else. There’s no other explanation for it. Louis feels it. Harry doesn’t need to tell him. He can feel it.

Harry steps back, hands still behind Louis’ back, as he looks at his favourite boy. He puts two fingers under Louis’ chin. While Louis isn’t moping with his head down, Harry still tilts his head up a bit further so the lights above illuminate his face. Louis smiles to him, a toothless grin, and watches as Harry’s eyes sparkle.

Harry steps back into their bubble and kisses him short and sweet, fingers still under his chin. When he pulls away Louis’ hands curl into fists at Harry’s waist, t-shirt balled up in his palms.

Louis stands on his tiptoes, mouth ghosting over Harry’s as he whispers, “I don’t know how I got so lucky with someone as irresistible as you.”

Harry chuckles softly from his throat. “If only you could see you from my eyes you’d see that I’m definitely the lucky one to have someone like you.”

They shower together that night. Harry sucks Louis’ dick out of random, but that’s okay. Louis will never complain. They fall asleep together soon before Johannah comes home from work. She knocks at Louis’ bedroom door and peeks through the crack as she creaks the door open. She sees the two boys taking up no more than half of the double bed, totally wound up in each other’s arms, legs, every single body part...

The bedside lamp is tinting the room a romantic orange tone. Johannah softly pads across the carpet and shuts off the light, leaving the two bundled up in their own cocoon of love and happiness.
He’s alone Saturday night when hears faint murmuring by his lounge room window.

He pauses the TV before standing up to walk over to the window. Cautiously, he looks past the curtain to find nothing but the darkness of the night. He stays there for a few seconds, listening to his breathing become heavier and heavier, before taking hesitant steps back to the couch and falling into a cushion.

He sets the TV at a lower volume and tries to not concentrate on the thought of a murderer lurking within his neighbourhood.

:::

Louis sighs when he wakes up the Monday morning. His body clock is set to 6am, though today he needn’t to worry about waking up early enough for school.

He wraps himself up, compacting himself into a tight burrito, letting the blanket heat take his body into sleep. A deep sleep that lasts three extra hours. It’s the three extra hours that Louis will keep dear to his heart. Keep next to his grandma and the mason jars.

It’s a sleep, eat and play week for Louis. By the time he knows it it’s Saturday and Niall’s at his house by the morning. He receives a text from Harry at around 3 in the afternoon. They’re in the back garden, Louis with legs stretching down a wooden lounge chair and Niall starfished on the grass with a football balancing on his stomach.

*mine tonight? got nothing on tomorrow xx*

He’s seen Harry a few times this week. Not as much as Louis had hoped to see him, but it was enough. Harry’s got babysitting jobs left and right since school’s out for the two weeks. Like most parents, Johannah doesn’t enlist Amelia into daycare since Louis is old enough, and has been old enough since he was 14, to look after his little sister during the school break. It means Louis can’t visit Harry when he’s running about looking after his kids.

To spend the night with Harry *and* stay with him all day tomorrow is a bit of a treat.

“You gotta go away,” Louis says bluntly. Niall throws the football at him and nips the untamed tufts at the top of his head. The ball bounces away behind the lounge chair. “Asshole.”

He groans like an impatient child. “Why do I have to leave?”

“Because Harry’s going to be sticking fingers in my bum and either you can come with me and listen or you can do as I said and leave.”

Niall leaves.

He packs his and heads to Harry’s as soon as his mum comes home from work. Anne lets him in and Louis kisses her on the cheek upon entry. She tells him Harry’s upstairs doing God knows what. Amused, Louis chuckles and thanks Anne before heading upstairs to knock at Harry’s bedroom door.

He’s pulled inside as if Harry’s keeping something top secret inside his room, something that his mum doesn’t, and can’t, know about. Louis whinges when Harry tugs them over to the bed,
dropping him down to the mattress and immediately curling himself around Louis from behind. He
forgot how clingy Harry got when he hasn’t seen him in a while, but he’s never this clingy. He’s
choking him.

“You want something from me, don’t you,” Louis assumes immediately. There’s no other
explanation for it. Well, maybe other than the fact Harry really missed him and wanted to touch him
all over as quickly as he could. Harry hums a no at his accusation. “Boy, stop choking me then. I
already have a hard time breathing when you’re around, I don’t need you physically attacking my
wind pipe.”

“I’m not even touching it. You’re just incapable of doing simple things. Like breathing.”

“So are you, considering you dragged me into this room as if you murdered someone in here earlier
and you’re keeping it a secret from your mum. You see, usually people open the door and let the
person inside the room with a welcoming handshake and a good evening. I was rather intrigued by
you until you decided to drop me down into bed and wrap your limbs around me, you octopus.”

Harry kisses the back of his neck and presses the tip of his nose at the top of his spine. “I’m just
happy to see you today.”

He thinks a snarky comment would be most appropriate because that’s just how they are. “I’m really
happy to see you too,” he says instead. Harry presses Louis into his chest tighter which probably
wasn’t the best thing to do but Louis wheezes and deals with it. “Always happy to see you.”

“Through your incredible amounts of complaining, I know for a fact you have an open heart for me
and my cuddles.”

“I don’t like to admit it,” Louis says, managing to turn himself around in Harry’s deathly grip and
come face to face with him. He hasn’t had a good look at him yet. It seems as if the day has
dishevelled him, hair messy but flat against his scalp, against the pillow they’re both resting on. His
face is relaxed but it’s the relaxed state that appears after you’re tense for so long, as if the relief has
only washed over him just recently. He can safely say that there’s some things he knows about Harry
better than Harry knows about himself, so it’s why he wonders why Harry’s been stressed, or maybe
angry. He doesn’t think it’s something that’s appropriate to bring up whilst they’re enjoying each
other’s company like this, after so very long.

He thinks he could fall asleep right now regardless of him not being particularly tired. He loves the
cuddles, the gentle talk that flows between them that eventually bring them closer.

They’re quiet for a few good minutes. The deep, calm breathing close to his ear almost assures Louis
that Harry has fallen asleep. But the voice that speaks up not to soon after Louis shifts between
Harry’s arms says otherwise. In fact, it scares Louis at how sudden his voice broke the silence in the
room.

“Tired, munchkin?” Harry asks. Louis shrugs, unable to respond. “Need a nap? Want some tea?”

“I’ll be alright,” he tells him, voice high and sweet. “I haven’t really been having the best sleep at
home. Slept in until one today without realising. It’s a wonder how Amelia didn’t end up dying
without her breakfast and a very late lunch.”

“Really?”

And it’s true. He doesn’t know if telling Harry that he keeps hearing noises outside of his house at
midnight will make it seem like he’s a delusional ass. It could be anything. It could be the bushes, or
a neighbourhood cat wanting to cause trouble.

“Yeah,” he responds. “I dunno, I keep hearing something outside the house. It’s really odd because... you know, I’m upstairs. It sounds like someone’s near my balcony, or on it. Or when I’m in the living room with Ams watching cartoons before she nods off to sleep, I hear someone near the window.”

Harry hums in thought before pressing a kiss to Louis’ temple. “Have you checked outside?”

“Have you not been paying attention to horror movies where the person who does the thing that everyone tells them not to do gets murdered first?”

“Lou,” Harry laughs softly. “I highly doubt it’s a murderer. You should check. Maybe it’s a cat or something. Have you asked your mum about it? If she’s heard anything?”

Louis shakes his head. “Not yet. I’ll do it tomorrow.” Harry peppers his cheek with kisses, the last peck lingering as his skin underneath blooms a bright pink colour. “Movie time?”

“One of course.” Harry unravels his arms from Louis’ body and searches under the bed for his laptop. He pulls it up and lays it flat on the mattress, opening the lid to reveal the already opened Netflix site. Louis grins and tucks himself into Harry’s side. “You choose, love.”

He points to something that looks decent, never having heard the title before. Harry clicks on it then brings the laptop up to rest in his lap, Louis curling closer into him to see the screen. He purrs when he feels Harry’s arm circle around the small of his back, hand perched onto his hip and fingers stroking over the surface of his skin. He feels so warm, so safe.

It’s only a matter of minutes until Louis begins to comment on the movie. He’s bored. Harry has had enough movie dates with him to know what Louis is like during them.

“Teenagers,” Louis huffs. He rolls his eyes while staring at the two lovebirds in the corridor of their school purposely avoiding each other. He wonders if he was, or is, ever this childish. “They both know they have a crush on each other. Their friends know. The queen might as well fucking know from how stupidly blatant they are.”

Harry lets out a helpless giggle. “Liam said the same about us, you know.”

“But look at them, they’re insanely obvious. It almost too obvious,” Louis complains, muting the movie altogether. “The script writer of this movie needs to be fired, or at least rethink their choices.”

“You chose this movie!”

“Out of pure thought that the front cover of the film would be as good as the film itself. I’ve been mislead and I regret everything.” Louis buries his head into Harry’s neck, annoyance bubbling wildly in his stomach. Harry’s scent is calming him slowly. “What do you mean Liam said the same about us?”

Harry pauses the movie and looks over to him tucked close to his side. “We were obvious little shits. Liam said I would always stare at you and you’d be so oblivious to it that it wasn’t even funny. I don’t know how we were like that but he said that we were clearly not friends.”

“But we are friends,” Louis speaks with the confusion strong in his voice. “Like... we aren’t... more than friends?

He knew this conversation would be brought up, but he didn’t think it’d be brought up now. He’s
not afraid to talk about it now, however. Something needs to be sorted out. They’ve been doing this for months. Almost six months to be exact. They can keep doing this forever, there’s nothing wrong with that. But what’s going to happen in the long run?

Harry might find someone else and Louis will be left in the dark. If there’s anything he’s afraid of, it’s that.

“The best of friends, munchkin,” Harry smiles, as if he’s trying to make the situation lighter. Surprisingly, it doesn’t. Harry restarts the conversation when his smile falls into a weak frown. “Is this something you want to talk about now?”

He could say no and they could forget about everything, but, “Yeah,” Louis whispers to him. “We need to talk about us.”

Harry chucks the laptop to the end of the bed and peels himself away from Louis, shuffling forward to have direct eye contact with Louis. He takes both of Louis’ hands and rests them on his crossed legs, holding them secure. Harry is nervous. It radiates from his skin and Louis knows that he’d be able to sense it from a mile away. He doesn’t remember seeing Harry as nervous as this. Aside from exams week, of course. Even then, Harry didn’t let his anxiety show. He smothered it with a comforting smile and too many compliments to the people around him.

This is a lot more different. He’s quiet as if he’s waiting for Louis to speak up first, which Louis isn’t afraid to do. He might say something wrong but that’s okay. Harry won’t judge, Harry won’t run away from him. The past six months have proven just that.

“I... um,” Louis stammers. Not a good start, but it’s the step that pads safely onto a stable ground. “If anything, I don’t think I want to be with anyone else but you.”

Harry’s eyes squint slightly as his mouth lifts into a small smile. “You really mean that?”

“Of course I would,” Louis says. “I wouldn’t lie to you about something like this. Something that’s about you.”

Harry’s quiet. He’s thinking. Louis’ heart’s jumping wildly in his chest. Even after so long of expressing how much he adores Harry, saying it out loud makes it so much more vividly real. Harry squeezes his hands and lets his cheeks puff up pink. Louis doesn’t think he’d ever be able to stop thinking about how cute he is, how gorgeous he is. He really does not want anyone else.

Harry, then, speaks ever so softly. “Can I say something?”

“Always.”

Harry slowly blinks at him, his eyes looking down to only travel back up, meeting their eyes once again. Louis feels his heart clutch, as if Harry has reached inside and squeezed a hand around it. He’d like to think Harry’s never given anyone this look. It’s only for Louis.

“I want no one else but you,” Harry says confidently. “I’ve never been so sure about something in my life and I know I haven’t lived all too long to know so much about life changing decisions or things like having someone for the rest of my life but I just know.”

To anyone else, he might sound ridiculous. And he does sound a bit ridiculous to Louis too but Louis feels the exact same way. This doesn’t feel like a normal conversation between two experimenting 18 year olds. This feels like adulthood. This really does feel like the biggest decision in his life, something that he’s so sure about.
“Did you want it to... be like-- Something more?” It’s one of the most stupidly obvious questions he’s ever asked in his life, but something he’s learned in the past five minutes is that it’s much more real when you hear it out loud. And he needs that from Harry considering his entire body feels numb with both anxiety and love.

“Only if you’re ready for it to be. I’m always going to be here,” Harry tells him, raising both of his hands and kissing Louis’ knuckles. “And if you don’t want it to be, then I’ll be okay with it. If you just want to keep doing this and then find out later on that you don’t want me here, then I’ll respect that.”

He shakes his head and pushes himself forward, sitting up on his knees to kiss Harry full on the mouth. Harry falls back to the mattress, hands gripping at Louis’ sides as if they were born to be there. Louis brushes his thumb over Harry’s cheek just as he pulls up from the kiss, smiling down to him and nuzzling their noses together.

“I don’t deserve you,” Louis whispers.

“Yes you do,” Harry replies. “Don’t think of yourself like that. I’m nothing special. Otherwise I’ll keep reminding you everyday that you’re good enough for everything in this world until you say it yourself.”

He wants to smoosh his mouth against Harry and stop him from talking and breathing. He’s so sweet it’s tooth rotting. He’s worse than the lolly snakes. He kisses him over and over with hard pecks that leave Harry’s face scrunched up in laughter. Harry grabs his face between his two palms and aligns their mouths together for a solid and wet kiss.

Just as Louis bites Harry’s bottom lip to kiss him deeper, Harry slides his fingers under Louis’ chin to tilt him away from his lips. “There’s more, Lou,” he says softly. The nervous look that crosses Louis’ face is nothing compared to what’s bubbling up inside his stomach. “If you’ll let me...”

“Of course.” He keeps their mouths close and their words closer, Louis feeling Harry’s breath hit against his lips and spread out to his cheeks. Harry’s lips twitch. Louis can feel that as their mouths brush slightly. It’s like something was supposed to come out but it got stuck in his throat at the last second. It feeds the worst of thoughts into Louis’ head. “You okay?”

Harry’s hands slide down to his arse, squeezing him and cupping underneath. Louis is nudged forward by the contact with legs spreading to have Harry between his thighs. He gives him a hard kiss again, lips falling open as Harry pushes his tongue into his mouth. Louis hums happily and accommodates to him by kissing him back sweetly.

His hands leave his arse and dip underneath the elastic of both his pants and briefs. His hands have never felt more at home.

“C-Can we...” Harry whispers into his mouth, his hips bucking up into Louis’ limp body. Louis makes a noise that asks Harry to follow on with his sentence. “I want you... like... I want you.”

It takes him a second to understand what he’s saying but when it clicks in his head, he moans and becomes even more pliant. He nods his head frantically, pushing his crotch down into Harry’s and rocking against his cock fattening up inside his pants.

“Yes,” Louis says quietly, a hand wriggling down Harry’s torso to lift himself up and sit upright. Harry’s hands shift to his hips when he’s sat up, a delicious smirk teetering on Harry’s pink mouth - one of both want and need. “Fuck, I-I... I keep dreaming about it, H.”
“Of you fucking me?”

“And being fucked.” Louis closes his eyes and tugs hard at his own bottom lip between his teeth. He pushes himself down onto Harry’s clothed cock. “Need to know what it feels like, so I can dream about it. And know.”

“Got everything we need,” Harry says as his thumbs press into his hips. Louis tilts his head back and sighs out, his two hands moving to the front of his jeans. He begins to fumble with the button and zipper, a desperate look written all over his face as he struggles to let his cock free. “God, I... Fuck, you’re gorgeous.”

Louis pushes down his briefs after he releases the zipper, pulling out his cock and letting it fall semi-hard against Harry’s stomach. Harry holds him at his hips, flipping them both over and giving him a small kiss. With Louis spread out flat on his back, Harry unclothes the bottom half of his body, leaving his cock free on his stomach and beautiful, silky thighs bare. Harry bends down and sucks a love bite into the side of his left thigh.

Louis takes off his shirt meanwhile, a flat moan coming from his mouth as the pain shoots up his leg and bleeds arousal into his cock. Louis wants to tug at himself but uses all his will power to stop himself. If he could come untouched once, he could definitely do it again. Harry would love that from him.

“Lou,” Harry says from his thighs. Louis whines in response, his right nipple between his thumb and index finger. Harry replaces it with his mouth when he crawls up to him, tongue swirling around and tip pressing into the bud. Louis has his eyes closed tight and mouth open when Harry whispers over his nipple, “I love you.”

His heart stops with his panting and his body seizes with his words. He opens his eyes and stares agape at Harry, lifting himself up on his elbows and reading his eyes. Harry just looks at him with a small smile on his face, nothing more.

Harry loves him.

“Is... Is that...” Louis trails off into his own little world of confusion, cock hard against his stomach and nipple cold without Harry’s mouth around the bud. His heart begins to race again, the realisation hitting him harder than a courier truck. Harry loves him, as in... Loves. Harry declared his love for him. Just as they’re about to have sex.

He’d be lying if he said he didn’t love him back.

“I needed to tell you,” Harry says quickly, no flash of regret crossing his eyes. Louis is glad. So glad that he shovels a hand into Harry’s hair and pulls him up to attach their mouths together in a messy kiss.

He’s got a hand under Harry’s shirt, helping him tug it off, as he whispers, “I love you too, H.”

Harry throws off his shirt and kisses him again. Over and over. They’re rolling on the bed like idiots, giggling into each other’s mouths. Harry starts feels too warm and too clothed, so he removes every other piece of clothing he has on and is left as bare as the day his mother birthed him. Louis has to thank Anne for raising such a wonderful man.

As Harry wraps his mouth around Louis’ cock, Louis mumbles an I love you down to him. The rest of his words are muffled by strangled moans that Harry only wishes to hear full and loud one day when they’re home alone.
As Louis gets his arse eaten by Harry’s lovely mouth, Harry presses three kisses against his rim, the words *I, love and you* being said after each kiss. It’s the first time Louis comes that night, even though Harry tells him to try and not to do as so. But Louis can’t help it. Not when Harry loves him. To know that Harry wants to be the only one touching him, to be the only one he wakes up to. That he fucking *loves* him.

Saturday night ends too quickly for Louis’ liking. He’s fucking out and so is Harry. The condom is tied off and thrown in the bin and they both clean each other off. They both sleep like logs with their strong branches intertwined in the most delicate of ways. Harry says he loves him once more that night. He’s said it a million times but Louis will never get over it. Because it’s an I love you for him. It’s only for *him*.

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An intruder gives them a rude awakening.

“Up on your feet, Haz. Andrew wants us down at the field for a match of a lifetime, and you--” Louis sits up in the bed, shirtless, and glares over at Liam racing through his loud and prepared speech. Liam’s eyes bulge out of his head. “Right... Um, I’ll... Sorry, I wasn’t told--”

“You weren’t,” Louis smirks over to him. Liam’s blushing incredulously when Harry also shows himself, also very naked. “So field then?”

“Shut up,” Liam groans, facing away from the two and hiding his face in the door frame. “You could’ve given me a better warning, Harry. Holy shit, I didn’t mean to barge in while--”

“We weren’t having sex,” Harry says. “Anyway, what’s this shit about going to the field? Match of a lifetime? Since when did Andrew care about playing footy with us?”

“I don’t know but I’m keen for it.” His face is still hidden from both of their views. Louis smother his laughter in Harry’s shoulder, biting into his skin. Harry slides a hand down his bare thigh and squeezes gently. “I’ll wait outside if you guys... want to finish up or--”

“You caught us *sleeping*, Li,” Harry clarifies. “But get out. I need to change. We’ll be out there in a few.”

He does leave and politely closes the door behind himself. Harry exhales loudly and presses a kiss into Louis’ temple, laughing.

“We’ve traumatised him,” Harry says.

“Good. It’ll remind him for next time before he barges into your room without a knock.”

Harry unfolds the covers from his lower half, stepping out of bed. He’s just as beautifully naked as last night. His cock is soft between his legs and all Louis wants is to put it back in his mouth and spend the Sunday with his favourite boy in bed.

“H,” he mewls, rolling over in bed and taking up the majority of the space. Harry looks back over to him from the drawer, already holding a pair of joggers. “You’re not really going to leave me, are you?”
Harry hums as he smiles, looking through the second drawer for a shirt. “We can do round two after, a’right? I know for a fact that Andrew playing footy doesn’t mean just that. It’s important.”

“How do you know it’s important?”

“Liam doesn’t just barge in my room to tell me someone wants to play footy,” Harry says, pushing the drawer closed after retrieving a light green polo. Louis frowns at him, unimpressed. “Lou, don’t look at me like that.”

“You said we’d have Sunday together.”

“I know,” Harry mutters as he walks over to him on the bed, slipping into a pair of briefs on the way. “It’s going to be half an hour maximum, alright? It’s only the park a block-ish away. I promise it’s not going to be any longer than that.”

He knows this shouldn’t be such a big deal. After all, Harry does have his own friends that he needs to spend time with. Harry’s promises are always kept. Harry will spend the rest of the Sunday with him. It’s just... Andrew. Why does Andrew have to appear out of nowhere. For God’s sake Harry said himself he hasn’t seen him in months. And why does Harry care about seeing Andrew for thirty god damn minutes for.

Too many questions. Louis knows Harry will have enough time for him later. “I just wanted to talk about something important, is all.”

Harry chucks on his sweatpants then falls to the bed. He creeps closer to Louis until he finds his hand, clasping their hands together. “Talk about what?”

“It’s...” Nothing important, actually, he wants to say. But it’s very important. Since last night he hasn’t thought about anything other than making this official, making them an item. It’s funny how he didn’t want to be exclusive in the first place, but it’s all he wants now. He doesn’t want Harry running away from him, even though Harry said that he wouldn’t. That he’d wait for him. “I...”

Harry sits on the bed. He’s not going anywhere anytime soon, it seems. “We have enough time now.”

“No,” Louis protests. “Liam’s waiting. It’s fine--”

“Anything that’s important from you is definitely worth letting Liam sit about for a few extra minutes without his mates. You’re fine. Pinky swear.” Harry locks their pinkies together. “He’ll understand, Lou. Please tell me what’s on your mind.”

He never thought asking Harry to be his would be as hard as it is. It’s a few words. A few words that struggle to even come out of his voice box let alone out of his mouth. He doesn’t need time to think about what he wants because all he wants is Harry. He just needs time to be able to say it in the right way.

“Is it something bad?”

Louis shakes his head and laughs nervously. “No.”

Harry quirks his lips up into a small smile, leaning forward to press his mouth in between Louis’ eyebrows. Louis nudges his nose upward to hit Harry’s chin. Harry pulls back, only to close back in to kiss Louis’ tiny button nose.

“I love you,” Harry whispers against him.
Louis giggles as Harry’s lips leave his nose. “I love you to--”

His last word is smothered by Harry’s mouth locking with his. The purest kiss they’ve shared since they’ve started seeing each other. Harry is something that Louis knows he never wants to let go of. Never will let go of. Even if he’s forced to.

“Be mine,” Louis says with their mouths still hard against one another. It almost gets lost in their kiss, but Harry catches it ringing sweetly into his ears and immediately freezes up with Louis wrapped up in his arms. “Don’t want to wait anymore. Want to be yours.”

A smallest thought flickers in his mind that Harry would say no, that they should wait to talk about it later. “Fuck,” Harry huffs. “Yes, holy shit. Of course. I couldn’t say no to you.”

He breathes out easily. Louis cups his hands around Harry’s broad shoulders and pulls him back, staring into his eyes and grinning proudly at his boy. Now actually his. His boy.


“Oh God,” Louis laughs, sliding his hands down Harry’s arms. “Boyfriend.”

There’s three violent knocks at the door before a voice shouts, “You guys fucking in there or something? Hurry up--”

“Liam!” Harry screams, Louis suppressing his giggles with two hands clapped over his mouth. “Just-Fuck, just give us a minute or something, twat.”

“I gave you two enough minutes. Andrew’s going to come over himself and drag you out by your ears if you don’t hurry up.”

Harry rolls his eyes and turns back to Louis grinning wide. “Pain in the ass. We should go.”

Louis’ eyes bulge with his eyebrows travelling half way up his forehead. “We?”

“Yeah?” Harry says in a knowing tone. “What, you think I’d just leave you alone while I go out and play footy. Please. We more than likely need someone else on the team anyway.”

No, that can’t happen. If he has to face Andrew and pretend to be buddy-buddy with him, his insanity will send him into the next dimension. He hasn’t had the courage to speak up about the Niall and Andrew situation to Harry just yet. It’s enough drama without getting another person involved, especially one of Harry’s best mates. Harry doesn’t know about it and he prefers to keep it that way. That is, unless Andrew’s said something and told Harry to keep hush about it.

Regardless, he really doesn’t want to face Andrew today. Or any day.

“I... Um,” Louis starts shakily, forming up a passable scenario. Nothing is drawing up in his mind. “I think I need to head home anyway.”

He’s unconvinced. Too predictable. “Change of mood so suddenly, Lou? What’s the matter?”

“Nothing,” he lies, his thumbs twiddling in his lap as he scans up and down Harry’s face. He can see questions forming in Harry’s throat. “Listen, it’s nothing. I promise. I really should head home. Mum might have an emergency call in or something and I gotta be home to look after Amelia.”

It isn’t really a lie, per se. If anything his mum would call up when need be and Louis could get
home within ten minutes. There’s silence between them. He’s hoping Harry’s not breaking down every bit of his made-up scenario to catch him out of his lie. However, after a few more silenced seconds, Harry nods and gives an ample smile to Louis.

“You can come over later,” Louis adds on. The smile grows bigger. “I’ll download a few movies and we can have a night in, hey?”

The slow blink Harry gives is followed by a small nod. “Love you,” he says with a kiss to Louis’ forehead.

“I love you, H.”

The clothes he finds in Harry’s drawer are much too big for him but he strides out of the room wearing an oversized Ramones top and skinny jeans that bunch up at his ankles. He shuffles out of the room with Harry in his hand, both coming face to face with Liam. He’s leaning on the corridor wall with arms folded, looking as unimpressed as he sounded when he aggressively knocked at the door.

“Finally,” Liam complains.

All three walk out of the house. It’s a shock to Liam finding out Louis isn’t joining them for the footy game, although he wasn’t exactly invited in the first place. But Louis would rather be anywhere else than within 50 feet of Andrew Martin. So he doesn’t feel as bad when Liam calls out to him asking why the fuck he’s getting into his car.

Harry answers for him just as he gives Louis one last kiss. Louis starts up the engine and drives down the street, Harry and Liam both striding down the footpath in the other direction in his rear view mirror.

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“Home so early?” is the first thing he’s greeted by when he walks into the lounge room. He drops his bag at his feet and smiles to his mum, who smiles back just as jubilantly.

“Yeah, Harry had a few things going with his friends,” Louis says, plopping on the couch next to his mum and stuffing a cushion between his arms. “So I decided to leave him be. He’s coming over later for tea, I think.”

She acknowledges him with a nod. “I’ll leave some money out for takeaway. I’ve got a late night shift tonight.”

Louis didn’t notice the TV gently filling the room with noise. He turns to see a mid-day news report playing, something about the economy or some shit. Louis could care less and is easily bored after five minutes of talk about the share market.

“I’m going to my room,” he declares, standing from his seat and collecting his bag. He throws it over his shoulder and treks up the stairs to find his sister exiting her room with a doll in her hand.

Louis smiles at her and crouches down with arms wide open. Amelia paces over to him and lets herself in the welcoming hug.
“Harry’s coming over later,” he tells her. The squeal she makes is nothing but unfathomable happiness. “Want to clean your room up for him? We can get pizza later.”

She pushes herself back and claps her hands wildly, giggling before running back into her room and softly clicking the door closed. Louis stands himself up and walks towards his bedroom, letting himself in and toing his shoes off one by one. He falls heavy into his bed and sighs.

A few seconds pass before he realises he hasn’t written his memory from last night.

Not bringing a jar with him to Harry’s was one of the biggest mistakes he’s ever made. Louis doesn’t let the mistake destroy his good mood. There’s a reason why the person who invented paper did as so in the first place. Louis would like to believe they, whoever they were, has the same intentions as Louis, jotting down their memories to last a lifetime and a half.

He rips off a strip and takes the sharpie into his hands, imprinting thick letters onto the sheet, the words bolder than the feeling of love last night. He stares at the writing for some time and sucks in a large breath. He’s never been more contented.

Louis turns on his heels and walks to the balcony, opening the door and--

What.

“No.” The piece of paper slips from his hand and is dragged with the wind over the balcony. His mouth falls. “No, no, nonono...”

His numb feet step into scattered papers and shattered glass. His tears join the rubble.

No.

Harry finds him balled up on the carpet in front of the balcony door. Then he sees the massacre in front of him.

“Oh my shit--” He covers his mouth with both palms, eyes stretching so wide they begin to tear up. There’s nothing holding his mouth up, jaw completely slack as shock hangs from it. “Louis-- Lou. Lou. Fuck, munchkin--”

“They’re gone,” he whispers from the ground, voice so monotonous it’s unrecognisable unless you see the mouth it’s escaping from. “Harry, they’re gone.”

“No, they’re there. They’re very there.” He’s so sure that he’s not helping the situation. But they’re there. The jars are still there. Just... a bit destroyed. Unfixable. He doesn’t know how to react. Especially when years and years worth of memories are now broken on the floor.

Just like Louis.

“Louis, they’re there--”

“I know they’re fucking there, Harry!” Louis explodes. His face is so red and glossy from the tears spilling over the rims of his eyes. They’re uncontrollable, just like Louis’ anger. His frustration. “They’re fucking there alright.”
Harry collapses on the floor with him, knees touching the forearm that lays flat near his face. He lifts a hand and hovers it over Louis’ back, unsure if physical comfort is appropriate. If it’s something he wants. He’s never seen Louis like this. As tormented as this. It’s like his soul has been taken from him and thrown in a shredder.

Who is he kidding? His mason jars were his everything. His soul has been taken from him and thrown in a shredder.

His hand grazes between his boyfriend’s shoulder blades as he whispers a gentle, “Louis--”

“Don’t fucking touch me!”

His face is completely lifted from the ground, eyes so magnificently blue and cheeks dangerously red. Harsh breaths are seething through his teeth, mouth wet and terrifyingly pink. It’s impossible not to find Louis gorgeous when he’s like this. But it’s not worth seeing him in this deranged state after realising the situation it takes to bring him here.

Harry tears his hand from him, a very challenging move to take forward, and stares at the boy wheezing towards the open door. Harry listens to him. His sobs come out as broken as the jars. Destroyed. In a million pieces.

How did this happen.

“T-They’re gone, Harry--” Louis hiccups and falls back down to the carpet, straining out his cries. Harry can’t bear to watch him so disfigured, but there are only a few things he can do. It’s watch and ponder. “Who would do this-- Why the... Who would do this to me.”

Harry stands up, eyes focused on the few papers littered underneath the insane piles of glass covering the balcony flooring. It’s like a river of broken glass washing its way over the entirety of the panelling. Harry knows just as much as Louis. Who would do this to him. Why would they do this to him.

“They were my everything. Why would anyone want to do this-- What have I ever done,” he rambles to himself, words muffled by the shaggy carpet. Harry keeps stepping over the glass in his shoes, the pieces crackling as he paces in circles. “I’ve lost everything. All my memories.”

Harry investigates as hard as he could, but it’s like shooting a bullet into the dark at this stage. He then notices blood.

Harry’s eyes widen. “Did you...” He doesn’t finish off his sentence, walking over to Louis on the floor and immediately checking the underside of his feet. An uncountable amount of glass shards have pierced his skin. “Louis!”

The way Louis shrieks when Harry picks him up could alarm the neighbours’ neighbours. Harry doesn’t listen to his screams to put him down, to leave him alone. He’s not putting up with the bullshit, not letting Louis swallow himself whole with glass in his feet and panic seeping from every pore in his skin.

He drops Louis to his bed and hears the next blood curdling scream leave his mouth when Harry covers his body with his duvet. It’s the loosest fit around his body, but it feels like four men are holding him down. As if they’re about to set an anvil on his chest. Harry’s touch has removed itself, however. Harry’s missing for a few seconds. Panic rises in his compacted chest. Louis fists the duvet in his hands and screams out Harry’s name.

Harry’s face pops up out of nowhere, and his voice rings into Louis’ ears as he says, “Munchkin, I’m
He is very much there. Louis feels so fucking numb that he can’t feel his heart slam against his ribs when he feels Harry’s hand curl around his. He’s never felt so pained in his life. Too pained to even let a good thing try and take some of the pain away. Harry’s every good thing and a little bit more. Louis can’t feel it.

“I need your feet, love,” Harry says to him, his other hand wrapping around his ankle. Louis stares at him through his tears, still feeling numb. Still feeling like every joint in his body has seized. “Glass everywhere, need to stop the bleeding.”

It takes a while until Harry’s actually able to leave the room without Louis screaming for him to come back. As hard as it is to understand, Harry does understand why Louis might be afraid to see Harry leave from his sight. It’s the fear he might not come back after seeing him like this.

Harry knows very well that Louis still believes that Harry thinks he’s a freak, which is beyond the case. Harry loves him more than anything in the entire world, and even if Louis didn’t feel the same way Harry will still love him and continue to do as so. It’s why Harry comes back with a water bottle, toilet tissue and tweezers in no more than a minute after leaving Louis alone. Harry hands Louis the water bottle and rips a few pieces of tissue to wipe underneath Louis’ eyes. He’s still hiccuping, still crying softly. He’s shaking and Harry knows it’s not because he’s cold.

He’d closed the balcony door earlier to save Louis anymore trauma. For God knows how long Louis has been laying on the floor weeping to himself. His mum called him half an hour ago to say there’s been a problem. Harry assumed a small problem - something easily solved with ice-cream and a cuddle.

This needed God’s touch itself to solve this.

He kisses Louis between his brows before shuffling down the bed to pick out every single piece of glass jammed into his feet. He uses the phone torch to seek out every shard, and it’s all a hard find. Louis doesn’t react to any piece squelching out of his feet and Harry’s unsure if the glass just isn’t painful or if Louis is really that numb to not feel anything. Louis knows it’s the latter.

Harry wipes Louis’ feet down with a wet tissue and covers his feet with a pair of fluffy white socks. He then lays down behind him and presses his chest to Louis’ back, an arm securing itself in the dip of Louis’ waist. Louis is very stiff under Harry’s touch. Understandable, but depressing.

Harry noses at the back of his neck. Louis doesn’t make a sound. “I love you, Louis.”

There’s nothing back from him, which once again is very understandable, but Harry holds Louis too tight anyway. He just needs to be reminded that he loves him.

Of all the memories he’s made with Harry, Harry’s his only living memory left.

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He didn’t realise they’d fallen asleep until he wakes up. Louis gone from his side but not too far away.

He’s sitting at the corner of his bed, back to the wall and legs up to his chest. He still has his fluffy
socks on and almost seems unnerved despite the situation they’re in. Harry props himself up and keeps his eyes on Louis, face still slightly swelled but definitely a tone paler from the aggressive red from earlier.

They’d napped for an hour, Harry estimates when he checks his phone. Louis still seemed too fragile to talk, too fragile to move. Harry decides to stay away from anything that could trigger another episode.

Louis decides to not follow Harry’s unsaid plans and makes it the first topic of conversation since the episode. “Only four people know, Harry.”

Four people know about the jars. Harry assumes it’s his mother, his sister, his best friend, and him - the boyfriend. All important people in Louis’ life. Harry loves him too unbelievably much.

“I know,” Harry responds back lightly. Louis pulls a face - one that can be pointed towards someone who was being ignorant. “Four people.”

Louis narrows his eyes at him. “Four people,” he repeats slowly, letting every letter drip from his tongue.

It doesn’t click into Harry’s head as fast as it should have. If only four people know, three of those people Louis trusts with his life and as known them much longer than Harry will ever know them for, one of those four people would have had to do something with the destruction of the mason jars.

When it finally clicks in, Harry widens his eyes and holds a dramatic gasp from coming out of his mouth. “Louis, you don’t think...” He can’t believe that Louis really thinks he can’t be trusted. Harry was with him last night, and obviously Louis would have noticed the jars the before he left for Harry’s yesterday. “I didn’t touch them.”

“I’m not saying you did.” But he is. What else could he be alluding to? “I’m saying you told someone. Didn’t you.”

What. “What? How could you say that?”

“Who did you tell?”

“I didn’t tell anyone!” Harry says, voice slowly raising by the end of the sentence. Louis doesn’t flinch. “Louis, I swore to you I wouldn’t tell anyone about the jars. I know how much they mean to you. I keep that promise close to my heart with another million promises I made and will make to you.”

If there were a knife in the room right now, he’s sure Louis would be holding it to his throat. “What if I don’t believe you?”

“Why don’t you, Louis? What makes you think I would go off and tell someone about the jars for? After five months? What makes you think I would tell someone who would then come over and break all of the jars for the hell of making you upset?”

Doubt crosses Louis’ face. Harry’s stomach sinks low. It’s not that Louis doesn’t trust him. He has no reason not to trust him. It’s such a big secret that he knows Harry swore to never tell. A secret that Harry’s kept dear to his heart beside Louis.

He just doesn’t understand how they’d break if no one else knew about them.

“Niall wouldn’t do such a thing,” he murmurs.
“I know, Lou,” Harry reassures. “Maybe it was... wind, or something?”

“Wind,” he chortles half-heartedly. There’s nothing happy about it. “You really think the fucking wind broke 50 mason jars, Harry? All of them? You'd want to fucking hope there’d been a hurricane in the middle of fucking winter that we didn’t know about for these jars just to fall down and break.”

Sure, it’s a stupid idea to bring up, but what, or who, else would have done it.

“There’s no one else that could have done it,” Harry reminds him.

He’s worried Louis is going to scan him up and down again, as if the constant reminder that Harry loves him and would never tell anyone such a big secret isn’t enough for Louis to trust him. Harry wants to crawl over to him and bunch him up in the tightest hug ever given but there’s a tough bubble between them that Harry feels bump at his chest when he tries to move.

Louis is silent for too long. Harry speaks up before his worries begin to eat at his feet.

“I love you,” he whispers gently.

Louis blinks at him before returning a soft, “I love you too, H.” Louis lets his eyes fall down to trace the wrinkles of his duvet but still continues to mumble his thoughts. “I’m sorry. I-I... I trust my family so much and Niall is basically my family-- and so are you. But I just know that sometimes people fuck up and I thought that you maybe told Liam or... Andrew.”

The pause before he said Andrew that makes Harry ponder. “Andrew?”

“Yeah,” Louis confirms. “Andrew.”

Louis shouldn’t make his hatred towards Andrew so obvious. He knows Harry can be quite daft some days, but that doesn’t mean he isn’t the smartest on the others. He hopes Harry doesn’t see into it too much and lets the suspicious talk go.

He doesn’t. “If I know Andrew well enough, I know that even if I did tell him he wouldn’t go around destroying the jars to see you get upset.”

Louis doesn’t know Andrew at all so Harry’s assumption is probably more than correct. Except, Louis does know Andrew. He knows enough about Andrew. He should stop there, agree with Harry. Except, he digs himself further into the small ditch he’s in right now, feeling his feet sink into the sand starting to turn into slick, dangerous mud.

“You obviously don’t know Andrew at all, then,” he claims.

Alongside curiosity, that sparks confusion in Harry’s eyes. “What’re you talking about?”

Retreat, he tells himself. You should really fucking retreat and pretend nothing ever happened and make Harry go home so you can cry yourself into a 17 hour sleep.

“You should go home,” he blurts out.

Harry’s eyebrows knit together. “Lou, what’re you talking about? What’s this about... Andrew? Do you really think I told Andrew and Andrew... did this? What has Andrew ever done to you?”

So he doesn’t know, which is a good thing. Also a bad thing because he can’t prove his fucking point without fucking up at least one more friendship in the mix.

“I don’t think you told Andrew,” Louis clarifies. “I don’t think anything.”
“Munchkin, I’m a bit of an idiot sometimes but I’m not that stupid not to notice when something’s up.”

“What do you think just happened, Harry? I lost all of the mason jars. Of course something is up,” he defends with the hope the defence will change the subject. He folds his arms over his chest to secure the point as a strong one. “All the memories gone. All of ours. All of my middle school--”

“What happened with Andrew?”

Of course he doesn’t fucking move around it. “Nothing fucking happened with Andrew, Harry!” Louis shouts at him, burying his face into his hands. “Jesus fucking Christ, you’re impossible, you know that? Can we drop it?”

“He’s my best mate. If there’s a problem between my boyfriend and my best mate, I should know.”

Louis drags his hands down his face and groans into the air. “There’s nothing to know, and even if there was, you don’t need to know everything, Harry.”

He opens his mouth to speak but closes it not too soon after, pausing his unthought words. Harry looks down to his lap before staring back up at Louis and sending over a look. Nothing to brash. Something that’ll hopefully soften their argument.

“You’re right,” Harry says. “I—I’m sorry. I’ll drop it if you want me to but--”

“Good, then fucking drop it.”

Something shatters in Harry’s eyes. Everything suddenly started to feel very light, very blurry. Louis focuses hard on Harry’s eyes and can’t see anything else but the guilt swell within the bright green colour. It’s like his heart has suddenly come up into his throat and is throbbing hard next to his windpipe. He might be choking. He doesn’t think he’s breathing.

Harry’s gaze falls down to his fingers scratching lines into the duvet. He’s trying to distract himself from talking, Louis supposes. Silencing Harry blooms guilt in his own chest and it spreads to his fingertips, his feet. It takes over his entire body quicker than a viral disease.

Louis shakes his head and also looks down, eyes trained to his sock covered feet. “Please,” he whispers.

There’s a faint cracking heard left. Louis thinks that’s Harry’s head whipping up too fast to glance at him. “I know, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have rambled on--”

“No, please just...” Louis shuffles close to Harry, reaching his hand out to imply he wants Harry to take it. “I’m really sorry. I don’t know... How to handle the situation without yelling, or something, or going off my head and taking it out on you. I only had mum when Nan’s jar broke years ago, Niall did fuck all and I don’t blame him. No one knows what to say when a crazy man loses 50 mason jars with fuck all memories in them.”

“Hey, don’t you dare.” He grabs Louis’ hand. Louis looks up and reads Harry’s frown. “You’re not a crazy man. And you didn’t just lose 50 mason jars, and they’re definitely not fuck all memories. They’re yours and they are a massive part of your life. You’ve had them for years. You lost them so suddenly without a blue’s clue as to how they broke, you have every right to be upset. If you need to take it out on something, or someone, go for your life. I’m here.”

Tears well up in his eyes but don’t spill over. The gentle glistening is spotted by Harry, so he reaches for the measures it takes to cheer Louis up. Only because Louis doesn’t deserve to cry, ever. Even if
he needs to cry, Harry wants him to cry alongside him just so he can be there to cheer him up afterwards with a million and one kisses and hours upon hours of hugging.

Harry scoops him up and land both of their heads on Louis’ pillows, digging his nose into Louis’ hair and kissing his scalp. Louis sighs and relaxes, although still remarkably tense. Harry doesn’t blame him and never will blame him.

“I’m sorry,” Louis breathes out tiredly. “I--”

“Louis, we’re going to find out who did this,” Harry promises. “We will find out. I promise you. We will find them, munchkin.”

He presses Louis close into his chest and kisses between his eyebrows. He slips a leg between Louis’ thighs, tangling themselves together too tight. However, it’s comfortable for the two of them. To be able to keep Louis warm and relaxed is comfortable. To be able to smell Harry is comfortable.

He doesn’t know how, or when, they’re going to find out who broke the jars. If there’s anything that Louis has learned from Harry is that he always keeps his promises.

All his promises are in his heart, right next to Louis.

::

The clean up is the second half of the nightmare.

Even after three days there are still remnants of the memories littered on the balcony floor. Louis can feel his sanity decrease the more he treads on the glass, letting every memory seep into the soles of his shoes. He walks over the memories like they’re worthless, as if they’re nothing but a disappointment.

Every time he goes outside to sweep the broken glass and papers into the dustpan, his eyes well up in tears and he runs back inside to hide himself away. Every attempt has been a failure. Every attempt promises failure.

He’s tried without moral support. He supposes asking for help isn’t that much of a problem. He’s always going to be a burden to Harry anyway. He supposes asking for the second set of hands isn’t as bad as having to deal with his ridiculous crying spells.

“But you want me to bring over anything?” He’d called Harry on the phone about twenty minutes ago. It’s only now they’re discussing the plan for tomorrow night. “I can get dinner if you want.”

“Mum should be home so we don’t need to worry about that. Thank you anyway,” Louis says, keeping his eyes down to the broken glass still in the same few piles as yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. The balcony door separates him and the mess. “Only need you.”

There’s a small chuckle from Harry. “All of me will be there.”

Louis hangs up when his mum shouts from downstairs that dinner is ready. He joins her and Amelia, steak cut into small pieces and fed into his mouth ever so slowly. He can see the concerned look form on his mother’s face and it isn’t until Amelia finishes her food before Louis that she questions him.
“Everything alright, dear?” While she hasn’t seen the trash bags full of broken glass come out of Louis’ room, she assumes that Louis had cleaned up the balcony without a fuss. If it had only been that easy. “You’ve hardly touched your food. Is it not cooked the way you like it?”

Everything about his mum’s cooking has always been perfect. “No, it’s brilliant.” He forks a piece of meat and puts it into his mouth to emphasise his point. “Just thinking, is all. Food’s not settling too well in my stomach.”

She tilts her head at him and places her cutlery down beside her plate. “Want to talk about it?”

It’s his mother for crying out loud. He shouldn’t feel uncomfortable, or even hesitate, to talk about what’s bothering him. It’s the jars. He knows well enough that if his mother was interested, or cared, about those jars she would have taken up her own mother’s tradition in the first place. There’s a reason why she didn’t want to carry it on.

There’s Amelia who knows jack shit about the jars. She’s four. When she turns nine, the age Louis was when he was given his first jar, he might tell her about them. Niall knows and respects the jars, as do Louis’ family. But Niall might as well be Amelia. It’d be a miracle if Niall could recite back to Louis why he had the jars in the first place.

Harry’s the only one that really knows what they’re about.

“It’s alright,” he says to her, putting his own fork down and pushing the plate forward. “I’ll wrap this up and eat it tomorrow. Thanks.”

He’s back up in his room with his head buried in a pillow. He’s sick of feeling so dependant on other people. Sick of being so dependant on mason jars. He can’t help it. His struggles aren’t going to be any help to him.

He’s sick of being alone, despite only seeing Harry yesterday morning, despite seeing his family all day today. He moves from the bed and visits his sister in her room, sitting beside her as she moves a car around on her carpeted flooring. Louis finds one of her dinosaur teddies, one of Louis’ old childhood toys, and starts making wild noises at the car. Amelia returns his calls with a beep beep! and runs the toy over.

He ends up reading her bedtime story from her supermassive collection. He’s halfway through turning the third page when he notices she’s out like a light. He shuts off the lamp and rests beside her. He’s sure Amelia doesn’t mind him crashing here for the night.

:::

“I remember this one,” Harry mutters, eyes down to the piece of paper held between his hands. Louis blinks over to him. “I didn’t know you made a memory of this day. I’m flattered.”

It was the day they’d spent at the football field a couple of weeks into May. Louis hums to acknowledge he was listening but silently scrapes up large chunks of glass with the side of his shoe. It’s not doing much else other than scratching the pieces along the panelling of the balcony.

There’s a soft sigh from Harry’s direction before two arms are wrapped around his waist. “Lou,” he whispers into his ear with his fingers tapping at his tummy. “What’s on your mind?”
It has just reached sunset. Louis loves sunsets. Though today reminds him too much of his grandma and her passing. Where the sky was as peachy as he was when they were on the beach. Tonight is too cold for Louis liking. Asking them to go inside and not finish the clean up is too much of an excuse. This needs to be done. Louis can’t hoard the broken jars any longer.

“I miss coming outside and seeing them. I miss knowing they’re going to be here when I wake up, when I come home, and I can check... I can look at everything and remember.”

He kicks a shard into one of the glass piles they’ve created. Harry’s arms tighten around him.

“I didn’t get to say goodbye to half of them.” Louis continues, head low and eyes squeezed closed. “I don’t remember what half of them were. And now I won’t remember what they were, ever.”

It’s obvious Harry’s stumped on what to say. They’re quiet for too long. The sounds of the trees and bushes rustling from the light breeze that travels throughout town fills their ears. Harry’s slow breathing is also too loud for his liking. But it’s calming. If Harry weren’t here right now he’s sure he’d be in his bed trying to swallow his tears. Not as if he hasn’t done that today.

Harry’s arms begin to slide away from his body, though, a hand remains on Louis’ right hip. “C’mon,” he says. “We have tomorrow to finish this up. Let’s go inside.”

_Bless him._

Harry guides him back into his bedroom with Louis close to his side. Louis stops them just before they reach the bed, turning to Harry and earning his attention with his eyes. Harry stares back at him immediately, a soft smile at his lips that makes his entire face glow.

“Would you like a cuppa?”

Harry nods. “I can get it,” he says. Louis shakes his head and puts a hand to his chest. “You can stay up here and pick out something to watch.”

“You don’t have to--”

“Sit.” Harry pats at the edge of the mattress. “I’ll ask mum about dinner too, if that’s what you were planning to do while you were down there.”

His heart smacks against his ribs when he hears him say it. He’ll never get over the fact Harry’s started calling her _mum_. Their relationship feels too unbelievably real now.

He kisses Louis on the forehead and whispers, “Rest your feet.” Louis drops to the bed with rough sigh falling from his mouth. “She told me you’ve been standing all day.”

“I haven’t,” he lies. Harry leaves without retaliating.

It’s like his mum couldn’t keep a secret to save her life. Despite the small dispute, he doesn’t mind Harry doing the walk for him. Though, standing around all day isn’t an excuse as to why Louis couldn’t have gotten the tea himself.

Louis knows he wanted to go down there for another reason. Not just for the cups of tea. Ever since the jars breaking, he knows Harry’s been talking to his mum. It’s a daily check up. He calls up every so often and asks her to check on Louis when he’s not around, in which she does by knocking on his door and intruding into his room once every few hours. His mum told him about it today, and Harry’s yet to find out that Louis knows about his call ups.
He doesn’t mind Harry speaking to his mum without him knowing. It’s the fact that they’re speaking about Louis. He doesn’t want to be the subject of attention especially when he’s perfectly fine. *Really.* Like really, really fine. He might be crying 50% of the time when his mum comes in to check on him but that’s none of her business. He needs time to himself, time to remember everything that he’s lost. His grandma, the jars... There’s way too much and there’s no one that’ll ever understand how much Louis loved both of those things. He could spend years talking, writing poem after poem, about what these two things mean to him, and no one will ever get it.

Harry comes back into the room five minutes later with two cups of tea. Louis doesn’t realise his brain had been completely flushed from thinking until he hears the bottom of a mug thud against the bedside table. He thanks Harry and scoots over so he can sit comfortably on the bed. Once sat, he doesn’t take his eyes off Louis.

He sips from his tea and mutters over the rim, “Don’t feel like watching a movie?”

He forgot to search for a movie. Great. “No,” he ends up saying. He wouldn’t mind a movie. It’d take his mind off a few other things. But right now he’s too tired to move and do anything other than just sit and breathe. “Maybe later.”

There’s a hand on his thigh no more than a second later. “Mum said dinner’ll be up in half an hour, tops.”

It’s a bitter silence for the next five minutes. Louis touches his tea three times. By the third sip, Harry realises he’s hardly touched it.

“Did I...” Harry starts. “Did I put too much sugar in there for you?”

The tea is perfect. “No,” he shakes his head, “it’s fine. I’m just not feeling tea right now.”

He asked if Harry wanted tea. He didn’t necessarily want a cup for himself. The gesture was nice, however. But he’s not going to force something into his body if he doesn’t want it there. Especially something as nice as this cup of tea which his sour mood can’t enjoy.

Harry’s thumb digs into his thigh. It’s a warm press against his skin. It’s something Louis never thought he needed until now. Harry’s touch is always something to look forward to, something that Louis can rely on to feel better. He doesn’t need tea, or a bed to cry on. He needs some part of Harry touching him.

Louis puts his tea back on the nightstand before flopping backside down to the bed. Harry’s eyes follow him.

“What’s on your mind,” Harry says.

Everything is on his mind but he didn’t mean for this one thought to slip out from his head. “I think I know who did it,” he whispers to the ceiling.

Harry blinks, confused and curious. “Who?”

Whatever was a secret before definitely won’t be a secret for much longer.

“Andrew.”

Harry narrows his eyes at him. His attempt to look unsuspicious about his random accusation is a definite failure. Louis looks at him before glaring back at the ceiling, nothing more to be said.
Until Harry speaks up, that is. “That’s out of the blue.”

“Out of the blue, but not unlikely,” defends Louis. He’s got every reason to think it was Andrew, and all of those reasons Harry’s got no clue about.

He knows Harry. Harry will listen to him and he will understand. He will support Louis and will find out that it was certainly Andrew asshole Martin who broke his beloved mason jars.

“Now I know it sounds absurd—”

“No offence but it does,” Harry protests immediately. “I stand by my promise; I didn’t tell him anything.”

“That’s not the reason why I think he did it, H. I know you didn’t tell him anything,” Louis reassures with a sigh. He sits up and draws his eyes to the duvet, looking down to where Harry’s hand is still on his thigh. “I should have told you last week...”

The slight pause confirms Harry’s taking his time connecting a few dots. “When something was up?”

“Yeah,” he mutters with a nod. “When I lashed out.”

“Is it something to do with him?” Harry questions softly. Louis tenses up as his fingers twist in the blanket underneath him. “Do you have a problem with him? Is that why you think he came over and did this?”

He decides to tell him the story that doesn’t involve him in it. It’s half of the truth and explains the majority of it. Harry loves him but Louis knows that telling Harry that he abused Andrew in some form will fuck shit up. Even if Andrew isn’t the greatest of friends.

“Niall and Andrew don’t like each other very much. Aren’t really friendly. They go to the same school.”

“Oh,” Harry murmurs. “Really?”

Louis wiggles on the bed to shift his weight, setting himself comfortable. “I was shocked when I found out too. Niall told me about him after a bit of conflict and that’s when most of it started,” Louis explains. “They got into a fight and Niall’s obviously said something about me being his best mate and... Well, Andrew knows me from you so.”

It takes Harry a bit to respond, but when it comes out it’s not what Louis was expecting to come out of his mouth. “So, what does that have to do with you and the jars?”

“What do you mean? It has everything to do with me and the jars.”

“No,” Harry says. “That... Whatever that was is Niall’s and Andrew’s problem. You have nothing to do with this. Why would Andrew come after you and do that to the jars if he hates Niall?”

“Niall’s m’best mate. If there’s anyone that Andrew wants to hurt other than Niall, it’d be me. To make Niall angry, he’d come for me because if Niall saw me upset about something, he’d be unstoppable until he found out who’d hurt me.”

He almost misses the small scoff that escapes Harry’s mouth. Harry certainly doesn’t miss the one that falls from Louis’ not too soon after.

“What was that about,” Louis snaps.
“You can’t seriously think Andrew would have any idea what those jars meant to you.” Harry folds his arms over his chest and glares sorely at Louis. “Not to the extent of how much I know. Or Niall. Or your family.”

He supposes Harry’s got a point, but, “Did you have to scoff at me as if I’m the most ridiculous person you’ve ever seen alive?”

“I didn’t mean for it to sound like that,” Harry softens. “You know I love you a lot and I told you we’ll find out who did this. But at the same time I don’t want you assuming things and making accusations with nothing to prove your point.”

It might have been a random point of a finger, but there’s literally no one else who would do this. And Louis has his points. They’re right there and Harry isn’t listening. Andrew and Niall, and if the real story is used - Louis too, had a fight and Andrew wants pay back. Andrew wants Louis to get upset for defending Niall’s arse. The real story makes a lot more sense. He should tell Harry the real story.

The situation is very unsteady. If Harry became bothered over Louis accusing one of his mates, sure as hell he’ll have a fit when he hears the true story.

“Agree to disagree,” Louis finalises with a sigh falling heavy to the bed.

“No. Not that,” Harry restarts. “I know you still think I told Andrew, don’t you.”

Everything would be a lot easier to figure out if Harry did tell him.

“How about dinner, then?” Louis cheers poorly, scuttling towards the edge of the bed to jump off. Harry stops him with an arm in front of his chest. “Harry, please—”

“I can’t believe this,” Harry mumbles with disbelief. “What made you... Why don’t you believe me? Why can’t you believe that I never told him. He’s my mate but you’re my boyfriend. You’re my best friend. I would never do something like that to you.”

Louis pinches the bridge of his nose. “I never said I didn’t trust you.”

“Your silence said otherwise.”

“Maybe my silence is just silence.”

“That’s bullshit and the both of us know it, Louis.” Shit. “And you’re lying to yourself if you say you trust me as much as you did before the jars broke.”

He knows Harry wouldn’t say anything to Andrew. Harry doesn’t believe him. If anything it’s Harry who’s making this entire situation more difficult than it needs to be. They could be heading downstairs for a lovely dinner right now. Instead, Louis is three feet deep in questions with no answers beside a boy who cries disbelief.

“I do trust you a lot,” Louis says.

Usually there’d be a small smile from Harry at this point, or something to acknowledge that yes, Louis is telling the truth and all’s good. Except, Harry narrows his eyes further and takes his precious time to leave Louis quiet and in the dark.

Finally, there’s words. “I’m not sure if you mean that...”
That’s it. He explodes.

“You fucking know what. You’re up in my face telling me that I don’t trust you and you’re making me saying all this shit, saying that I should trust you, when you don’t even fucking trust me when I say something. And I fucking mean it, Harry. I fucking mean it when I say I trust you. But no, you believe in fuck all I say and would rather defend one of your friends, who should I mention you’ve just started speaking to again, instead of finding any appropriate reason to support my assumptions about a possible criminal.”

“Louis--”

“And no, I’m not letting you fucking speak. Don’t you dare say he isn’t a criminal. He touched my things. Broke my things. He broke me. You’re defending someone that broke me. What type of boyfriend material is that. What next, you going to do the same as him? Break me too?”

Harry hasn’t moved the slightest. “I don’t need to defend you all the time. We can disagree on things.”

“We can disagree but not on things as serious as this. I need you there for me. I need you to understand where I’m coming from. But you’re not seeing what I’m seeing. You see a crazy man who’s still whining about some fucking jars and forming up ridiculous scenarios about who broke them. You don’t see me. You see that.”

“I see you. I’ve always seen you. You’re not crazy--”

“Fucking prove it to me, Harry! Prove to me that you’re not just defending Andrew because he’s your friend. Prove to me that you don’t think I’m crazy. Prove to me you’re not just here because you think you need to be here. Prove to me that you want to be here because...”

He’s frozen all over again. His tears won’t fall down his face, his eyes aren’t blinking. Harry’s just staring. Not doing anything but staring and breathing in the heavy and tense air. There’s so much in Harry’s eyes. So much that Louis can’t see what he wants to see. It’s a murky cloud of green. A tunnel of unknown.

“I can’t do this, H,” Louis shakes his head and finally blinks, letting his fat tears fall to the bed, “I really can’t.”

Harry’s hand is back on his thigh. Louis slaps it away immediately.

“Louis,” Harry frowns.

“I need to be alone.”

Harry’s frown deepens. “That isn’t a good idea.”

“No one else but me decides what is and isn’t a good idea. I need to be alone,” he repeats. He looks up and sees past his tears. Harry’s got disappointment written across his face. Usually his heart would sink to his stomach seeing Harry pull such a face. But there’s nothing tonight. “Leave, please.”

“Lou--”

“For crying out loud, just leave me the fuck alone!” He hides his head in his hands and counts to ten. By the seventh second, there’s the open and close of a door and the muffled thuds of Harry’s footsteps on the other side of the door. He’s sobbing to himself again once he hears Harry’s car
engine grovel miserably as it leaves the driveway.

:::

There’s three messages from Harry that night. There’s another five to tend to after he picks Niall up from the shopping promenade in the centre of town the following morning. He reads them but doesn’t do anything more than re-lock his phone and virtually kick Niall’s ass in the game of FIFA they’re enjoying.

He’d probably enjoy the game a lot more if Harry wasn’t in the back of his mind constantly eating away all the sanity he has left.

:::

_Have a cup of tea and have some time to yourself. Love you lots and you know it. xx_

“Harry again, is it?” Niall asks him.

“Hit the nail straight on the head,” Louis responds monotonously. He shouldn’t sound so bothered. It’s the struggle of having Harry constantly messaging him as if he couldn’t get him out of his head already. “I just need a day to myself. Is that too much to ask for.”

“I don’t know why you called me over here then.” Niall pauses to look up at him from the shattered glass underneath their feet. He knows exactly why he’s here. He’s the clown Louis has always wanted. Although, maybe not necessarily needed. “Am I a mushroom to you?”


Niall rolls his eyes and finishes his sweep up. There’s a small glass pile in front of his feet. “Got the last pile here. Want to sweep this one up for me?”

_Not really_, he wants to say with the largest of pouts, but it needs to be done. He bends down with his dustpan and brush and listens as the glass scratches along the wooden flooring into the plastic. He cleans up every last piece, every bit of shining glass that would sooner or later get stuck into his bare feet. He carries it over to the plastic bin and dumps the remains into there before turning around to see Niall resting the large broom against the fencing of the balcony.

It’s so, so bare.

There’s a small buzz from Louis pocket that both of them hear. Louis is about to fish his phone from his pocket but Niall slaps his wrist before scolding him.

“You asked for a day to yourself, mate,” Niall reminds him. He loves Niall a lot, he realises. “And now we’ve finished this off, let’s go for a drive.”

Louis forces his hands to his side and squints at his best friend. “Should I remind you that this “drive” you’re talking about involves using my car, which uses my gas, which costs my money?”
“Let’s get ice-cream. I’ll pay for yours if that’ll settle the deal.”

A tough deal to beat, even if it’s the middle of Winter. “You got me there, pal,” he grins.

“C’mon, let’s fucking go,” Niall motivates with a slap to his shoulder blade. Yeah, he really loves Niall’s positive nature. Or just Niall in general.

:::

The positive energy has an end, believe it or not. Louis certainly didn’t.

Looking at ice-cream shouldn’t be one of those things that makes Louis upset. Ice-cream makes things good. Makes the hot days feel cold and the cold days feel happier. It makes the children grin with messy mouths and those with a sweet tooth unbelievably content.

Louis stares at the vanilla and choc-mint ice-cream sitting side by side one another in the freezer and immediately falls silent.

“I'll take a scoop of that.” Niall’s in the background already have had three tries of the new nutty chocolate flavour and speaks with the taste spoon still in his mouth. The cashier does as asked as Niall creeps over beside Louis and waits for his order.

He has his cone in his hand as he licks happily at the melting side, asking Louis, “It’s on me, so don’t you dare get a triple scoop on a waffle cone.”

Ice-cream shouldn’t be so triggering. There should be a warning. Louis concludes there’s nothing in this world that’s going to make him not remember Harry. There’s nothing in this world that’s going to stop Louis from thinking about him, from falling in love with him more and more, even though he just wants a fucking day to himself.

He thinks he’s given up trying to ignore Harry where he stands. The truth is, he’s given up nothing, because there was nothing to give up to start with.

“Scoop of vanilla on a normal cone, thanks.” There’s a look from Niall. It’s the same look that Louis gave to Harry the first time he told him it was his favourite flavour. “He’s paying.”

Niall pays for both cones before they both walk out of the parlour to Louis’ car.

“Can’t believe I paid with my own money for you to get the most plain flavour of ice-cream. I almost feel deceived,” Niall speaks abashed. Louis opens the door to his side of the car, jumping in before licking up one of the sides. “Out of all the flavours, why?”

Niall doesn’t know the specifics behind vanilla. Louis decides to keep it that way.

“It’s not bland, your creativity awaits you,” Louis says to him, every word straight from Harry’s mouth. “Also, if you don’t like it get the fuck out of my car and find your own way home, twat.”

For the sake of not walking the forty minutes back to his own house, Niall sits like a good little child and shuts the fuck up.
When Niall leaves the front door of the house, Louis contemplates following him. Though, he’s glued to his spot by the door frame of the lounge and hears Amelia screaming from behind to join her in watching Pingu. He can hear that penguin bitch nooting in the back of his mind already.

He does join her because what other choice does he have. He can hear Niall jumping into his mate’s car at the front of his house as they take off down the street like idiots. He rethinks his choice about not letting Niall take his phone for the night when there’s the inevitable buzz underneath his arse no more than ten seconds into Pingu episode. Niall’s kept him well distracted for the past few hours to not check his messages. It’s all in Louis’ hands now to try his very best to not touch his phone.

He forgets that his very best isn’t exactly of high standard.

“Amelia.” She’s all eyes on the TV. Louis wonders if there’ll ever be a time where she isn’t TV-focused. “Can you do something for your big brother? I’ll make cookies with you.”

He’s surprised it worked. She blinks over to him with the biggest blue eyes and grins like the Cheshire cat.

“I need you to take my phone,” Louis says to her, handing over the phone to place into his little sister’s hand, “and hide it for me, but don’t forget where it is. Okay?”

She nods excitedly before immediately standing and running up the stairs to what Louis supposes would be her bedroom. He knew he could count on her.

He watches the Pingu episode alone despite having a mild hatred for the show. He ends up switching the channel to something more age appropriate just as his mum storms into their home from work. He leaves the TV playing and stands from the couch to greet his mum. She smiles and pulls Louis in to kiss him warmly on the cheek.

“You need help with dinner?” Louis asks her. There’s no other response to that than yes.

He’s panfrying beef as his mum cleanly chops up vegetables for tacos. As he’s tipping the cooked meat onto a plate, she asks about them.

“Everything all sorted upstairs, honey?”

Yes, unfortunately. Everything’s sorted. Everything’s gone. Bare. Empty. He supposes that’s how it should be.

“Yeah,” he responds dully. “Niall helped me out good. The glass is all swept up and everything’s in the bin now.”

And she asks about him.

“How’s Harry doing after last night?”

She knows about last night, and without a doubt she knows how Harry’s feeling because Harry would have fucking messaged her asking if Louis was okay. Because Harry cares. Because Harry loves him and Louis loves him probably a lot more but right now Harry isn’t something that needs to be on his mind. And worrying about how Harry might be feeling because of that is certainly something Louis doesn’t want to think about.
“Should be fine,” Louis says. He hopes his tone was monotonous enough to let her know this isn’t a topic that should be discussed. Especially on taco night. “Haven’t spoken to him so...”

“Why’s that?” Louis squints his eyes at her while he takes out the warm tortillas from the microwave. She keeps her back to Louis as she finishes off grating the carrots. “That’s not something I usually hear from you.”

“We’re having a break.”

“After such a short time?”

“We’ve been dating for months, mum. We’ve been together too much and sometimes I just need to stay away from him,” Louis argues. “It’s healthier for us.”

“You had a disagreement and obviously you’re not seeing his point as well as he sees yours.”

Louis groans. “He doesn’t see my point, that’s the big deal behind this. I don’t care whether or not we had a disagreement, I need time away from him and I’d like to keep it that way until school starts next week; when I’m forced to see him.”

There’s nothing more from the two of them. Johannah calls for Amelia and she races down the stairs to join the two for dinner. Dinner is rather silent other than the random rambles from his little sister. Louis is quick to finish his meal. All there is to do is drown his miseries in the shower and dive under the covers for an endless amount of sleep.

He’s fresh from the shower and ready for a good night sleep. When he slams himself into the bed he really wasn’t expecting his phone to drop out from the pillow sheet onto the carpet.

*Good hiding, Amelia.*

He can’t blame her. She’s four for fuck’s sake. He can’t help himself to tisk and sigh as he reaches down for the phone, unlocking it instantly. The next mistake he makes is checking the 14 messages Harry’s left for him.

*Still thinking about you. x*

*Hey lou why did the rooster cross the road?*

*To cockadoodle doooooo something*

*Yes, I’m bored enough to be sending you jokes*

*I love you a lot*

*Munchkinnnnn please respond before I lose my mind. xxxx*

He giggles. He’s charming and stupid, but Louis supposes he’s stupider for ignoring Harry for the past day. Today, he’s done next to nothing to acknowledge Harry’s presence.

Then again, there’s a reason, and a good enough reason at that, as to why he’s being blatantly ignored. He doesn’t know what it’s going to take to get him to speak to Harry unless he’s forced to.

Maybe that’s all Louis will take.

He reads the messages one by one and he knows Harry will be able to see the timestamp underneath
the read messages. He shuts off his phone and buries his head into the same pillow he cried into the night before, and the other million nights before then.

:::

The investigation continues on. However, as the days pass by, Louis’ own original notions about Andrew destroying his mason jars are making a lot less sense.

He wouldn’t mind to be proven wrong if there was something that could clearly justify that Andrew didn’t do anything. Harry’s argument against Louis was supported by wind. Wind that apparently broke 50 odd mason jars. Wind that was definitely multidirectional and attacked every individual glass jar.

At least his assumption isn’t as ridiculous as Harry’s.

He calls Niall because at this stage he hasn’t bothered trying to engage in any sort of conversation to Harry. It’s been days now. It’s a brilliant Sunday and school restarts in two days time. He’s going to have to face him at school whether or not Louis likes it, so he supposes the extra two days of ignorance might be worth it.

He’s outside on the balcony. It’s a clear day. Almost as clear as the balcony itself. He has a hand tight around the railing as he keeps the phone pressed to his ear, listening to Niall buzz about some rumour being thrown about at school. He really begins listening when Andrew’s name is mentioned.

“Andrew’s going to go off at school, I can only bet,” he says. “10 quid that he’ll schedule the next fight for upcoming Wednesday.”

“No more fights,” Louis sighs to him. “I don’t have anything else for him to break.”

There’s a soft, inaudible mutter on the other line before he speaks. “You really think he broke those jars?”

“I mean, who else could have?”

“Harry?” Niall asks. “He’s the only other one who knew about them. Amelia isn’t even allowed in your room and your mum knows how much they meant to you. Unless Andrew and Harry both did it or summat.”

He didn’t think about that. “But t-that’s... Logical? More than likely what actually happened? “No, that’s preposterous. Harry loves me and loves the jars as much as I did. He wouldn’t do that.”

“I know it seems like he wouldn’t but you don’t know. Like... what if it was an accident? What if--”

“I was with him the night it happened, Ni. It wasn’t him and Andrew that did shit. It was either Andrew alone or it was something or someone else that was barbaric enough to hurt me.”

There’s a extended sigh from Niall. “There’s just nothing we can work with other than the fact he wanted to hurt the both of us.”

“Exactly, and I can’t tell Harry that I had him by the shirt up against the car defending you either. It’s why he doesn’t believe that Andrew’s after the both of us...”
“Doesn’t that just complicate your situation?” Niall questions him. “He’d easily believe Andrew went for the jars if you just told him—”

Louis begins to pace back and forth along the balcony. “It’s his best friend. You know that.”

“You really think he’d choose Andrew over you? Especially when it wasn’t even your fault for getting involved in the first place?”

“How about we switch up the situation,” Louis says. “If you were Andrew in this situation and Andrew was you, and Harry was me, I would more than definitely choose my best friend over the boyfriend. Both of you may mean the world to me but catch me dead before I fuck up losing you.”

“Aw, sweet,” Niall grins. Louis can feel his happiness shake through the phone. “So, you really think he’d choose Andrew? We all don’t have the same motives...”

“I know,” Louis says. “I don't want to risk it. I’ve already lost the jars. I don’t want to lose Harry too.”

“Then you should really get back to messaging him.”

“He knows I need the time away from him.”

Niall chuckles. “At least send him a message saying you’re okay, that you’re still alive. I’m surprised he hasn’t tried coming over.”

“Me too,” Louis says. “He’s really understanding about everything, about how I feel and what I need.”

“Then why don’t you just tell him about Andrew? If he’s really understanding, don’t you think he’d understand the Andrew situation?”

He pinches the bridge of his nose. “I told you he lost it when I presumed that Andrew fucked around with the jars. The next time I see him I don’t want to mention anything about Andrew, or the jars, or how both things might coincidentally correlate to one another. I just want things to be alright when I see him again.”

Again, Niall laughs lightheartedly at him. “You’re a confusing man, Tomlinson.”

“As are you, Mr. Horan.”

Niall begins barking about how his last name is better simply because it’s spelt with five letters. It’s a debate Louis is willing to argue against.

:::

School arrives too early but the wake up time is even earlier.

It feels like it’s been years since he woke up at half six in the morning. He lugs himself into the shower and barely manages to not scrape off half of his face while shaving. He heads to school in something that makes him look like his outfit of choice was a last minute decision. He parks on the other side of the parking lot after seeing Harry’s Range Rover by the front of the school.
Here we go, then.

He decides to try his best to completely avoid Harry for the morning at least. He might feel the little bit better after form and the school assembly. He might feel ready enough to at least blink at Harry. Maybe not talk. But blink. Or breathe.

Some luck is on his side for the first few hours. He doesn’t see Harry but Literature is his first class for the new semester. His class is thrown into a new topic. Novel study this time. And Louis thought reading a play was difficult...

A class analysis of the blurb is all that’s done within the period. The school bell sirens and morning tea begins as students run out of classes and rush to see their friends. Louis can see the look of despair cross everyone’s faces. A look that could only be presented by miserable, anxiety-stricken high school students who could only wish for a longer holiday.

Louis knows that out of all the students that he passes in the corridors, his face is the most desolate.

His frown deepens when he reaches his locker. He catches eye with Liam and Harry both standing in front of the door with eyes directly on his sad body. Louis shuffles the rest of the way to his blocked locker not even bothering to try push past them to get to the lock. He stands before them, glaring with the deepest blue eyes that he could reflect upon them and hopes that they’ll just leave him alone for a few minutes longer. It’s something he needs.

Harry doesn’t understand him this time. Though, Louis can’t blame him. His body language isn’t the most radiantly expressive thing in the world right now.

“I didn’t see you this morning, Lou,” Harry says to him. Louis blinks slowly and keeps a straight face. “I was worried you weren’t coming in.”

Louis huffs lightly. It could have been mistaken as a half-assed chuckle. “Of course not. It’s school. Wouldn’t miss it for the world.”

Harry snickers gently at him, kicking his left foot out to nudge the tip of his shoe against Louis’. There’s something about Harry today that Louis can’t quite put his finger on. It’s like he’s tense but his muscles aren’t showing it. As if there should be veins popping out from his head to signify his stress.

“If you... If you don’t mind, can we talk? U-Unless you want this time to eat alone, I understand--”

“No,” Louis protests. “I have nothing to do.”

Harry smiles down to him before turning his head and nodding to Liam. Liam nods back and walks off. Harry begins walking in the opposite direction, asking Louis to follow suit, through the gaggle of younger students. They make it out of the main building and begin walking in the garden towards their main lunch spot. It’s quiet hold for the few birds that hum their melody from the right. And they’re alone. Just as Louis likes it.

“So,” Harry begins. “How’ve you been?”

He wants to say everything but fine because he doesn’t want to lie. But he doesn’t want to be asked about why he isn’t fine because he’ll end up lying anyway. He doesn’t want to tell him it’s the jars that are making him not fine. He doesn’t want to talk about the jars. He wants to talk about their relationship and he wants to maybe kiss Harry and have a granola bar to fill up his growling stomach.
“Half half. The week’s been kinda flat,” Louis ends up saying. Harry leads them to one of the benches. “Nothing’s been happening.”

Harry sits first, staring up to Louis who remains standing. “Do you want to talk about it?”

He shifts his weight uncomfortably, eyes gazing down to his feet. “Preferably not,” Louis murmurs.

“Okay,” Harry whispers. “But at least come sit with me.”

He pats the spot next to him only for Louis to take the seat without hesitation. Their knees bump together and Louis leans to rest his head against Harry’s. Harry finds his hand and folds Louis’ and his own together. Louis sighs softly. Nothing ever seems to feel better than being next to Harry.

“I’ve been so worried about you. You never replied back,” Harry reminds him. “I knew you wanted space so I didn’t try and come over just in case you didn’t want to see me. But I missed you. A lot.”

“I’m sorry,” Louis sighs.

“You don’t need to apologise for needing space,” Harry says. “I’m sorry for acting the way I did. It certainly wasn’t my best moment.”

“It really wasn’t,” he confirms. Louis’ eyes shift to their entwined hands. He contemplates letting Harry go.

Harry squeezes their hands together, afraid Louis would do just as so. “Tell me what you’re feeling. Please.”

There’s so much he’s feeling. He could let it out in one large burst and hopes Harry understands. But nothing fucks up more than word vomit. The silence he presents starts to transform into suspicion. Though Harry isn’t narrowing his eyes at him from what he can see in his peripheral vision, anyway. He understands that Louis needs time to think despite having an entire week to think to himself already.

Louis releases a stressed sigh. “There’s so much to say, H.”

“Try and sum it up for me,” Harry asks of him. “This can’t be one sided. I can’t have you bottling up everything. There’s been too much of that.”

“Too much of it,” Louis follows after him. Harry nods and once again squeezes their hands. “I just want you there for me.”

“And I always will be, Lou. Even through disagreements, through fights; I’m always going to be there. You can’t forget that.”

It leaves Louis quiet for a moment. “I can’t understand why you’re taking his side.”

Harry blinks at him. Harry should have expected the upbringing of this topic. They won’t get any closer to a solution if they didn’t speak of it. More so farther than where they are now.

“I still love you all the same. I don’t want this to be about Andrew. I want this to be about us. Alright? Besides, I think I know what happened to the jars, if you’ll hear me out--”

“No,” Louis silences him. “Nothing about the jars. I don’t want to hear anything about the jars.”

Louis takes a slow breath in and out. If Harry doesn’t want this to be about Andrew, then Louis can just maybe not make it about Andrew also. It might be easier said than done. If there’s anything he’s learned over the past few days with Niall it’s that he would very much like to not lose Harry as easily as he did the jars. He’d rather keep Harry where he is, love him as much as he’s grown to. Even if this jar situation never is resolved.

He’s always going to have Harry by his side. Literally. Who cares about the disagreements when Harry is by his side physically holding him like this.

Harry leaves him a soft kiss on the temple. “I love you.”

“I know,” Louis says.

“You don’t know.” Harry tucks two fingers under his chin to tilt his head to the right. Louis is forced to look. “You really don’t know.”

Louis’ lip quivers as he speaks. “Jesus, H. We’re only in high school. You make loving me seem so surreal.”

“It is,” Harry says. “It’s surreal being with you. I don’t want to lose what we have.”

“It’s been a few short months, you realise that.”

“I do know,” Harry whispers. “But something you don’t. You’ll never know everything about anything. You’ll know numbers, but you’ll never find the number infinity. You’ll know about history, but history lasts forever and we don’t. You’ll never know how much you mean to me because there’s never going to be enough time for me to say how much I want to say. You can’t say *I know* to an *I love you* because you’ll never know how much I really do.”

There’s nothing more to say because he’s right. Everything he’s said is right. And he loves Harry all the same.

“I want this all to stop. I want you to come over, for us to have tea, for movie nights...” Louis continues, unlatching their hands to wrap his two arms around Harry’s torso, leaning his head against his shoulder. “I miss you. I miss not having you.”

Harry cradles him in. “You’ll always have me. Whenever you want,” and with all Louis has got, he believes him.

Harry reveals himself as Louis shuts his locker door for the final time that day.

“Hi,” Louis greets. He slings his backpack over his shoulder carelessly. Why should he have to be careful anymore. There’s no empty mason jar ready to be picked up and be filled with a sweet memory. “Busy today?”

Harry grins. “Only if I’m with you.”

They walk out to the parking lot to Harry’s car. Louis comes forward with a plan to head to Harry’s for the afternoon to make up for lost time. The plans are sorted and Louis tells him he’ll follow Harry
to his in his own car. As he’s about to walk away, Harry grabs his attention and stops him.

“There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

The both of them know this something could probably wait until they’re secluded in Harry’s room. Louis knows the feeling though. He knows the feeling of keeping something bottled up for too long that it begins to eat at your insides. It needs to be said and if Harry wants to say it now, it’ll have to be said now.

“Sure, go ahead,” Louis encourages.

“It’s about... the jars,” Harry says, a hint of reluctance in his voice. Louis stiffens as he turns his head away from him, eyes darting to his own scuffed shoes. “I know you didn’t want to talk about them--”

“Harry--”

“I know what happened.”

It’s when Louis looks up. “What?”

“I figured it out. I thought about it for a while,” Harry starts. Louis’ attention is all on him, eyes gleaming as if the answer to all questions is at the top of Harry’s tongue. “So you know how that plank was just laying on the ground when you found the jars? I figured that maybe the wind made it fall from where it was leaning against the wall and hit the loose shelf. And like a see-saw, everything slid off and broke. But then the plank that fell onto the shelf also fell to ground and joined the debris on the floor.”

Louis shakes his head. “No, that can’t have been how it happened. The plank wasn’t on the door side. If it fell it would have fallen straight to the ground without hitting anything.”

“Are you sure? I remember seeing it leaning up against the window. Maybe your mum moved it or something?”

He can’t be sure. He doesn’t remember.

“But...” It’s not that Harry’s idea doesn’t make sense, because it really, really does, and it’s probably what happened. “So many of them broke.”

“Because all of them fell, munchkin.”

“I know that. But...” There’s nothing that can’t disprove Harry’s thought out answer. He doesn’t know where the plank was. He doesn’t know how windy it was that night. He doesn’t know a lot at all and he feels like he’s back at square one despite having possibly solved the mystery.

Harry blinks at him. “I think we figured it out. It wasn’t a who done it. It was a what done it.”

Harry’s smiling at him. He’s smiling as if Louis should be smiling at him. Smiling back. Louis tries his hardest to tweak some sort of grin back. But there’s something in the back of his mind that’s still not understanding how the answer works. There’s a sense of doubt that the answer isn’t actually the answer at all.

“Everything alright, Lou?” Harry asks him.

His smile shrinks then. He decides that letting go could be easy only if he makes it easy. Blame it on the wind. Blame it on the plank. Blame it on the poor excuse of a shelf he built when he was nine. If
Harry’s sure about this then Louis can be sure too.

He glances into Harry’s proud eyes before nodding hesitantly.

“Yeah,” Louis says. He’s not sure if he’s lying. “We got it.”

“All solved,” Harry whispers.

“All solved,” Louis whispers back.

In fact, nothing has been solved at all.

:::

*Everything is solved and everything is good.*

He tucks his head into Harry’s neck and gently nuzzles his nose into the curve.

“Cold,” Harry says. But Louis digs his nose in further and lets his smell travel up his sinuses. He’s missed his smell all too much. “It’s getting late.”

So it is. It’s seven at night and Louis is straddled across Harry’s thighs with his hands scratching up and down Harry’s back. Louis has told Harry he needed to be back home before six for dinner. Though, he’s sure Johannah wouldn’t mind the late arrival, or the possible no show.

“Yeah,” Louis acknowledges. “Too bad we can’t stop time so we can spend more time together.”

“Guess we’re just going to have to let time pass. We *certainly* can’t do *anything* to get you back home.”

“Definitely not. There is absolutely *nothing* we can do.”

Harry laughs meekly, hands brushing up Louis’ soft curves. “You know you’re the best thing that’s ever happened to me, right?”

Time does stop then and there. Louis lifts his head from his neck and glances at Harry with a sincere look. He kisses Louis full on the mouth, bruising his lips. Letting his words linger. To never be forgotten.

“Something tells me I should stay the night,” Louis says.

“That *something* certainly has the right idea. I’ve had an empty bed for too many nights.”

He snickers at his boyfriend and lets his hands slide around from his back to run up his torso and cradle his jaw. His thumbs press into his too-deep dimples from his too-bright smile. Louis also smiles, his eyes exchanging left to right as he watches how Harry’s mouth shrinks from its smile into a faint smirk. Louis traces his thumb over his bottom lip.

“Bloody gorgeous,” Louis murmurs to himself. Harry surges up to kiss him again with hands cupped underneath his bum. He lifts him from his thighs and twists them both to lay Louis flat on his back, Harry towering over him with mouths still sealed together.
Yes, indeed. Everything is solved and everything is good. Everything is a lot better this way, especially if he can still have Harry.

::

He’s cracked hard into studying, nose in the books and brain overfilled with useless information. His mother is over his shoulder encouraging him while she and Amelia make peanut butter sandwiches for lunch.

Harry decides to message just as Louis manages to understand something in this darned book of his.

Come over today? :D x

“I knew you were secretly texting under the table,” his mother accuses. Louis spins around in his chair so fast he almost twists his spine. “Do I have to take it away so you’d at least concentrate for five minutes?”

“What do you think I’ve been doing for the past hour?” Nothing, really.

She rolls her eyes at him before sending a disapproving look to her son. “I thought you were going to take this semester seriously.”

“It’s just started! I am taking it seriously! It’s just one message from Harry. The only message from him today,” Louis explains. The scowl on his mum’s face starts to fade. “Can I take a break for lunch now.”

She’s half convinced which is better than not being convinced at all. She lets Louis off from his study work and passes him his two triangle sandwiches on a plate. He begins chowing devilishly.

“So why’d he message you?”

Louis rolls his eyes, putting the sandwich down. “What’s it going to take to have a bit of privacy in this household?”

“Just wondering,” Johannah laughs. “Is it something that’s going to distract you from doing your work for the rest of your day?”

He begins to chew his food slowly. “If I say yes would I be able to go see Harry?” Her frown returns. Her eyebrows follow the downward trend. “It’s not like I’m going to get anything else done, so it’d just be a waste of time to stay here and pretend I’m doing something!”

“Why doesn’t Harry tutor you like he used to? You might as well get something done while you’re over there.”

“We do,” Louis, mistakenly, says.

“Like what.”

As he stands from his chair, he freezes up. He pulls a face down to his plate of food, unable to respond appropriately. Without a damn doubt his mother is suspicious, but she should be no more surprised.
“Like...” Louis picks up the sandwich plate and turns around haltingly. “Housework.”

“Housework?” Johannah repeats arguably.

“Yeah, housework. Like...” Coitus. “Dishes.”

“Dishes,” she nods. Louis nods back hurriedly. “It’s a wonder why you don’t do dishes around here too.”

“We-- I do... I do!” Louis says. “I do a lot of dishes here too. I do a lot of housework.”

Before blush could spread like a rash across his face, he excuses himself and runs up to his own room to finish off his lunch. He decides to message Harry back before a reply leaves his mind.

i may or may not have just told mum that we’ve fucked at each other’s places x

Harry’s response is quick.

YOU WHAT :O

The three dots reappear again as if they never left.

How in the living fuck did that type of conversation appear between you and mum? xx

i just told her we did dishes at your house! I don’t think she realised what i was talking about

You cheeky little ass ;)

Louis grins.

i’ll come do the dishes at your house in half an hour? ;) xx

God i would love to do some housework with you ;) x

Louis pushes his palm down to his crotch, biting his lip as he curls a hand around his fattening cock.

but Andrew’s over and he and i wanted to know if you wanted to come around for a footy game with liam and josh. xxx

His hand has never been ripped away from his crotch so damn fast.

His smile falls. Abort everything. Why in the hell is Andrew spending so much time with Harry? Why is Andrew encouraging that Harry should organise something with Louis? Why can’t Andrew leave Louis alone. Why can’t Andrew leave Harry alone.

A response was formulated in his mind 15 times before he manages to type out something respectable enough. Something that doesn’t pull the piss out of Andrew or asks if he could kindly fuck off. He thinks Andrew is putting strain on their relationship. If anything, it’s his fault for not wanting to see both Harry and Andrew at the same time. Louis just doesn’t want to see Andrew’s face anytime, anywhere, for the rest of his life.

i’m sorry baby i got caught up with something at home. mum wants me to do some homework because of my grades. xx

It’s not an excuse. It really isn’t.
Come around here. I’ll help you out after the game :) x

we both know that studying is NOT going to happen xx

He almost feels... bad. But Louis knows Louis best and he knows very well he doesn’t want to see a scumbag today.

I just want to see you at least :( x

I know i’m sorry :( maybe later you want to come around? xx

He picks up his empty plate and begins his trip down the stairs. Harry replies an “alright. xx” just as he places the dish into the sink. He’s let him down, but he’ll make it up to him later. Louis promises that to Harry and to himself.

“You’re going to wash that plate, aren’t you?” A sneering voice rings from the kitchen door frame. Louis spins around to see his mum grinning too wide. “I thought you loved doing housework. Especially dishes.”

Louis knows she knows that housework doesn’t mean housework. “Sure,” he says, reluctantly picking up a wet sponge.

He’s grateful for a lot of things in his life, especially his mum. He might as well help her out.

~

He falls heavy into the leather couch with the football in his lap, Andrew plopping down next to him with an aggravated sigh.

“Without a doubt one of the most fucked games of footy I’ve ever played.”

Harry agrees but doesn’t let it show. He pushes the ball from his lap and sinks into the couch further, feeling too lethargic to even breathe. Andrew begins to rant beside him about Liam’s shit referee job. Harry wonders if Andrew knows, or will ever know, that he doesn’t give any fucks about the game they just played.

“They’re good players. Would have been a good game if they didn’t fuck around with the rules,” Andrew continues. Harry hums. He doesn't agree or disagree. Andrew can take his response however he likes. “What’s on your mind?”

His eyes peel away from the space of air he was gazing into. “Why do you ask?”

“You’re sitting there moping,” Andrew observes. “Not usual for you after a game.”


“You miss Louis,” mutters Andrew, his voice so low and miserable it makes Harry sound like an idiot. “You can see Louis any time. You only see me on the weekends now. C’mon, don’t have a cry.”

Andrew hasn’t really been the best for support. Ever since him and Harry met. Harry should have remembered that before he said anything.

“You’re right... I—I’m just wondering why he changed his mind so quickly. Studying’s never stopped him before.”
“Maybe you just need to stop overthinking it.”

He’s right.

“Yeah,” Harry admits bluely. “So how about some lunch?”

Andrew agrees willingly with an eager nod, standing from the couch with Harry and following him into the kitchen. He takes patties from the fridge, which he specially made the day before, and cooks them over the pan as Andrew sits on the counter with his nose deep into his phone.

“Wanna help me out a little, mate?” Harry questions with humour high in his voice. For once, he’d love to be joking.

Andrew jumps off the counter as his eyes roll. Harry could sense that from a mile away. He heads over to the pantry, still nose deep into his phone, and takes out the buns. He begins to snicker viciously as he closes the pantry door.

“Oh God,” Andrew splutters.

“Another one of those stupid videos on Facebook you like to tag me in?”

“No, no.” Andrew settles with the laughter. He places the buns on a chopping board before creeping up beside Harry by the stove. “There’s this kid at school who loves making an absolute twit out of himself. He’s come up on my newsfeed again.”

“Sounds great,” Harry murmurs with little interest.

Andrew furrows his eyebrows. “No, you don’t understand. He’s a douchebag. Thinks highly of himself. Tucks his shirt into his pants.” Andrew shoves the phone into his face. He sees a photo of blonde boy wearing a tux, holding a guitar in his right hand. Looks like a church boy. Only to realise it’s-- “Niall Horan. Heard of him?”

This is Louis’ best friend. “Yes, heard of him.”

“Fuck, he’s a dick, isn’t he?”

“He’s Louis’ best friend.”

Andrew moves the phone from Harry’s face, sneering. “Yeah, I know. As much as I like Louis, I can’t fucking stand Niall. Louis protects him like a mother to her child. It’s fucking ridiculous.”


“Little does he know I have the best dirt on him. He’s going to have the hardest time when I tell everyone.”

Harry knits his eyebrows and angles his body towards Andrew. He sets his spatula down before saying, “I get there’s a feud but... You know, we’re seniors. Don’t act like someone from middle school. That was fun and games.”

“Didn’t know senior year was going to turn you so much into an overdramatic parent.”

“I’m... I’m not! It’s just stupid. Rumours aren’t a way to make someone feel bad for being a dick. Maybe they’re just a dick because they have a hard time?”

“You’re too kind sometimes, Styles,” Andrew snarls. “It’s only a rumour when it may or may not be
true, but you know what. These very eyes have seen one of the most absurd things done by any human being. I bet you’ll even be shocked.”

“You sound a lot like those clickbaiting ads on Facebook now. I think you need some time away from it.”

“Are you interested?” Andrew urged. “I know you like dirty little secrets.”

He picks up the spatula and tends to his patties again. “I’m really not keen, Andrew.”

“C’mon,” he moans. “Just because he’s Louis’ best friend doesn’t mean anything. You don’t need to tell Louis. I’d rather you not tell Louis, actually. But it’s--”

“Seriously, is there any need to tell me?”

“I just need to tell someone! It’s itching me.”

“Andrew, I’m not--”

“He has jars!” Andrew shouts with a cackle. “Fucking 50 odd mason jars, Harry!”

Harry stills immediately. Niall could have jars too. He could have 50 jars too.

“What.”

“I know, right? I was going to egg Niall’s window one night. Don’t kill me for it. It’s all banter. No cars were in the driveway so it was the perfect time. I saw as I went up the balcony he had jars and... Holy fuck. Things like “first day of middle school” was labelled on these fucking jars. It was one of the most fucked up things I’ve ever seen!” Andrew laughs maniacally. “So you know what I did instead?”

He hesitantly turns to Andrew with his eyes narrowed and jaw clenched harder than his fists.

“What.”

“I broke the jars.”

~

There’s an urgent knock or two or fifty at his front door. It’s alarming.

He hears his mum screaming from the living room to shut up the knocking as quickly as he could. He grumbles as he runs down the stairs, dashing towards the door to silence the person on the other side once and for all.

He swings open the door to reveal a panicked looking Harry.

“H,” Louis gasps, creaking the door open further and stepping aside. “What are you--”

He swoops in, holding Louis at the hips, and giving him a hard kiss on the mouth. Then another one. Then another. He kisses him five times before pulling back and letting the confused boy breathe. But Harry doesn’t let him speak a word.

“Your room,” he whispers hurriedly, clutching both of Louis’ hands between his own. “Important. So, so important.”

That’s where they go.
Harry shuts the door behind them after Louis shuffles along the carpet. He stands in the middle of his room with his hands in his pockets. Perplexity has never struck him so hard.

“What is this?” Louis finally says.

Harry begins to pace over to him. “You were right,” he tells. Their hands come together again. This time they’re laced. “He did it. You were right.”

His confusion isn’t subsided but fuelled. “What? Right about what?”

“Andrew,” Harry says. “He admitted it. He did it.”

It. Andrew did it.

“I...” Louis gapes. Harry nods slowly at him as Louis breathes in the new info. “He... He said he did it?”

“Yes. He told me. Straight out he told me.”

He might pass out but Harry’s touch is keeping him upright, keeping him breathing. He blinks and looks over Harry’s shoulder, through the balcony window where it’s empty. Then he notices the plank still standing up against the window. It wasn’t the plank that cleared years worth of memories. It was Andrew.

“It was really him...” Louis whispers to himself.

Harry’s hands unlatch from his and settle on his shoulders. “Lou, I’m so sorry. If I’d known... and obviously I didn’t,” Harry apologises. “Fuck. I feel like such a fool. I should have listened to you, asked him about it at least.”

“You were protecting a friend, I understand.”

Harry smiles so tentatively at him that Louis wonders if Harry’s supposed to be smiling. “You understand a lot of things,” Harry tells him. “And I really love you for that. For understanding. For not shouting I told you so and throwing me out.”

“Never said I wouldn’t say I told you so,” Louis chuckles. Harry laughs along with him. “How did you find out?”

“He brought up Niall and talked about the feud they have going on. He then said he went to his house, climb up with a ladder and found the jars. What he didn’t realise, until I told him later, that it was actually your house. You live here. That was about the time I threw him out of mine and told him to fix himself up.”

Louis gawks. “How the living fuck did he confuse our houses?”

“He followed the both of you home one day, obviously thought this was Niall’s house,” Harry explains. “The same day you and Niall got pretty handsy with him at one of the parks.”

Louis shrinks into his shoulders. His gaze falls down to the carpet as he looks at his feet for answers. He had to find out at some point, he guesses. He’s glad it was after everything had been sorted out. Sorted out for the better.

Still doesn’t remove the fact Louis attacked one of Harry’s best friends. “Yeah...” Louis replies awkwardly. “About that.”
“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I was protecting my best friend, H. I’m sorry, it got way out of hand. He shouldn’t have acted like a cock towards Ni, or me. It was an act of defence for someone who didn’t deserve to be hurt.”

Harry pulls a grimaced face. “I don’t want you getting hurt or involved. I don’t condone any sort of physical violence, you know that.”


Harry’s hands slide down his forearms and curl around his wrists. Louis traces the movement with his eyes. Harry steps forward and presses a soft kiss into his hair, nuzzling his nose deep and breathing in. Louis sighs.

“He was so proud of himself for breaking the jars, you know? He was so happy that someone’s possessions were destroyed,” Harry grovels into his hair. “I can’t believe he did this to you. He was just... fucking happy.”

“I can see why,” Louis says.

“It’s so illegal.”

Louis breathes out a laugh. “You know I won’t take any action against it, as much as he did ruin my things,” he says. “The jars did mean the world to me, but it wouldn’t have happened unless it was supposed to. My grandma always said some things happen for the better. And as much as these jars were my everything, my better, I think them breaking did me some good.”

Harry lifts his head away from Louis’ hair and glares at him absurdly. “Munchkin, you can’t--”

“I can,” Louis whispers. “Grandma’s up there thinking of me as much as I am thinking of her. She wouldn’t have allowed this unless she wanted it to happen.”

“You can’t let go of her tradition,” Harry stressed. “You said yourself she wanted you to keep this going because mum didn’t. She wants you to capture everything you can get, everything that makes you happy. She wants you to hold those jars dear to your heart and hand them down to your children, your grandchildren.”

“H, but--”

“You can’t let this go because all of them are gone. You can’t give up on something after working so long on it. You have the rest of your lifetime to build this up again. To build up your collection. In fifty years time you’ll hand your first, new jar from not-too-soon after now to your grandchild. You’ll say the exact same words your nan said to you when she first gave you her jar.”

You see this jar here. This is the jar I used when I first met your Grandpa.

Louis frowns, but Harry lifts his chin back up with two fingers and kisses him warmly on the mouth.

“Please don’t let this go,” Harry whispers. Louis stares at him, stares into his soul. He sees butterflies within a meadow of bliss and hope. “These jars are just as unique and wonderful as you. They hold a special place in my heart too and I don’t want you to lose something that’s been in yours for far too long.”

Who is he. Who is he to think that he could give up something his grandma wanted him to pass on
for her. Who is he to say that because this has happened that he shouldn’t try again, that he shouldn’t start over. Where did this Louis come from.

He loves Harry far too much. Far, far too much.

“I could never let you down,” Louis mumbles.

“If you wanted to stop, you won’t let me down. You’d never let me down,” Harry says. “Not even your grandma would be let down. She loves you. I just don’t think you should stop for something as silly as Andrew. I want you to follow your grandma’s footsteps. Live a long life with someone you love and keep the memories for as long as possible.”

Louis smiles softly and gives a solid nod. “I will,” he says. “A long life with someone I love. With the jars.”

They stare into each other’s eyes. There’s no better thing to do. To look into the eyes of someone you love and ponder about how much of them you have in your hands. Your entire world in your very two hands, right in front of you. Someone who is supportive, who will never be let down because of you. Someone who puts you before themselves...

“Now,” Harry speaks. “Do yourself and I a favour, alright?”

Louis simpers. “Sure.”

“Say I told you so.”

Louis barks out in wild laughter, head thrown back as his hearty laugh fills the room. “I don’t think I can do that, H. You didn’t know and you had every right to defend Andrew--”

“I didn’t, and you know that,” Harry grins. “Now say I told you so.”

With a half-hearted roll of his eyes, Louis drawls out, “I told you so.”

“And what did you tell me, munchkin?”

“That Andrew broke the jars. Not the wind, not the plank. It was all Andrew, and you didn’t believe me because you’re a silly dick and--”

“Alright you.” Harry charges into him, arms around his torso as he lifts him high from the ground. He flips Louis over his shoulder, listening to the giggly shouts from behind as he rampages to the bed. “That’s quite enough from you.”

Louis bundles Harry’s shirt in his two hands. “Let me go, you bastard!”

“But what if I didn’t,” Harry sneers. “What if I carried you around like this for the rest of the afternoon. No one could do anything about it. And I’d tickle your little feet like this.”

Harry does the unthinkable. He also gets hit in the face with Louis’ left foot but that was basically asked for. He settles Louis down to the bed, watching his laughter grow when Harry rubs at his hardly-wounded cheek. Harry prowls at him.

“You’re a sadist for laughing at my pain.”

“Tickling me promises a punch in the face, you know that very well from me,” Louis says. Harry jumps to the bed, landing beside Louis and pulling him in at his hips roughly. Louis squawks. “I like it rough.”
“I know you do.”

His heart swells. And so does his dick. “Does this mean you’re staying the night then?”

“I guess so,” Harry confirms. “I mean, is there a choice? That door looks to be very much locked and there’s definitely no other escape. This bed is also very comfy and I have a very gorgeous boy next to me that apparently has a half hard dick–”

Louis slaps his mouth shut. “I hate you.”

“But you kind of really don’t,” Harry babbles happily. “And I kind of really don’t hate you too.”

Louis replaces his hand with his mouth and that’d have probably been one of the best decisions he’s ever made.

:::

“Will there ever be a time I’ll forget what you said?” His mum asks him, her tone knowingly and high with humour. “I think that’ll be a no. Looks like you’ll be doing your fair share of housework for the rest of your life.”

He very much regrets saying anything about how much he loves housework. And even if his mum knew last month’s conversation wasn't about housework at all, she still uses it as an excuse to get Louis to clean the house left and right.

It leaves Louis feeling outright embarrassed every time she asks him to do the dishes.

Louis groans miserably. “Harry’s going to be here any minute.”

“Best be hurrying up putting away those plates then, darling,” Johannah snickers. “Surely Harry doesn’t want to join in on the housework now, does he.”

So. Fucking. Embarrassing.

The final dish is put away, and so are the rest of his mother’s cheeky remarks. Just as he races up the stairs to change into a pair of jeans, his phone chimes Harry’s special ringtone. It’s a message from him.

At the front door. xx

Usually he’d knock and his mum would answer and let him through. Sometimes he’d let himself through. Johannah has said an exceptional amount of times that she’d be glad to get a house key cut for him whenever he wanted to stay. Louis and Harry had both agreed as much as they’d stay over each other’s houses they’re sure they didn’t need another key to be lost between them.

House keys might also be a little extreme at this stage of their relationship.

Louis buzzes down the stairs and slides to the front door, opening it up to conveniently find Harry in his all too pretty white button up and the usual black pair of skinnies. He’s sporting a large duffel bag over his shoulder which he carries up to Louis’ bedroom easily. Louis sits down on the bed. His relaxation time is cut short when Harry tells him to stand back up again.
“Balcony,” Harry says. “I found something outside and I know we can see it from your balcony.”

He’s on his feet in two seconds flat and shuffling out to the balcony. It’s still as empty as he remembers it. The jars are a distant memory now. They fade from his mind more and more each day. He knows he’s not trying. He knows Harry wanted him to keep the tradition. He knows he could keep it up for his grandma. Harry motivates him more and more each day. There’s been no excuse as to why the balcony is still empty other than the fact he’s lazy and has spent so long not collecting memory after memory. He’s gotten used to it.

Harry takes his time stepping onto the balcony. Louis is on his tip toes, leaning on the railing, looking left and right for this mysterious something Harry was talking about. There is a tap on Louis’ shoulder which almost surprises him.

“I got something for you.”

He spins around just as Harry pulls it out from behind his back. A plain, clean, capped mason jar.

He covers his mouth with both of his hands gawking at the precious gift. Something comes out of his throat. It’s not a word. It’s a squeak. A squeak of happiness. His heart is slamming so hard against his ribs and he tries to blink away the inevitable tears that begin to well up at the rim of his eyes.

Harry takes his hand and places the small jar in his palm. Louis’ hand curls around it as if it belongs there. He hasn’t felt this in two months. He hasn’t had a jar in his hand in two months.


It’s beautiful. So pure. He hasn’t felt like this since he was nine, since he was given his first jar by someone he very much loved. Someone dear to his heart.

Harry gave him his first jar. His first jar for the new beginning.

“Holy fuck-- I-I...” He’s lost for words. Only because there’s nothing more that needs to be said. His emotions say it all. How happy he is. How grateful he is for Harry’s existence. How unbelievably happy he is and will always be as long as Harry’s there. “It’s beautiful.”

“Just like you.”

Louis looks up to him and laughs through his tears, wiping them away gently with the back of his hand. He glances back down to the jar in his hand, inspecting it. It’s got a lovely silver rim and the glass is so clean Louis knows he’ll have a hard time marking it with a sharpie later on in the day.

But what memory will he capture first? Capture for the new beginning?

“Now we have to go on a date so we can use this,” Louis smiles.

“Well, that’s good then,” Harry says. “Already got something planned for us, believe it or not.”

“You did not.”

“You see, munchkin, I’m pretty brilliant.” Louis knows he’s taking the piss out of himself. But Louis can’t argue with the fact that he’s very brilliant and that he’s very in love with this brilliant man.

After a small kiss they leave the balcony. Harry tells him to pack a change of warm clothes and to meet him downstairs once he’s done. Louis follows orders, rushing down the steps to meet Harry outside after giving his mum a warm kiss on the cheek goodbye. He sees him loading up the
back of his Range Rover. Louis can see the mattress in the back once he’s by the passenger door.

He jumps into Harry’s car, resting his change of clothes on the floor and keeping the mason jar in his lap. He buckles himself up as Harry revs the engine, reversing onto the road and beginning to drive the scenic 15 minutes to the lake they had once caught a memory at before. The trip is mainly silent minus the soft music playing through the sound system.

The lake hasn’t changed one bit since they’ve been here. He’s sure Harry marked the exact location of where they were parked before because the view is exactly the same from where they sit on the mattress. The murky water, the trees that reach far and beyond, and the clouds that aren’t too aggressively grey but might bring a shower or two later in the night. Everything is picturesque and perfect. Just like the first time they were here.

It’s close to 5 in the afternoon when Harry brings out a picnic dinner, spreading out the four plates of food between them to share. There’s chicken still warm to the touch and a nicely made potato salad that Louis knows he’s had too much of once he’s stopped. His full tummy doesn’t rest, however, because Harry brings out ice-cream. A pint for Louis and a pint for himself. Vanilla and choc-mint, of course.

Louis eats more of the vanilla than he does his own pint.

The sun’s down by the time they’ve cleaned up their dinner and dessert, stretching out on the mattress and staring up to the car’s ceiling. There’s a small tap in the middle of Louis’ palm just as he closed his eyes. He opens them and stares at Harry.

“Can’t last ten seconds without touching me, can you.”

“Change that to five seconds and you would have got that right on point,” Harry admits proudly.

Louis giggles, rolling onto his side with his eyes still trained on Harry’s temple. “We should do something.”

He’s more than happy to admit out loud that this something is alluding to sexual deeds. They’re out of the house, alone, and Louis is always going to be a horny teenage boy who can’t get enough of Harry. He begins running a finger up and down Harry’s bicep, tickling him more so than caressing him gently. However, it sparks a reaction out of Harry.

“Yeah we should!” And Louis gets all too excited. Emotionally and physically. “Let’s do some origami. I have paper stashed in the glove box!”

Louis freezes. “Let’s what.”

Harry’s already on his feet, reaching over the back of the passenger seat to open the glove box. Looks like he wasn’t joking because he pulls out approximately 50 different coloured sheets; some patterned, some solid colours. He sets the papers down in front of Louis and himself, merrily cheering to him as he chooses the yellow coloured paper and begins to fold.

Who the fuck is his boyfriend.

Still, he’d show Harry to the world and proudly say he’s his boyfriend. If he had the world’s attention for a minute, he’d ramble about how much he adored Harry and how happy he makes him. He’s talk about how kindhearted he is, how unbelievably random he may be. They could be having sex, but instead, they’re folding sheets of paper into cranes instead.

“What’s that thing that’s believed by millions of people in the world?” Louis questions. He continues
to follow Harry’s steps into folding a paper crane while he talks. “The one where you fold a thousand of these and you get a wish?”

“We should do it,” Harry says, completing his second crane. “See if it’s true. We could wish for anything in the world.”

“Yeah, we could.” Louis completes his first crane and adds it into the small pile Harry has made. “Anything in the world.”

They’re silent as they begin to fold the next pieces of paper they’ve chosen from the pile. Paper folding is a relaxing sound against the rippling waves of the lake. It’s a new sound Louis thinks he’ll come to love.

“What would you wish for?” Harry asks.

It’s nothing new. He’s sure he’ll say this for the rest of his life. He’ll ask for it for the rest of his life and one day he’ll get his wish.

“I would love to see my grandma one last time,” Louis says to him. “To give her one last kiss on the cheek goodbye, to thank her for what she’s given me. To thank her for always watching over me.”

There’s a hand that stops Louis from folding for a moment. He looks up to see Harry smiling right at him, his hand curling around Louis’ fingers and holding him warm. His eyes are so green. So green that Louis forgets that any other colour existed. None of the coloured papers in front of him are anything compared to Harry’s eyes. They’re always going to be his favourite.

“Well, we have 997 more cranes to go,” Harry whispers.

They stop at about twenty only because Louis’ hand hurts and Harry massages it until it doesn’t anymore. Louis can see the moon rise up above them lighting up their surroundings like Harry would on a bad day. As Harry kisses the back of his hand, Louis reaches behind him for the jar he had given to him.

It’s time for a new beginning.

Louis takes one last look at the jar. He looks at it hard and thinks about it. It might not be the first jar his grandma gave to him but it feels just as precious and Louis will make sure nothing ever happens to it. For as long as he shall live. He decides then and there he wants to be buried with it. Buried six feet under and never to rot unlike Louis’ own body.

He has a hand over the lid and twists the cap. It pops open; the noise that kept Louis sane for many years before. He doesn’t just scoop a memory. He picks up a smaller crane made by Harry, the yellow one. The colour of joy and happiness. He places it inside the empty jar and lets more air into it, lets more of the memory inside.

As he places the lid back on, Harry’s hand rests on top of his own, fingers sinking between the gaps. Both of them twist the lid onto their first mason jar of the new beginning.

Their new beginning.
once more, i'm here on tumblr and the photoset is this one here. thank you so much for reading <3

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