And I Wait For Paradise

by You_Just_Mightx3

Summary

*Somehow, as the delirious jeers ricochet around in his skull, Harry’s mobile slides in his clammy palm. Desperate the intensity does not faze his vision as he keys, ‘do you still believe in forever?’ On fire, twitchy and a mess, the Alpha blacks out. It’s only hours into emotional asphyxiation Harry reads the response, ‘I still believe in you.’ Just like that Harry breaks away from the infinite shards of addiction. Dry heaves, “I’m not ruined, I’m not ruined,” into the darkness until he’s not the only one who believes it.*

…or, the one where it’s not the Harry who touched Louis’ heart that comes home, but an addict thought to be hopeless. A paradise above addiction when Louis wins so does Harry.

Notes
So I've had this sitting around for a long while now and it's so very dear to me I've been
dying to share!

I'd like to thank my beta's Miles and Harley and Alyssa for all the love and support and
help they've given me through this. I'd have never posted without them!

(Songs I wrote this too:
https://open.spotify.com/user/daniid123/playlist/2LeATTDLRGQu8MWZb7RfzO )

I hope you all enjoy!
All my love,
Dani xx

See the end of the work for more notes
Part One:

As the Alpha pulls into the stretchy drive the place he’s come to call home towers before him. It’s more than two people need, but not only does Harry Styles enjoy the lavish lifestyle he’s been born into, so does Louis Tomlinson.

Louis Tomlinson is a name not only he’s familiar with, but all of the UK. Hell, his own name fits that description rather nicely, but he’s not inclined to say so. Ugliness is attached to his.

See once upon a time an Omega by the name of Louis Tomlinson had tossed a cherry flavored slushie over his head for commenting on his size. And once upon a time an Alpha by the name of Harry hadn’t been capable of controlling his easily sparked temper.

To this day, Harry cringes at the memory of tackling an obnoxious (small) Omega to the floor and attempting to knock the hell out of him. Of course, with all the training, the to-be Alpha pinned the thrashing creature in seconds, lifting his arm, hand fisted and all, but the damndest thing had happened. One: the little bastard’s beautiful boyish face had been terrified in the worst ways, mirroring so many others to come. Two: the little bastard spit in his eye and knocked the hell out of him. Three: the two were forced into three day suspension, and Harry had been forced into a lifetime of annoyance starting with the words, “Wait ‘til we’re alone,” from him, to the words, “Bring it! You’re mine now, Cherrycheeks. My best mate,” from none-other-than Louis Tomlinson.

Well it’s an entertaining tale to tell when Louis isn’t exaggerating it, “What happened is Styles here saw my striking face and just froze. Fireworks in his eyes, the whole bit,” and “I had to beat the fuck out of him though, shout out to my fellow Omega heirs. Gave him a split lip and a black eye and a…,” until the injuries become paralysis or a comatose condition and Harry is forced to shut him up.

A sudden blare pierces his reverie. Slow to react, Harry just blinks. Before him two little fists are braced on the middle of the steering wheel, which is the reason for the noise. No shocker, the reason for most of the noise in his life is Louis (the thoughts aren’t worth mentioning). Arching a quizzical brow, the Alpha regards the young Omega who continues to lean over from the passenger side. Moonlight slices through the windows, makes the boy beside him appear porcelain.

Sharp, sharp, sharp is the perfect adjective to describe Louis Tomlinson. So sharp. With teased, whispery chestnut hair, slightly hollowed cheeks, an almost (not quite so perfected) button nose, and those bloody eyes. Right now, those eyes are tempest in their shade of blue, his thin mouth pursed.

“Goin’ to let up anytime soon?” the Alpha raises his voice above the incessant noise that’s causing his temples to pound, not enough to annoy him, only the thoughts case that magnitude of reaction.

“Gimme what I want!” the boy responds that impressive pitch of his. Confusion prods at him before Louis lets up on the alarm to whine indignantly, “Have you forgotten so soon?”

Smirking, Harry watches him cross his arms, waiting on some sort of response. Unwavering, he holds that piercing stare; the seconds melt and dissipate with the swarming pause, their sanity-stealing drone quieting with this still moment.
Damn it this is one of the many reasons Louis is *his* (best friend)...because his distractions are all that holds Harry’s sanity anymore. “I have this feelin’ ‘m missing something,” he prompts slowly.

Like he does when he’s attempting to provoke (like that ever works) him, the Omega rolls his eyes *hard*, but smiles that small, pained smile that Harry knows he’s unable to stifle. True to his mulish nature, Louis sober his expression, furrows his brows, and shouts, “You never pay me any attention anymore! It’s like I don’t even exist! *You don’t see me anymore!*” Like this the Omega twists, throws his door open, and storms out of the Escalade.

Unable to get enough of him, Harry follows, swinging his keys in two fingers and wondering idly why Louis insists on “saving electricity.” to leave the front lights off. Probably plotting Harry’s ‘accidental’ death; death by tripping over a loose pebble on the way in—*funny*. On with his little act, Louis continues irritably, convincingly hurt, “It’s like I’m nothing to you! Not even here! A nobody! Am I nothing to you now?” *Everything*, he corrects nonsensically, *everything and everybody* to me.

Silent, the Alpha joins him at the first step leading up to the front door. “How was that?” the boy asks, pivoting with an expectant expression. To anyone else the tinge of hope in those eyes might not be noticeable, but Harry knows this boy better than he knows himself, and though it’s purposeless, Louis has been working on his ‘*break-up*’ performance six weeks now; once it’d been so believable Harry had to fit right into the role of the *dumped*, storming through the halls after the deranged boy insulting him on how disgusting an Alpha he is, falling into it, feeling some sort of panicked *paroxysm* until pinning Louis to the bed where the Omega laughed that damned endearing giggle, “*Haz, Haz, calm down!* Shh, no more growling. ‘*S just an act! I’m...I’m not breaking up with you, sheesh!*”

Ice, pure and undeniable, pelted at him in that moment, and those amused, warm words had screwed with his head the entire nice once he’d put his fist through Louis’ bedroom wall (okay maybe he still hasn’t quite learnt to dominate his temper) and holed himself up in his own bedroom. *Like there’s anything to break up with, what a fucking joke, what a twisted joke.*

The next morning the Omega had knocked real quietly on his door, slipping into the room, right back into that reserved spot for his best friend, best boy, in his heart with a tiny, “*M sorry, Haz. I won’t do it again. Pinky promise.*” Since then he hasn’t played to that extreme, and Harry hasn’t touched him for fear of hurting him like he’d felt the need to do that night. *He can’t hurt Louis, never his beautiful boy.*

“Flawless. Totally fooled me. I thought I was ‘bout to lose my balls.” Even in the darkness Louis’s entire face lights up, the prettiest smile to be seen on his mouth as he whisper-shrieks, “*Honest?*” Under the force of the Omega’s excitement, the Alpha swallows around whatever the hell is ballooning in his throat, and nods, “*Yeah. ‘Course, paradise.*”

Always unable to accept compliments Louis snatches the keys from his hand, then turns to face the door and work intently on locating the many locks (as much protection as possible is required with Louis in the house) then enter their security code. Mechanically, Harry turns on his phone’s flashlight so Louis hums and lets them into their freezing, arctic Victorian dated manor. Empty of décor, the place mirrors their inability to get themselves together.

As Harry follows Louis through the hoard of boxes, the toe of his boot catches one (surprise surprise); he trips, cursing under his breath and stumbling like an idiot, “Damn it, Lou. How the fuck are you moving through this shit?”

“We really *should* hire someone to do something about this mess. It’s been four months,” Louis comments pertly, sashaying through their disaster with a grace Harry lacks.
Kicking the item responsible aside, the Alpha repeats the same words from weeks ago, “You know better. This is ours. We are going to make it a home, or whatever.”

Waving a dismissive, dainty hand, the boy hums, “Whatever dickwad says,” before disappearing into the room (he believes to be the kitchen?). Surveying the room Harry considers (not that he’d say so) help as there are three stories to this place with more than plenty bedrooms and an attic Louis wants to renovate into an arcade; an obstacle that will take enormous effort as both of them have always been fickle. It could honestly take years.

The entry room is round with the front door center and wide, aged windows bordering the structure with window seats below made of velvet blue that almost matches Louis’s irises (those will have to stay) and accents the worn wooden floors beautifully. Wooden floorboards that Louis insists they get rid of because, “it’s creepy, H! *M not living in constant paranoia!”

Like paranoia hasn’t infested Harry’s space enough. Hell, sometimes the creeping notion that Louis might become infected is enough that he can’t leave his room for hours upon hours until the Omega works his magic and distracts him with constancy.

Undeterred, Harry tells him the floor stay as the history of their manor is its allure, and its melodies are reflections of this history. The creeks and whines of the floorboards announce Louis’s approach before the boy sighs in exasperation, “This is ridiculous. I can’t even walk without being broadcasted now.”

Disregarding him, the Alpha eyes the fireplace in the far corner which will certainly need to be refurbished as rust has set into the metal support. Rustic doesn’t belong here, rather–, “Haz, c’mon, quit renovating without my consent.”

Sweeping past him, Louis plops onto one of the dusty, years untouched seats, sneezing adorably, “Nice. Now it’s screwing with my body, too!” As he curls up, Harry asks quietly, tracing the buttercup borders of the seat in disgust, “Why not start tomorrow?”

“How about you start tomorrow and I cheerlead?” By cheerlead the Omega must mean try to boss him about and tell him what he wants to go where, really.

Used to this the Alpha negotiates, meeting his round pleading gaze impassively, “You’ll cook?”

“I’ll order take out,” Louis hedges, which by now Harry expects because not only does this boy not clean, he also does not cook beyond cheese toasties and juice (which Harry had forced him into). What he does is entertain.

“Deal. But you have to shake your arse a bit for me, too.”

The stunned expression lasts only seconds before the boy snarls, “Oh, shut up.” Barking laughter, Harry lifts his hands, palms first, in surrender, “You know I’m taking the piss, but a bloke can dream.”

“Every Alpha but you dreams about this pretty paradise.” Mine, my paradise. Only I can call you that. It’s personal. It’s mine.

Grounding his teeth, Harry bites, “Yeah, well, no complaining tomorrow, got it?”

Hopping like a little hyper bunny, Louis smiles brilliantly, “Only if you’re lucky.” Winking, the Omega brushes past him, “See ya on the bright side.”

It’s become routine, this whole five-more-minutes bit. Impulsive, the Alpha holds his thin wrist swiftly, then orders, “Not so fast, short-stuff. You stay up with me five more minutes.” Because
damn it when Louis isn’t being loud his thoughts are, and Harry needs to not feel like he’s drowning in quicksand and fuck-up failures for five more minutes at the very least.

Facing him, Louis observes with scarily curious radiance alight in his eyes. Under the intensity, his skin crawls, and the Alpha shoves his arm away, muttering in attempt to cover his lapse in control. “Sorry. You’re tired. Go on, sleep.”

“You’re not sleeping anymore, are you, Haz?” the Omega asks softly, like he does when he’s serious. Serious Louis is never what Harry wants. But hell if Louis cares what anyone wants as the Omega shuffles around stray boxes towards him. Christ, why can’t Louis ever realise when it’s not the time to start in, when his thoughts become red in defense. Resistance eats at him when the boy is close, curving one soft, warm palm against his face and stretching a bit. Proximity hasn’t been an issue up recently, not an issue unless Louis is like this, soft and considerate and not how he’s supposed to be. Because when the Omega is like this he’s tenuous and his damned Alpha tries to observe him in ways Harry could never allow.

Yet the Alpha holds his swimming stare, composure drilled into him. Nimble, thin fingers trace the dark rings beneath his eyes, markers of all his sleepless nights. This his Alpha snarls at, unable to tolerate any proof his failure. There’s nothing to be done as Harry’s muscles are locked, and he holds so still it’s as if he’s dead, which might not be so unlikely as he’s quit breathing. “You think I can’t hear you pacing until four, five in the morning with these bloody floors? And then your weight sinking into that damn chair when you start drinking? And you’re using again. You’re high every morning. What are you on now?”

Rage sprouts in his brain as his hands curl into fists, though he cages the reaction before he acts out. “I thought I was being too loud.” Avoiding that troubled stare, Harry fumbles stupidly, “I’ll move. I knew I shouldn’t have taken the one above you. Hold on,” like this he tries to sidestep the small boy, “Let me just—,”

Stubborn, Louis mirrors his movements, hand all but glued to his face as Harry focuses on the pitch black foyer leading up to the stairway, rather than Louis. “Stop,” he murmurs, attempting to halt him through Harry doesn’t listen, caught in a frenzied state. “Stop avoiding this. Let me help. I…”

“Paradise, don’t start. I don’t need help, I don’t want to talk about shit, and I’m not going to cry to you about my issues.” Just then Louis loses his balance on their scrambled journey, and Harry reacts in seconds, snatching him around the soft, slim waist, only to recoil from the sensation; which leaves him slipping on God knows what (himself?) onto his knees. Like this Harry’s up to Louis’s revealed clavicle, tracing the enticing lines so many Alphas must fantasize over. And he wishes they would try anything, he’d tear them—not Louis, off limits.

Blankly, Harry says, “’M just not tired. You don’t worry about me. Understood?”

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“Oh bullshit. You’re so tired you’re a zombie sometimes, Harry. For weeks it’s been like this. Either you’re high and being a dick, or tired and unresponsive. So don’t tell me not to worry. Because that’s not okay, Styles. No, just no.” The anxiety in his voice jabs at Harry’s chest in odd, painful ways.

Swallowing thickly, the Alpha professes, “I’m sorry. I’m trying, yeah? Just…I’m honestly not tired. I’m not addicted or whatever. It’s just to help get myself…together.”

“That’s not going to help, moron,” Louis argues softly, stroking his hair all the while, soothing him oddly enough.

“For me it does. Get off my case, Louis. It’s not serious enough to bother with. You should just let it be.”
“Look at me and tell me that, Haz,” the boy murmurs, nails biting at his skin as his palm urges Harry’s head backwards.

Shoving whatever emotion Louis’ conjured up within him to the curb, the Alpha inhales like he’s not at all worried Louis’ seen through his act, and meets his stare resolutely to confirm with finality, “I am not tired. I’m restless, and I’m working on it. You know this isn’t anything new and I’ll get over it. But I don’t need you giving me those scared looks, yeah?” Playful, he taps his bottom lip, “No more puppy eyes, pup. You know how I feel about you giving me those looks.”

As their eyes bore the Alpha does not feel guilty over the lies because Louis doesn’t need any more burdens on his shoulders, shouldn’t worry over him, and certainly shouldn’t have to stay up with him because he can’t get his shit together. It’s no different than any other night. Sleeping has always been difficult with the shit sloshing around in his head.

Those beautiful eyes waver in their steel and triumph comes over him through Louis presses in defeat. “Promise me. Promise me you’ll cut the drug shit out. You’re too old for this experimenting shit now, and I don’t need an addict for a roommate. Pinky promise me.” Then does it, holds out his damn little finger. Of course Louis would pull this, this childish card he knows Harry hates to screw about with. Right now this has to be one of those lies that causes the lively weeds in his lungs to twine around his ribs, sucking the soul out of him.

With force, the Alpha wraps their pinkies in an embrace and whispers, “You got it, baby. I promise.”

Studying him with those sharp, all-too-knowing eyes, it’s moments too late that Louis sighs, and nods with a shy smile. “’Kay, I don’t mean to be pushy…I can’t help it. I need you to be okay. Be okay. No drinking, no using, no pacing. Sleep. Tonight, sleep. Please.” Christ, Louis never says the p-word unless he wants something he knows he can’t have or he’s desperate, neither of which the older can stand. Louis should never want, and always have. He should never be desperate unless it’s sexual…which not his business.

“Yeah. Yeah, I will.” Ah, what’s another white lie? Standing slowly, Harry tosses an arm around his frail shoulders. “Now it’s way past your bedtime, short-stuff. I don’t want hell instead of paradise tomorrow. So sleep.” With that he tows the small Omega down the hall to the very last room (far, far from his warzone) and shows his door out of the way to hustle him inside by the small of his back. “Goodnight.” In a rush to be over with this, Harry shuts the door.

Alone, an unsteady breath crawls up his throat. With every, echoing step towards his room the thoughts start up until his hands tremor and his temples twinge mercilessly. Before his eyes the hallway falls apart, his conscious awareness fades as his movements slow with the new scene. A knife is heavy in his hand. Sticky, warm, slipping in his grip. It’s all he feels. Numb, numb, numb, the bright lights overhead burn his frantically searching eyes. Trapped, all there seems to be is white white white. But as his wild eyes fall to what evil he’s–

“Wait, wait, wait!” a blessed trill disrupts as Harry flinches from both, ripped from the uncalled for scene. Dimness returns, stilted floors and worn boots reunite with him.

A little body crashes into him, and without permission his arms curl around his back as he buries his nose in the soft nest of hair, the ocean breeze with a hint of lavender assaulting his senses in the best of ways as Louis breaths warm his throat. It shouldn’t feel like this. It shouldn’t…but fuck he’s so good in Harry’s arms, fits so well. The house is fucking with his head.

Being so close to him all the time is really doin’ it to him, making him stupid. Louis’ voice shoves the short, proximity pleasure away, which means he’s only responding to a soft Omega body,
which makes him release a relieved breath. Not Louis. Just an Omega. “You didn’t finish our scene.”

“Neither did you,” he reminds.

Stepping backwards, the boy asks, staring up at him through wide, droopy eyes, “Do you even see me anymore?” Razor-sharp desperation bleeds into his voice as his beautiful, sleepy eyes reflect the same, becoming damp. It’s too real—Harry despises how Louis can do this, become another person in another situation in seconds. A beauty, a curse.

Like always, Harry can’t find his voice, even though the response is stamped to his jumbled hurricane of a mind. See he just can’t, no. Because, unlike Louis, he’d mean every word.

Numb from the horde that’s returned to his mind, endless shouts lodged in his throat, the Alpha turns his back on the Omega to climb the stairs, makes it to the room and sits on the bed with his head in his hands. “Such a mess,” he says vacantly, with his thoughts running and running and running until his teeth work and he’s yanking his damned hair (it comes out easy these days). Nope, not tonight, not sleeping tonight.

Standing again, Harry does what he does every night, centers only on his body and drags his feet back and forth.

Again.

And again.

Endlessly.

When his body screams in exhaustion, it’s been hours, and though he considers the stash in his desk, damned puppy eyes are burnt behind his lids, all he sees with every blink as he collapses on the bed.

Cruel thoughts shred his brain, attempting to slaughter him.

Just because, Harry tells the obscurity what he can’t recite to Louis. “You’re all I see. My all time high. My good as it gets. My guiltiest pleasure. The best damn thing I lucked into. You are all I will ever see, the boy with the beautiful eyes.”

 Fuck, who even chose those lines?

&&

It’s ass-o’clock when Louis has officially had it. Above him the dull thuds of Harry’s footsteps carry. Tonight the insistent whines of the floorboards leave impressions on his mind. So over this restless schedule his best mate’s acquired, Louis exhales unevenly, shoves the blankets away, and scrambles to an indecisive stance.

One with the shadows, Louis skates through the dimly lit hallways, careful to skip the seventh step up the stairs, the one that releases an obnoxious moan with any amount of weight (he swears it moaned over a beetle). No doubt the Alpha will hear that and come to investigate; Harry investigates every little noise.

Upstairs, the Omega rounds the first corner to creep over to the first bedroom door and…hesitate. Here, before the wide, heavy door, the boy feels especially small, an empty shell, powerless in his efforts to do something, anything.
Except his attempts are shot down, cauterized every lone time, which might be his own fault. See, Louis knows Harry Styles. Knows his best friend’s every fault, and countless perfections. But the stranger in the room before him is an entirely untried male.

When the Alpha is locked in there, he’s someone else. Defensive, hostile, scary—before moving into this (their) house, Louis hadn’t ever thought to be afraid of Harry. Not in the least. But the man who had returned from the Institution ten months prior is entirely new to him with jagged edges Louis’s yet to touch. He’s afraid that those edges might be too sharp, stab and cut at him until he’s left with gaping wounds of his own. Which can’t happen—someone needs to maintain their sense, and it seems that Harry’s a lost cause. So that’s Louis’ latest mission: stay sane.

Curling his toes in his socks, Louis takes a moment to listen in and catches Harry’s mindless mutters from the other side: “not right,” is a broken recods. God, Louis would kill to have Harry tell him what isn’t right. Is it the house, Louis, *them*?

Distress screams in his tummy, but the Omega musters his infinite courage, doesn’t think, simply *acts*. Impulsive actions work best for him. It’s jerky, but Louis throws the entrance open and sees…no Harry. The scarily neat room lacks any personality, bare and sad. So frozen it’s ugly, an arctic island without beauty.

Despite the thunderous instinct to retreat, to protect himself from the monster suffocating Harry’s room, Louis draws forward cautiously. The walls are the deepest shade of blue, and staring now makes him uncomfortable; the sneaking suspicion that he’s drowning here in this vast room with an enormous bed to the right wall, a metal desk just before the metal screened window. Frowning, Louis peers at the bed with no luck. A quiet screech of the flooring startles him so the boy whirls around to find Harry’s outline in the shadows near the walk-in wardrobe. “Shit,” Louis yelps, arms circling his belly in silent comfort. “H, you scared—,”

“What d’you think you’re doing in here, Louis?” the cold, flat tone has his Omega shrinking. Never before has Harry made him feel more unwanted, unwelcome. Except now in the moonlight illuminated space, with Harry lurking in the shadows, watching him like he’s an outsider. Irritated, Louis lifts his chin, and hisses defensively, “What am I doing here? You ask some stupid questions.” When the Alpha doesn’t respond, Louis sighs in exasperation, planting one hand on his hip, needing to see his expression and reassure himself that Harry is in here somewhere. “God, H, will you come here and quit creeping in the shadows?”

Cautiously, the Alpha approaches. Able to see his face now, Louis’ heart turns inside out. When the Alpha moves like this, sleek and lethal, it’s such a predatory prowl. Slim, long long long, Harry Styles is every Omega’s favorite eyecandy. Striking, with his stupid features, all broad and defined, and his stupid eyes that seem to smolder in the darkness.

Squirming under the intensity, Louis swallows, opening his mouth to snap at him when Harry mumbles (seemingly uncomfortable), stopping too many feet away, “I didn’t mean to scare you, sorry.”

And damn it Louis is such a sucker for Harry’s apologies as he so rarely issues them to anyone. Thawing a bit, the boy breathes hopefully, “You’ll have to make it up to me.”

“Of course I will,” the Alpha retorts dryly, rolling his eyes, then coughing as he shoves his hands in his front pockets. “Is something wrong? A reason for this visit? You should be asleep.” *So should you,* Louis thinks, motivated.

“But I don’t wanna sleep right now. I want to cuddle,” Louis implores without missing a single beat.
The discouraging response is instantaneous as Harry storms to the door, opens it, and snarls, “No. Get out.”

Sucking on his bottom lip, the Omega scuffles forward until he’s almost flush against him, so close to the solid tension that holds Harry’s frame. Leaning in, the boy is bold enough to rest his head on Harry’s chest, like he could do before he’d last left him. “Please.” The proximity means Harry’s scent clings to his senses, dark with a hint of cologne. “Please, Haz. Just for a little while.” You haven’t held me in almost a year. I’m needy.

The heavy breath Harry lets out is victory. Overjoyed, Louis beams, taking his (unreasonably) large hand and towing him to the massive, plush (unused) bed. Louis settles on his side, and waits impatiently as Harry sits, removing his shoes, then shedding his V-neck. Peeking through his lashes, Louis marvels at the differences in his build since last year; though he’s still slim, there’s so much more of him now, his shoulders have broadened, and with every move his muscles ripple. Braced on his elbows, his biceps bulge slightly, his chest so much fleshlier as he stretches out beside him.

At the sight his Omega purrs, and impulsively Louis starts to scramble over him, but in seconds the Alpha holds him fast; something mad skids in his eyes though Louis doesn’t allow him the chance to react further, rounding his eyes and begging softly, “Please.”

A satisfied thrill rushes through his veins hotly when the Alpha slowly releases his wrists, loosening up some and nodding shallowly. Unwilling to chance Harry changing his mind, the boy settles fast over his body, spreading his legs so they bracket his waist, curling his hands at his chest and peering up at him shyly when those hands stroke his shoulder. A shiver rides up his spine… Oh, but he knows those eyes, and he knows this touch. He does, so he buries his face in the crook of Harry’s throat.

“’S okay to hold me, too, Haz,” he encourages happily when the Alpha doesn’t move even an inch. He doesn’t think he’s even breathing.

Stiffly, those hands run down to rest low on his back, rough and heavy from use, lengthy fingers curling underneath (what used to his T-shirt five or so years ago) his thin top.

So relieved to have Harry in bed, as calm as he can seem to be these days, Louis’ lashes flutter. “Goodnight, morning, whatever.”

“You’re not sleeping here. You said a little while,” the vibrations of his deep, molasses-like voice are felt on Louis’ lips. Louis simply noses at his jaw. “Kay,” the boy acquiesces, as to not stress him into agitation, though he thinks smugly, I give it ten minutes before you’re out like a lightbulb.

And he’s right (no surprise). Soon, the Alpha’s breathing evens out, and when Louis braces on his elbows to confirm his suspicions, he’s asleep.

Oh, baby, he thinks softly, you’re killing yourself.

Even in sleep Harry’s features aren’t smooth or relaxed; his dark brows are furrowed, and the muscles of his jaw tick. Softly, Louis smooths the creases, and breathes sadly, “Be okay. I need you to trust me. To come back to me, Haz.”

When there’s no response, Louis sighs, but carefully returns to his previous position, breathing the dark scent into his lungs.

For the moment, like this, the Omega lets his concaving worries drift and become nothing more
than nightmares.

Louis can’t breathe through his too-tight airways. Gasping, the boy’s eyes spring open, bleary in his startle as adrenaline fires through his veins. A silky, thick mop of chocolate coloured curls tickles his face. In a rush, Louis realizes Harry’s tossed in his sleep. Which means Louis is very much trapped underneath him, explaining the crushing weight on his lungs. So, so heavy, though it’s unbearable, achy even, his Omega adores it, likes every hard line against his soft curves.

A hoarse noise tears through his trance. When the Alpha’s hand drags down his side, Louis tenses a bit, and his breath catches in his throat when that hand sneaks between the tops of his thighs to spread his legs effortlessly. No, this is not okay—it’s obvious he’s unconscious, but what he’s doing, like this, puzzles Louis like nothing else.

Unable to find his voice, the boy’s mouth simply parts while Harry fits between his open thighs; offering another throaty sound. This hasn’t happened between them before, not like this, not even when they did sleep in the same bed (before Harry went away for the third time).

Now, Harry’s hips are flush to his belly, hands rough on his thighs, fingers burrowing achingly into his flesh, leaving impressions as a means to keep him open for his use. “H-Haz,” Louis protests breathlessly, desperate to escape these spellbinding sparks. Never before has he been touched so intimately; which Harry knows. It’s not that he’s innocent, he’s explored his body, knows what pleasure is, but he has never desired an Alphas touch, never felt like this.

But he does not want Harry to touch him like this without consciously doing so. The reason behind the bulge of his very hard cock against Louis’s tummy is quite indefinite. There has to be someone or something on his mind, a reason behind this sexual drive, but it’s certainly not him; Harry’s never been interested in him this way because Louis is not his type, nowhere near that perfect.

Louis tries to form words, but then the Alpha’s hips…move. Delicious heat pools low in his belly. Oh, no. Low in his throat, Harry growls, breath rough on his throat as his hands squeeze his thighs, and his hips repeat that lovely motion. A flush blooms on his face and spreads down his throat.

“Harr’eh,” Louis tries once more because he does not want what his body has begun to beg for. Twining thick locks of wavy hair in his fingers, the Omega yanks hard and begins to squirm; trying to break away from whatever that is without disturbing his rest.

But it doesn’t work or help as Harry’s mouth latches onto his throat. Inside’s melting, Louis moans breathily, “Haz, please,” and he doesn’t know that he’s asking the Alpha to stop or stay doing this beautiful thing with his mouth. Sensation causes the heat to ball in his belly as his lashes flutter and one hand slides from his hair to his sweat slickened shoulder, burning hot and taunt. Sexual. Pure sex.

Dazed, Louis does nothing against his parted mouth drawing wetly down his throat. Right now he’s unable to anything but feel as Harry’s hips press him into the mattress, and his mouth works rough on his skin, marking him like he’s never been marked before. A moment whispers by like this until Harry’s mouth finds its destination.

Louis mewls, and shivers viciously, flooded with the hottest sensation, the heat so tight his cock is throbbing, and he’s leaking steadily now.
No. Teeth close around his special-spot, his bonding skin.

The realization sends a torrent of ice through him as Louis hisses, like Harry knows what he’s doing. “Don’t touch me! Stop.”

Disturbed by such an intimate invasion, the Omega claws at his shoulders, then shoves with all his strength so Harry’s torn away from his throat. “Let me go, damn it! You fucker! I’ll murder you in your sleep!” the screech seems to reach Harry, who instantly stiffens above him. Grappling with the opportunity, Louis heaves, and with a hurt noise the Alpha’s deadweight yields with no resistance.

“Oh, come on. That’s hardly fair,” Louis lifts his hands, and blows out an unsettled breath as his heart races. “You’re trying to sleep fuck me. You’re not allowed to make hurt noises.” Silence is the only response as Harry stills, face buried in the sheets though his breathing is choppy, rough.

Utterly ruffled, the boy leaves the bed warily, drunkenly wobbling to the door which he closes so soundlessly behind him. And in seconds he tears away. Honest, Louis doesn’t know why he’s on the run, but he is, and he doesn’t ever want to stop because he’s overwhelmed because what he wants more than anything in the world is his Harry back. Not this…phantom—if he knew this is what he’d be moving in with…he’d have stuck to his answer and told Harry to fuck off.

At the front door Louis stops, fumbles with the security code, then once the green light flashes, exits only to sink to the first step. A noise too close to a sob rips from his heaving chest as the air thins in his lungs, and Louis rocks a bit, feeling dirty and unworthy and wrong. God, he’d been touched sexually by Harry, and God only knows it’s because he’d been asleep, probably dreaming of stupid sexual shit. Wrong.

Louis is wrong to him; always has been this unattractive freak-of-nature…yet the Alpha had the balls to touch him like that.

Yeah right–Louis is no coward, and he is ready to slap the high out of him for doing that right now. Red clouds his vision as the Omega stands, reenters the code, and storms inside.

As soon as he’s set foot inside an agonized, choked shout ricochets through the entire house.

Crossing his arms, the Omega tries to turn away, to ignore it, really he does, but as the sounds grow in strength, the sharp pain bashes at his resolve. All of five seconds draws by before Louis bolts upstairs, into the room where he stops dead, lost on what to do, or how to go about doing it.

Thrashing in the sheets, Harry seems to be struggling against someone who is not there, snarling menacingly.

Approaching, Louis breathes softly, “Haz? Haz…wake up. You’re having a nightmare.” And he makes the mistake of placing one hand on Harry’s tense shoulder. Without warning he’s tossed onto the mattress, whimpering as Harry’s hand bears down on his throat, but otherwise stunned into silence as the malicious seize obstructs his airways. “You…arsehole!” Louis screams breathlessly, prying at the hand as crazed, lifeless emerald eyes bore into his, and Harry shouts back with such force that he recoils into the mattress, “Nasty motherfucker! I’m going to slice your dirty throat and bathe in your blood!”

He’s choking on nothing, thinking stupidly that falling into the mossy fields of his eyes, like basking in the scent and the emotion and oh God it’d be such a lovely way to die. Weeeelll perhaps he’s losing his mind too.

“N-Not before I bite your bloody ear off!” Louis pants around the pain of the constriction. Okay,
time to panic, not pull a Mike Tyson. “Haz! P-Please! Stop it!”

With a nasty edge, the Alpha laughs, then leans down to run his nose along his cheek. “Yeah, I’ll have fun snapping your neck.” Right now Louis believes him.

But still, after their earliest scene, that’s almost funny. Though the Omega tries to laugh it’s a pathetic wheeze as breathing is impossible. Instinct kicks in, and Louis kicks too, right where it counts. When the Alpha snarls, enraged, but lessening his hold enough that Louis chokes on the sudden rush of oxygen, gasping and clutching the sheets.

“I…Lou? Louis!” it’s lost its malevolent bite as the Alpha returns to consciousness, horrified. Eyes screwed shut, Louis buries his face in the sheets as he coughs sporadically, “Oh, Christ, Louis, paradise, what’d I do? You let me… Louis, what the fuck is wrong with you?”

The pain in his throat intensifies when Louis clears it to croak, “Shut up, Harry. You can’t…be… angry at me. You n-n-n-needed to sleep…. It’s only now that the severity of the situation unearths itself as his throat works to swallow. He feels like laughing, but starts cry instead.

“You’re s-s-o fucked up.”

“’M sorry,” the Alpha blurts hastily, attempting to gather his trembling body in his arms. “I’m… Paradise, I didn’t…Don’t cry, please. I won’t do it again. I won’t, I promise. Pinky promise.”

Hot, salty tears spill from his eyes, and Louis shakes his head angrily, but ends up curling small in Harry’s lap with his head tucked underneath his chin, and his arm wound around his neck. Why can’t you understand the real problem, you fool?

“Help me? You sleeping here ain’t helping shit, Louis! It’s making it worse! I fucking hurt you!”

the Alpha is almost roaring, panic and stress and unimaginable brokenness in his voice. Oh, baby…

Except Louis’ temper flares as he cries, “You need to sleep! You didn’t hurt me! I’m fine! You’re the one that’s–,”

Furiously, Harry deposits him onto the mattress; the crazy returns to his darting eyes—even now he can’t look him in the eye. “Get out.” Stunned by the bleak hatred in his voice, Louis snivels, and Harry stands, roaring with more Alpha than Louis’s ever heard before, “Get the fuck out before I hurt you, God damn it!”

And right now Louis believes him, he’s trembling with the force of his emotional reaction, and he doesn’t stop searching the room like someone (or something) is watching the scene unfold, like it’s not just them, here alone falling apart.

Ashamed of his insistent ability to make things worse, Louis lowers his face, and rushes from the room with tears blurring his journey back to his room. There, the boy curls up, and cries soundlessly, muffling his (sad) noises into the pillows and wondering where they went so wrong.

(And will they ever find their way back again?)

∞∞∞

Sick, sick, sick. So fucked up. As his stomach rolls the Alpha careens around the room with the walls that have begun to close in on him, drawing nearer and nearer. Some pathetic animalistic noise creeps up his frantically working throat as his hands shake uncontrollably, seeking some form of relief. In his dry mouth, Harry’s tongue feels too thick, too thick to cry for help, help he couldn’t take. No help. Not that help. Not his, Louis’ help.
"Oh, God, paradise..."

Well, so much for never returning to this desperate, dingy cave in his mind. Frenzied, the Alpha tears open an eight ounce, the already measured powder loaded in scatters on the table. Roars build in his head; *work faster, they're coming, work faster...*

Even using a blade the white lines aren’t straight; but fuck his head isn’t straight, his life isn’t straight, *nothing is fucking straight with him.* All screwed up twists and spirals and coils. With all this shit Harry’s learnt parkour.

With the roll-up of money in hand, the Alpha brings it up to his right nostril and pinches the left. With the walls shrieking, and the shadows settling, Harry inhales his first line (zigzag, whatever) long and hard. The powder shoots up his nose in a blaze of fire he’s become numb to. Bent over, he doesn’t need to pause, moving onto the second, snorting up in a quick take. Then the third. And the fourth. Until there are only crumbs he almost wants to eat.

As the chemical clings to his neurotransmitters, the heady rush quiets the monster in his head. Groaning low in throat, Harry shoves backwards in his chair, rocking on the back legs. The shadows retreat, sinking back into the walls, and hissing in response to his guttural laughter. *Ah, fuck ‘em.*

Except as he laughs, someone tugs the back of his chair, and he collapses backwards, slamming onto the woodworks on his side.

“*Christ,*” he groans when his face meets the cold wood. For some reason the sight of the wood rams into his chest, emotion threatening to cave in on him. “Paradise, baby,” he croaks pitifully, the scene he tried to snort away caught in the crevices of the bloody wood Louis hates so much. Sometimes he thinks the boy hates only what Harry loves…

Sitting up, the pain of the fall is nothing compared to the battering ram of emotion as glassy cerulean eyes sit in front of his vision, hurting because he’s a disaster.

Jerkily, the Alpha stands, stumbles and catches his weight on the bedpost. Without cause permission, he bolts from the room, down the stairs, and into the warmest haven in this poorly ventilated house. Out of habit, Harry does a quick once over with his eyes; but of course there is nothing lurking the in the shadows. Somehow, Louis’ room is always empty of Harry’s followers. It eases his nerves.

Secure, his stare wanders to the middle of the room where Louis is curled up in a glaringly tiny ball. Seemingly startled, the boy lifts his head from the indented pillow he’s hugging to peer through swollen, sleepy eyes. With that stare on him Harry’s entire body feels electrified, and despite how the room won’t hold still his own stare does not stray, never has with Louis.

An owlish blink is all the reaction the boy gives him before realizing who’s intruded. Careful to keep the others out, the Alpha proceeds to cold the door and click the faulty locks (they will have to be replaced). Right now it’s unnecessary, Harry would easily defend his Omega from the demons that crawl down his throat, into his head so often, defend him from every follower, defend him from everything *but himself.* He has to stop getting in the way of Louis and his dreams…He’s at the starting line of the rest of his life and the prize is his to win.

Louis always wins.

He wants to tell him to get ready, get set, and…

*Please, don’t go.*
Soundless in his actions, the Alpha strides over to the canopied bedframe that Louis insisted on having, claiming to feel like a proper prince.

Determined, the Alpha edges onto the sumptuous mattress, then takes his thin, tucked in ankle in one hand and unwraps his thick limb. Like he knows there is no winning this time Louis doesn’t resist, rolling onto his back and spreading out, soft and small and so bloody Omega when he’s upset like this.

And he doesn’t need permission to drape over him, bracing his hands flat on either side of his face. Underneath him, the Omega inhales sharply, pretty mouth parting like an invitation. *I’ve been standing in gas and you have been the flames.*

“’S not your fault. You can’t fix me…I wish it were so simple. I’m sorry,” the Alpha breathes into his bruising neck, stroking his silky, sleep mussed hair with one hand. “I want so bad to be helped, but not by you. You can’t help me, paradise. ‘M so sorry.”

“’S not fair,” Louis whines too quietly. “’S like moving mountains with you. And it’s not fair that someone else can take my place so easy. I’m supposed to be your constant. I’m supposed to help. Not…Not…”

It’s more than the air Harry breathes, but the hurt note to his voice shreds at him, leaving angry red streaks in its wake. “You are my constant, Louis. You’ve helped me enough. And every time you try…I hurt you.” *Christ, I can’t stand it.*

“You’re not–,”

“Shh,” the Alpha breathes where his ocean vanilla scent oozes from his skin the best, “Let me explain. The more you try to help me…the more on edge I am. I’m…God, Louis, can’t you see how unstable I am? Aren’t…” you afraid I’m going to snap and hurt you beyond forgiveness? Sickened by the thought, unwilling to acknowledge that, Harry clears his throat, then, “I try not to hurt you, I try so hard, but I still end up hurting you anyway because…I…Some screws and bolts in my head are missing. Not loose, paradise, lost. And I don’t think I’ll find them, yeah? So…I want to tell you something else. I want to tell you I’m…I’ll be better. But I just…I can’t right now.” More than anything Harry wants to shut the fuck up, but the way Louis is running his fingertips across his bare shoulder is the most pleasure he’s experienced ever, soothing him enough that his tongue is too damn loose. The most incredible highs are always enticed by Louis. His next words are quick bullets, “I was…uh, in my dream…we were fine. At first, we were fine. I was…uh, with you,” fucking you, in my dream I was fucking you, and you wanted it, “But then…it wasn’t fine anymore. They…They were trying to take you away. They were going to if I…if I didn’t…be the monster and hurt them first. But I w-woke up…Christ, I woke up and I…I’m hurting you. Not them, me. It was…me, paradise.”

This communication requirement Louis’ set has always done stupid shit to his head; see not only is Louis listening, they are too. Guilt coils in his stomach, though it’s nothing when Louis is softening underneath him like this, hands scrunching in his curls. “They can’t hurt me when I have you, Haz. Whoever they are. Who wants to hurt me?” God, he’d really like to believe that bullshit, but he knows better.

Tension grasps his shoulders at the thought; were his lids open crimson would tint his vision, his canines already protruding from his gums, but when he thinks of them trying to touch Louis…Venom laces his response, “My followers.” They’re everywhere; they never stopped following me, not then, not now, not ever.

“Followers?” the Omega whispers, confused. *Which is good,* he should be confused, he can’t
know how wrong his head is; he’d definitely ditch this.

Christ, he should tell him so he leaves. Rip the bandage and all that shit, reveal the chasmal wound. Right now, Harry wishes they were children again; wishes he could depend on Louis to stay. That obnoxious little pup who had demanded to have every class with him, who had followed him when he ditched class, who prattled on and on about his Alpha levels, who had called him for two years straight despite Harry’s inability to answer the phone.

See, that little pup had changed so much; so much while Harry had been away and hadn’t been able to be with his through these transformations. With just as many demands where Harry’s concerned, Louis now ditches his Council courses, Louis prattles on and on about his Omega, and Louis refuses to answer his phone when he’s away.

In the years leading up to now Louis went through friends and outfits and interests effortlessly, ditching people without even a second thought. Luke, Bryan, Liza, Max, Catherine, Alana, Kendall...so many others abandoned without a care. Fuck, he stopped feeding his bunny a week after his Mum bought the bloody thing, he’d given an entire designer wardrobe to charity in order to change his style the second time in one month, he’d let Max kiss him more than enough times, proclaimed his undying love, then stomped on the bloke’s heart by taking Harry’s hand and claiming to have moved on two weeks after Harry came back from his Third-Point training.

More than anything Louis can’t make up his mind. And he can’t stay attracted to anything at all. Erratic, unpredictable, lovely, intimidating in all ways...

“’S nothing to worry about, paradise. They...They won’t bother you.” They’re here for me. When he lifts his weight to stare down, this beautiful boy he’s hurt so bad is chewing on his bottom lip, releasing the wet, red flesh to whisper, “When you say it’s nothing to worry about all I hear is another thing to lose my mind musing over.”

Leaning in, the Alpha’s mouth brushes the curve of his ear, and he teases, “They’ll call the Crazies soon enough.”

“Haz,” is his sad breath, as his little hands shove between them, on his chest so Harry retreats again. There are hurt traces there, in his shattered-glass eyes. Thumbing at the corner of his mouth, the Alpha says softly, “Don’t let me hurt you, paradise. You’re all I have...I’m still here, still Harry. And I still love you more than I’ve ever loved anyone or anything. You’re the best boy, but I can’t trust myself not to hurt you when you’re trying to help me in whatever crazy way.”

“How can I possibly help that?” Louis moans, reaching up to tuck a strand of his hair behind his ear. He doesn’t take his hand back, though, instead his fingertips drift along the line of his jaw as Harry blatantly stares; his heartbeat slows as much as it can in this state. “I love you. You’re my best mate, and I love you. I can’t just sit back and watch you do this to yourself anymore.”

Even now those three words cause fire and ice to clash in his heart. A pain that shouldn’t feel so delicious and right– Squeezing his eyes shut, Harry buries his face in the crook of Louis’ throat to shield his expression, wanting to feel the soft of his skin on his mouth, but refraining out of self-disgust. “Don’t make me do it, Lou.”

“Do what?”

“Don’t make me tear down the canopies and make you wear them as a dress for being so stubborn.”

“’M not being stubborn, H! I’m—,”
To quiet him, the Alpha clamps a hand over his rowdy mouth, laughing when Louis shrieks into his hand, talking nonsense before licking wetly. “Like I haven’t had your spit in my eye,” Harry snorts, playfully dragging him up the mattress. “Lick away, paradise.” And his other hand reaches out for the shimmery material though Louis shrieks again, and bites the fleshy part of his thumb hard.

Shoving the instinct that tells him Louis is now the enemy to the curb, Harry snatches his hand back and licks at his jaw wetly in retaliation. His skin tastes sweet. He can’t imagine how his—,”

“Oh my Gosh! Ew! Harry, quit it!” Louis moans dramatically, squirming underneath him. All his soft curves feel...different underneath him, provocative as his Alpha takes notice, and his skin shouldn’t taste like his vanilla breeze and–

With his heart an insistent thud thud thud behind his ears, the Alpha sits up on his knees, which means Louis worms underneath the coverlets. Instinctively, he follows, forcing his way beside him in the dim, tight heat of concealment. “Still not raising my white flag,” Louis pokes out his tongue cutely.

“Y’know I’m in need of a new dress and–,”

Louis acts like he does, impulsively, hurling at him and closing his teeth on his ear. “Nawow try ish,” the boy mumbles, breathing hot in his ear as Harry winces from the pleasure this little sting rakes through him. “Think I enjoyed the licking more.” Any place your wet is enjoyable I bet.

Onto his earlobe, the boy clamps and sucks, like he’s trying to please him as Harry swallows thickly, trying to keep his cock from wanting that sensation. “Alright,” the Alpha mutters gruffly. “You’ve made your point. You can keep your little princess canopy.”

Squealing all too happily, Louis lets up, but curls beside him, “I always get my way.” Which is very true. There is not one soul who can deny Louis, because he either tortures or tempts them into giving in.

“’Cause you’re a cheat.”

Snuffling adorably, the boy takes his arm so it’s over his waist, the whispers smugly, “Whatever works.” Securing his hold, Harry turns onto his side, and Louis wiggles then, “Go to sleep now.”

“Can’t.” Harry disagrees, keyed up on coke. “I need to start on this bloody house.”

“Later,” Louis mumbles, soft and sleepy, like he’s already forgotten what happened only hours ago.

“Which is what we say every time. It’s now or never, paradise. You sleep, I’ll work.” It’s his most persuasive tone that’s worked on many before, but he’s never used this timbre on Louis before, but it seems to actually work as the Omega hums, “‘Kay, but hold me until I’m asleep at least, lover boy.”

Satisfied, the Alpha does so, matching their breaths until the Omega’s becomes inaudible with sleep. Once he becomes too restless to stay another minute, he takes his arm back with great care as to not startle him awake, and starts backwards towards freedom. “No,” Louis whimpers, tossing and shivering. “Stay. Hold me.” It’s no surprise that even in sleep Louis is as he’s always been: needy.

On two feet, Harry makes it to the side Louis is towards, drawing out his stay to stare in awe. Small, Louis’s hands are tucked underneath his cheek, features pert and pretty in sleep. “Stop starin’ at me, creep,” the boy mumbles without opening his eyes.
“Oops,” he mutters, starting to turn when Louis mumbles, reaching out to take his hand, “No, no…Stay. Stare at me all you want. Please, stay.”

It makes up his mind when he risks a glance backwards to find lonely eyes staring back at him.

So, like he always does, the Alpha pushes his luck, and stays.

&&

Some time passes before he emerges from the room.

Excited, electric surges of energy have flowered in his bloodstream as the Alpha snatches the switchblade from where it lays lifeless on the bare counterpane. Once in the entry room Harry sinks to his knees, frantic to find that the concealed objects home bits and pieces of who he wants to be again.

Erratic scores, severs, slices prove him wrong in these moments time and time again.

And sticky, cruel hands creep from the shadows, latching onto his shoulders as to keep the lost out of reach.

Sweaty panic saturates his skin as Harry’s ribcage constricts maliciously around his lungs and heart and– Choking on what breath remains, his hands find another identical box, plowing its contents out onto the floor. There is nothing more than Tupperware and fine china that’s been chipped and badly beaten (most likely due to their neglect). A dry, hopeless sound (so much like a sob though he refuses to acknowledge so; he’s screwed up in every way possible but he isn’t less an Alpha damn it) crawls up his throat as his damp hands slide on the wood, and his head bows underneath the force of the crippling hands.

In one last attempt to stay here, an entirely bearable mess, the Alpha pries his eyes open and–

A little box rests in a wide open Tupperware container; velvet blue with crystals imbedded (definitely paradises’ doing). Before his trembling fingers show the lid open Harry knows what it is. Of course there’s no explanation as to how it would end up here, with the décor, but hell if it matters because a scene unlike the others comes to life in his murky vision.

Numb to the emotional scene before him Harry trudges through the horde of bodies: lovers, friends, family. Amass of love.

Love cannot exist where they have sojourned–hatred is more a fitting alternative. Out of the suffocation zone, Harry tears the steel-plated tags from around his neck and fists it tight in his right hand. A sin infested hand, utilized, worked and wrong.

As his teeth work Harry stands motionless before the manmade reservoir, torn between the need to cling to this piece any other Alpha would be proud to wear, and the need to let it sink with the demons trapped within.

Get rid of his pride to save his rapidly deteriorating sanity…Reasonable to anyone else.

As his fingers uncurl, tiny thin ones wind the best they can around his wrist. Sneering, acting on the impulse that tells him to execute the one who dares touch him, the seventeen year old Alpha starts first to detain the assailant. Yet when his head whirs to the right, and his vision files down
on the ‘idiot’ any defensive action scarred into his brain flees, no match for the tiny creature standing beside him. A thin, frail Omega—nothing worth the effort, with features masked by the fog concealing the sky much the same.

A pest. “What’s this?” it’s a curious trill as the pesky thing snatches the chain and holds it closer than necessary to his face in silent examination.

“Who the hell do you think you are?” he demands much too late, attempting to take back his property though the nuisance flutters away, out of reach, like a weightless leaf. Only much more intriguing as he reveals glowing, emotion ridden eyes that make Harry’s heart tattoo like it does when he palms his Beretta; cardiac arrest fast. Which is fucking ridiculous, who the hell does this little shit think he is, eyeing him apprehensively as if he is the culprit.

“I like this. It’s very…official,” the little one chirps, peering at his chain intently, starting to pull it over his head. “I want it. It’s mine now.

Irritated, the Alpha strikes while he’s otherwise concerned, taking his slim arms in either hands, then leaning in so they’re nose-to-nose. The proximity makes him want to recoil, knowing what this would cost him if he was still in the Institution…but oh Christ, he needs to remember that he is not there anymore, needs to readjust and what better way to start than to realise one little brat is powerless against him. This is an Omega with no means of hurting him, unarmed and stunned enough to stumble into his body.

Endorphins barbwire straight through his every vein, reminding him that he’s not been this close to an Omega in two years...And right now his eyes are boring into bottomless oceans, the colour an endless sapphire night, dancing with innocent fascination. “Y’know I thought by now you’d have a bit more respect for those of weaker physical standing...” the boy with the mesmerized, and likewise mesmerizing eyes, tells him with bated breath. “Then again there isn’t one thing in this world that could tamper with your temper.”

Realisation lightning bolts between them as Harry inhales sharply through his nose doubtfully; but it’s there, the scent of an ocean’s breeze, it’s like a walk on the beach, so much more potent now, melting the ice in his chest as his Alpha thunders to life for the first time in two years. “Paradise,” he recognises, gentling his hold on the Omega’s supple hips.

“‘Bout time! Welcome home, Haz,” Louis Tomlinson sighs in a voice Harry has never heard before, faraway with a dreamy lilt to his name.

“What...the hell happened to you? Why are you such a...Omega?” the Alpha blurts, disturbed, like Louis could stop puberty in order to make changes with him there to watch. Mercilessly, the tension drains between them when Louis makes this soft, pleased noise, and throws his arms around his shoulders as to let Harry carry all his weight (there isn’t much—all that child chub has left his figure).

“I’m not?” his breath is warm on his skin. You’re not? Perhaps not yet. He’s too distracted to think into the details of Louis’ presentation. For the first time in too long it does not feel like there’s some catch to the contact, does not feel like a knife will appear to slice his throat wide open.

“Oh,” is the first word to leave his mouth; he loves knowing Louis is...well, Louis. Constant paradise, his home from home, his his his; someone who won’t try to slit his throat or cut his tongue out (not unprovoked at least).

Short, hitching breaths mark his tears as much as the damp wet on his skin. Uncomfortable, the older attempts to retreat, but the fifteen year old boy clings to him, shaking his head a bit to
mumble, “’M sorry. I…”

“Are you…Jesus, are you crying, paradise?” the notion is knife enough–so much for being secure. Emotional knives might hurt more than any other; they’re ragged, never clean cuts.

“No! Get a g-grip! I don’t cry! I’ve just got a leak, ‘s all.” That’s right–Louis does not cry. Mostly, Louis is vicious kicks and spiteful giggles.

“You’re still not a robot, Louis,” he whispers playfully, thumbing at the jut of his hipbone, instinctively brushing his mouth against the smooth skin of his right temple. When the boy stomps on his right foot, Harry’s mouth pulls up in an insignificant smile that falls short with the reminder than he’s not smiled in two fucking years. “What are you cryin’ for?”

“’M n-not. But if I was…it’d be ‘cause I haven’t heard your voice in t-two bloody years minus a shitty la-landline, and you sound a l-lot more Alpha. And you feel a whole lot more Al-Alpha, too.”

What that means, the Alpha hasn’t a clue, but mutters, “You feel a whole lot more Omega, paradise.”

He winces. “No. You sound like you’ve not h-had a drink in two years.”

“Not the drink I’ve been lookin’ for,” the older snorts, playful though Louis tenses up, seemingly mystified. It reminds him that he’s talking to Louis….Louis who is in obvious denial over his nearing presentation, and hasn’t experienced his first anything yet. He hopes he hasn’t missed anything. And he intends to make sure of it once he’s collapses in his childhood bed and slept a whole night through without breaks and spazzes due to…Institution life. “Joking,” he assures quietly, stroking because he can’t help how his hands enjoy the soft curves that weren’t there when Louis was twelve, “You sound like you swallowed a squeaky toy, pup.”

“Max tells me I sound soft,” the boy retorts as Harry burrows his nose in his hair (yeah, definitely an Omega).

“Well Max must really be kissing your arse.”

Louis makes a little noise in disagreement. “Only my lips! Though he did try to slip a little tongue in too.”

Christ. That’s new—that makes him want to hunt this Max fellow down and sow his mouth shut. Caught off by the anger this evokes in him, Harry growls, “How long’s this been going on?”

“Ooooh, so big bad Alpha now,” Louis mocks, squirming, then running his nose up his neck to his ear, “I haven’t told anyone. He promised not to, too. So don’t worry.” Only thing I’m worried about is your innocence staying intact because it’s mine to take.

Harry swallows thickly to avoid such thoughts, then, “A very sad welcome home, paradise. Deciding to drop this bomb on me that you’ve been bad while I was away.”

Against him, Louis stiffens, then whispers meekly, “Bad?”

“Very bad,” he affirms quietly. “Giving your mouth without my approval.” Lord, what is he saying?

“No,” the boy disagrees in such horror that Harry almost feels wrong for doing this to him…but when his mouth is damp and warm on his ear, his cock is the hardest it’s ever been and he can’t seem to think beyond sensation and what his Alpha tells him is right. “No. Not bad. Good.” Once
again he wonders how Louis can still think he’s an Alpha.

“I don’t think so. You’ve only been bad. How’re you going to be good, paradise?”

Louis’ breaths come fast and short before the fifteen year old boy acts like he always has: impulsively. A soft, wet mouth is hot on his, and though the Alpha stiffens, he doesn’t hesitate to take what Louis is offering in this precious moment, returning the kiss to tongue at his salty lips, slowly, until they part under his attention.

Omega. Omega. Omega.

Obviously, his tongue is still virgin. Wanting him to return the contact, the Alpha teases his little tongue languidly. The taste is better than he could have ever imagined, saccharine and eager for him. A foreign so forms in the boy’s throat, sexual and so needy. A calling, the base of his cock swells.

The dim jingle of his chain reels him to reality. Tearing away, Harry staggers, then shoves with more force than intended at the Omega who tumbles to the floor and begins to laugh hysterically, dabbing at real tears, “How’s that for good?”

When the soon to be Omega tilts his head backwards, those blue eyes are wide and laughing despite the cheery flush to his cheeks. Swallowing, the Alpha shakes the sensation away to play along, “Filthy. You’re a filthy whore.”

Pouting, Louis crosses his arms, “‘M just desirable in all ways.” You are…

“Feed Max-y that bullshit, pup.”

“I’ve been kissed by you. Screw Max. Wait ‘til I’m an Alpha and laugh in one of your whores’ face because you tongued me down first.”

Deliberately, Harry scrubs at his mouth with the back of his hand, then spits like the taste disgusts him. “You taste like whore.”

“From kissing one fifteen year old boy? Unlikely.”

Unimpressed, the Alpha crosses his arms and pins the boy with his most disapproving look. “Must I monitor you at all times, pup? What were you gettin’ from a fumbling child’s kiss?”

Standing, Louis retorts, “Twenty seven. Christ, H. What were you gettin’ from an old dusty hag’s kiss?”

“Nothing but a nice warm hole to fuck, L.”

At the crude, biting response, the boy’s eyes bug out. “Disgusting pig, only think with your dick.”

“Interested as you are, I didn’t come home to talk about my dick’s whereabouts.”

Scrunching his face cutely, Louis ducks his head, and opens his hand to reveal his chain pooled in his hand. Against his skin the metallic grey looks…beautiful as his nimble fingers trace the tags attached. “I quite like this.”

“Keep it,” Harry hears himself say.

Peeking up through thick lashes, the boy whispers shyly, “Yeah?”

“Yeah, so next time I’m away if you ever miss me you can just put it on.” So you don’t forget,
“Yeah, so next time I’m away if you ever miss me you can just put it on.” So you don’t forget, because God knows I’ve never forgotten.

“Don’t go away again.”

Leaning into the rails, Harry looks out over the river. “Don’t ask that of me.”

“I’m not asking. I’m saying that you are home now, you’re still mine, and you’re not allowed to leave me behind anymore.”

Harry smiles numbly, then whispers to the dark void stretching out before him. It looks like his future. “If it were so simple I’d never leave again.” Never leave you to Matt, whatever the fuck his name is, or any other moron.

“I hoped you wouldn’t find that,” a small voice parts the memory as Harry tenses, blinking rapidly to find the tags again; there’s the same militia encryptions, but diamonds are engraved on all seven tags, diamonds that weren’t there when he last seen them.

Slowly, the Alpha looks over his shoulder to find Louis in the doorway, clutching the blankets to his frail shoulders; his hair is a mess in his face, and something lurks in the depths of his soft stare. “Diamonds?” he asks quietly, tracing the smooth little fragments with the tip of his index finger.

“I wanted to be there, too,” Louis explains, jacking the blankets up to scurry over and stand before him. “They have a pretty sparkle to ’em now.”

Helpless to his reaction, the Alpha smiles a bit, then looks back down at the tags. “Has a nice shine now. They look better like this.”

“I think so too. They were too simplistic. And you know—,”

“Nothing about paradise is simple,” he finishes as Louis curls into his lap, resting his head on Harry’s shoulder. Fit for him, the Omega settles to take the chain in two fingers. “It’s still mine. No take backs.”

“I wouldn’t dream of trying to take anything from you.”

“You’ve taken enough,” the boy mumbles with too many traces of unhappiness.

He swallows, hard. Tries to apologise, though it’s a wasted effort as Louis asks first, “Do you remember when you gave them to me?”

“When you stole them,” Harry corrects seconds too late, snaking his arm around his waist. “Yes, I do.” I remember every detail; how you felt, how you tasted and talked…

Fingers trail down his neck to sneak underneath his V-neck, to his pecs where the muscles jump. “Your third time coming home. You didn’t think I’d be there. Your Mum said you didn’t want any of us there…” there’s a frown in his voice. “You looked so tired. And you gained so much weight! I almost passed you right by. You were going to throw my necklace away, too. Like you hadn’t gone through Hell to get those tags. And then you looked at me like you wanted to…” from there the boy begins to ramble, and Harry listens and listens and listens because that’s just his way, drinking in every word like it’s the last drop of water on Earth.

When at last Louis’ finished the tale of their reuniting, Harry asks in amusement, “Are you done?”

“Oh, I could go all night,” he knows, “but I’m starving. You don’t feed me enough. Get your arse in that kitchen, slave.”
It’s once Harry’s rummaged through the entire kitchen, offering options of meals, that Louis groans, “This is taking too long! I’m hungry now!”

“Brat,” the Alpha mutters, scowling as Louis smiles sweetly.

“I’ll get dressed! Diner downtown?”

“Sure,” he waves one hand, already headed to his room. He needs just a few more lines to keep him going. “Want to take a ride on the bike?”

“Can we? Can we, can we?” A child’s excitement halos him as Louis almost soars out of sight, leaving a trail of fairy dust and giggles.

“We can.”

“I’ll be out in two minutes!”

All that Harry leaves is a trail of tragedy.

&&

Adrenaline festers in Louis’ bloodstream even as the Alpha kills the engine and stands all in one effortless motion. Breathless, the Omega acts on the habit of a lifetime, following Harry’s example to swing his legs over onto his side; its nowhere as poised: Louis loses balance with how his head spins and suddenly he’s making a slow dive towards the concrete. A large, familiar hand closes around his upper arm, steadying him. Like this, the Omega closes his eyes and focuses on anything but the mad rush in his head.

“Steady,” his voice is amused, then concerned when Louis gives no reaction. “Gonna remove the helmet now, okay?”

Softly, Louis hums, shoring the strength to somehow lift his helmet head so Harry’s skilled fingers unfasten the protection, then carefully remove it. Once the cool morning breeze drifts over his sweat sheen face the Omega shivers, and exhales, batting the hair from his eyes to peer up at Harry. Heartthrob is such an understatement when looking at Harry like this; dressed in a sleeved white shirt, peeking from the end of the flannel button up is a flashy watch which must’ve cost more than the entire diner they’re about to enter, fastened to his wrist. And tight, black skinnies stretch across the thicker span of his thighs, his usual brown leather boots toeing at the rubble.

Observing now in the piercing sunlight, with his silky hair bouffant styled, out of his face, the skittish madness there loiters in the emerald depths of his eyes. Anxiety knots in his tummy; Harry looks so drained, dark bags causing his naturally fair skin to appear wraithlike.

Seemingly uncomfortable, the Alpha ushers him to his feet. As to appease him, Louis breathes excitedly, “That was so much fun! You’ve been holding out on me, Sir!” Reproving, his index pokes him in the right pec as Harry smiles cheekily down at him, setting the helmet carelessly on the seat. “You know I haven’t exactly been around to ride it.” No, because Harry had purchased the bloody bike on his nineteenth birthday from the Institution God knows how, and dubbed Louis its lousy babysitter.

“I know,” Louis murmurs, rolling his eyes heavenward before sauntering towards the entrance. “But I mean look how I’ve cared for it! The least you could’ve done is trusted me with the bloody
keys!” Except Harry isn’t *that* thick, never has been despite the slow drawl of his voice, or his inability to get to the point, and knows Louis would have abused that trust (*but come on! Who wouldn’t?*).

Somehow the Alpha makes it to the entrance first (which *what?*), taking the handle to hold the door wide open for him to walk through first—which he does with his head ducked shyly, though he can’t help but comment airily, “Always the gentleman.”

Close behind, Harry’s hand bears down on his lower back, and Louis swallows thickly at the steering contact; even knowing better by now, his Omega instinctively feels so much more secure out in the open with him, knows Harry would never let someone like Robert, the obsessed Alpha from one year prior, touch him again. Except Harry knows nothing of Robert; knows nothing of Robert’s pathetic fixation. Because being stripped of his dignity was too much to bear, and Louis had done *everything in his immense power to keep the episode to himself* (he still wishes his family could have been kept apart too, but that was an inevitable).

With crystal-clear clarity, Louis remembers that cold, terrified sensation; cornered and alone with Robert that *voice* to luring him, remembers spiraling out of control, remembers feeling *powerless* as he followed the Alpha’s orders, remembers standing before him on that lamp-lit street, trembling but unable to really *move* because Robert had commanded him to “stay very still, little pet, don’t you move,” and God he remembers the Alpha stroking his face with invasive hands and weeping because, “you’re finally here, I finally have you…I love you, I love you, I love you… I’ve…We’re…meant, don’t you see…”

And he remembers the rush of *victory* when his own hand had obeyed his will, and punched the fuck out of his vile stalker, with enough force that he’d toppled backwards (he had always had a proper arm). Of course that rush hadn’t exactly lashed as Robert struck back in seconds, shouting with rancid breath “*Love me!*” in his face as Louis screamed at the top of his lungs. What happened afterwards remains dim and distant, but Louis does recall waking up in confidential hospital care with anxiety attacks over his beaten face because *Harry* was due home and he was an absolute *wreck*.

Mercifully, his Father had Robert locked away for the remainder of his life, and Louis’ face had mostly healed before Harry’s return, beside the faded black eye which was easily explained away as horseplay on the footie field.

(Jesus, but he *can’t* rely on Harry to protect him; the Alpha has become a ticking-time-bomb and everyone’s noticed; everyone warned him against moving in, even his Dad who wanted Harry for a son-in-law more than anything, but Louis just couldn’t listen, opting instead to keep his faith in the Harry who had brought him nearly a thousand pounds worth of ice-cream when Louis presented what he felt to be wrong, the Harry who used his hands to love, not hurt, the Harry who had been *his*. He’d been so very wrong, knows now that *this* Harry is bound to prove him wrong time and time over. *This* male will tear him down until he has no choice but to escape this nightmare or wind up in the same madhouse.)

“Welcome!” a cheery trill interrupts his dismal thoughts–tall, beautiful, Omega, and *very* excited by their (no, Harry’s) arrival. “Two,” Harry tells tersely, studying her with critical eyes.

As to distract him from Miss Caked-Make-Up, Louis knocks into him lightly, and teases, “What about our imaginary friends? Wherever will they sit?” Something as simple as this triggers him these days; abruptly, the Alpha halts, frantically searching for something or someone that will not be there. Dread pours over him as the diner conversations quiet, prying eyes wandering over to Harry who’s started towards the windows—, “Is he…?” Miss Idiotic-Cakey-Face asks like she’s so very concerned.
Too focused on Harry, Louis doesn’t even bother with a cutting response, scrambling over to his best mate and curling his hand around his straining bicep. “Haz,” the Omega murmurs, yanking on his arm. “I was joking. C’mon, babe, the nosy people are staring.”

Success. Louis seems to reach him as Harry nods curtly, though his temper flares under all the wary stares. Somehow, the Alpha lets him haul him by the arm, all the while meeting stares resolutely (everyone looks away immediately).

“Here we are,” the ‘flustered’ waitress announces, motioning to the table near the wide, curtain drawn window. Firstly, the Alpha pulls out Louis’ seat, and Louis sits hesitantly as he’s tucked in, and then watches him shove into the seat across, stating to the waiting waitress, “A shot of Henny to start, please, lovely.”

“What?” Louis sputters incredulously as Harry smirks suggestively at her. Furious emotion wires through him as Louis pins the bitch with a cutting scowl that says, ‘try it’. “Ignore him, lovely. We actually need a moment. Don’t bring anything to this table, or I will have to throw it in your pretty little caked face.”

Awkwardly, the waitress sputters, clearly offended though Louis only smiles tightly, “Go on, lovely. Shoo. And don’t feel too special, this happens all the time.” When she storms away, Louis smiles, much more satisfied, though Harry’s voice shreds through this haze. “That wasn’t very nice.”

“When am I ever nice? You know, it’s eight in the morning,” Louis states conversationally, folding his hands on the table before him.

“And?” the Alpha asks tightly, jaw ticking attractively (damn him).

“And there is no reason for you to be so bitchy.”

Bracing on his elbows, Harry leans forward, brows low, mouth set, nostrils flared and working as he inhales so many times it’s rather impressive. “I’m bitchy? Says the one with no reason to be in Mummy mode. Or is it something else? Forgetting your place, Louis?”

Humiliated heat creeps onto his cheeks as the Omega hisses, “You obviously haven’t grown up any.”

“And you have?”

“Obviously more than you,” Louis retorts, brimming with heated hurt. “What exactly happened when you went away, Harry? Lost some brain cells, someone beat your head in? God, you’re so damn jumpy all the time. You know, everyone thinks you’re losing your mind? I’m tryin’ to keep faith, H, really I am, but God damn it I can’t even mention imaginary friends without–,”

It’s only when Harry slams his fists against his eyes, and whispers faintly, “Stop, please,” as he works to breathe through his nose does Louis realise what he’s said. What he’s brought up, what memories he’s awoken. “I’m sorry,” Louis mumbles sincerely, wishing Harry would open his eyes and see him for once. “I… That was wrong.”

Now that suggestive smirk is aimed at him as Harry leans back in his seat and crosses his arms. “I think I deserve that drink now.”

Feeling small and cruel, Louis fastens his stare to the table and nods, with his hands wringing before him. Surprising him, the Alpha reaches forward, hesitantly brushing his hands with gentle fingers. Goose bumps form all along his arms, and the Omega holds very still, so maybe he’ll stay. “’S okay, paradise. I… You don’t have to act like it didn’t happen…”
I don’t? Confused, Louis nods again, then admits softly, “I missed you so bad. And then…I got you back, but you’re not…you.” And still I miss you so bad.

Louis peeks up at him just as he looks away, scrubbing at his nose. “I thought about you all the time. You’re all I thought about, really.”

God, with those words his heart trips up, and he asks timidly, “Yeah?”

“Yeah. Right before I passed out, right when I woke up, and when I went through a diamond mine.” Already, the Omega’s insides become soupy; he’s so stupid when it comes to Harry Styles’ sweets.

Smiling shyly, Louis chirps, “Diamond mine? You didn’t tell me about that? Was it pretty? Why did you go there?”

“It was…uh, pretty. You would’ve liked it…” something remains unsaid. “And I was…uh, looking for someone.” Pease, just talk to me…Don’t hide…

Curiously sad, Louis starts to ask, but the Alpha strokes his knuckles, and tingles run up his arm. Distracting him—contact always distracts him and Harry knows so. “It was cold. And while I wanted you to see it with me, I was sure you’d catch somethin’. I did.”

Oh is he distracted. “You’re always warm,” Louis says in disbelief. “I can’t believe that.”

“Yeah,” Harry murmurs, mouth in a crooked grin. “It wasn’t pretty. I’m not pretty when I’m sick, lovely.” Lovely…I’m lovely.

“What else?” the boy says eagerly, in need of reassurance. “What else made you think of me?”

Clearing his throat, Harry murmurs ponderously, “Well, chocolate did. I didn’t see that stuff often but when I did I thought about all the times I brought you some when you were being emotional. Rain boots. How yours squeak no matter the brand. Car crashes. There were lots. And I thought about your shit driving skills and how the first time I let you drive my car you totaled it. Blood. When you hit that bloody goalie post playing footie and busted the back of your head. The sky. The sky reminded me of your eyes. Some days it was very light blue and then cloudy and grey, but the best was dusk, that’s when I wanted to see your eyes in person the most. I wanted to see them change colour like the sky. One day the richest blue, the next tinged with grey and then dark dark blue like twilight. I watched the sky a lot. I wanted to feel closer to you. Somehow…it worked.” Melting, Louis sighs dreamily, watching as Harry rubs the back of his neck. “Uh…yeah. Lots of stuff.”

“Wow,” Louis breathes, wanderlust crackling like fireworks in his veins. Except the Alpha inhales sharply, hurting the moment, “Your nose bothering you?”

“It’s stuffy.”

Inside, Louis wilts, and diverts his gaze because some bit of him knows why. Slowly, the Omega takes his hand back despite his Omega’s reluctance and puts his bitch-face back on to ask briskly, “Why aren’t you hungry?”

As the Alpha shrugs, the sharp muscles of his shoulders shift, and Louis tries so hard not to notice how sharp he’s become, edged by starvation. “Not hungry.”

Louis cocks an artful brow. “You’re always hungry.” You used to be…
“Not this morning,” Harry murmurs easily. It’s unsettling how Louis can no longer decipher truth from lie with him. On that note, the Omega deflates, then toys with his silverware, “I wish you’d eat.”

“I like to watch you eat.”

“Of course you do.” Because Harry Styles is pure Alpha, and that’s just an Alpha’s way. Louis’ been around enough to know.

When the Alpha twines their ankles, the boy tells himself it’s nothing, because Harry does these things, so it shouldn’t feel like more than what it is; an all-too-familiar touch. Mischievously, the Omega toes out of his right shoe to rub his sock-clad foot up his calf, swallowing thickly when Harry stiffens. Peering between thick lashes, a heady thrill runs through him at the look in his hypnotic stare, hot and interested.

“I wish you would eat,” Louis repeats, taking his bottom lip between his canines. “That would make me feel better.”

“Better?” His voice has taken on a husky note as Louis curls his toes on his thigh, hands trembling where he hides them in his lap.

“Mhm,” he hums softly. “Put me in a bett’ah mood.”

“I doubt that,” Harry mutters, and it’s like his voice hadn’t changed at all, returning to its natural rasp.

“It definitely would,” Louis convinces, stroking his thigh suggestively until one large hand takes his thin ankle, and Harry lifts one brow. “You’re nearing the wrong territory right now, sweets.”

Warmth drizzles over him, and Louis wants to deny, because that’s where he’d like to be; he liked the feeling of him last night.

“Mmm,” the Omega hums again, attempting nonchalance as Harry thumbs at his skin. And he wants to ask if he’s hard for him now, if he’s struggling to breathe evenly, if… Slapping himself mentally, Louis tries to snatch his foot back, confused and ashamed, wanting to hide though the Alpha holds him fast. “Stay.”

“Let up,” the boy mumbles hastily, tugging.

“You started it. You enjoy games. So stay. Rub me off underneath the table.”

Louis’ mouth parts at the blunt words, and his eyes widen at the same time Harry’s do. “Shit…” the Alpha mutters, releasing him like he’s a blazing iron as Louis swallows so many times around the butterflies creeping up his throat from his belly. “I don’t know why I said that. Was stupid. I’m sorry.”

“Extremely stupid,” Louis agrees, flushed hot all over.

“I didn’t mean it.”

Ouch. With his chest aching, the Omega wishes he could curl in on himself as he breathes, “Gee, thanks. You’re such a prick.”

“I know, ‘m sorry.”

As his appetite has abandoned him, Louis mumbles, “I’m not hungry anymore. I want to go
Of course he has to sound like he regrets it more than anything else, like he’s repulsed. Angry tears sting his eyes as Louis clenches his teeth, then snaps, “Home. Now, Harry.”

“Christ, I said I was sorry. I don’t think when I talk, you know that. It’s not the first time I’ve said something stupid.”

Nonexistent vomit threatens to crawl up his throat as Louis blindly stares at the table before him. “Yeah, okay, but you don’t have to sound so grossed out by me. I know I’m not such a turn on, but Jesus, you could pretend to be nice about it.”

Silence swarms between them before Harry whispers, “I’m never grossed out by you, Louis. You know that. You’re beautiful. Nobody in their right mind is turned off by you.”

And damn it Louis wants to believe him, but it’s so difficult because if that were the case an Alpha would have claimed him already. God, he’s nineteen. He’s going into spinsterhood. And he’s going to be alone forever and—, “Louis, c’mon, stop it. Enough. For christsakes, you’re not a bloody spinster. You have to be patient.”

A stunned noise falls past his lips as he realizes what he’s said. Humiliated heat creeps high on his cheeks as the Omega whispers, “I don’t want to be patient. I want to be loved. I want to…to be…taken.” As the words crowd the space between them, Louis squirms, then mumbles miserably, “It’s easy for you to say so. You’re an Alpha. There’s nothing wrong with the bachelor’s life for you. But I’m an Omega. I want to make someone, preferably an Alpha, happy, and I want someone to make me happy. Damn it, I want to be mated. You know how long I’ve wanted that bond. And yet nobody has shown any true interest in me.”

And he can’t muster the courage to look up as Harry’s silence is deafening, then, “You know I understand that. You know I don’t want a fucking bachelor’s life. And you know what I want more than anything in this world, but I don’t have that choice right now. And I’m just going to have to accept that pill.” Babies.

A shiver runs up his spine as Louis’ skin heats deliciously, though Harry only carries on shakily, “And you need to be more confident in your skin, paradise. God, you’re intimidating. You scare so many Alphas away with just one word. You shatter hearts. All the time. With just one look. And it’s better that way because you don’t need them. You need someone who…isn’t scared of you. Someone who can love you for you. If you rush that then you’ll end up with the wrong person. Be patient, paradise. It will happen, I pinky promise you.”

“You just want me to stay with you,” Louis mumbles stupidly, angry that even now he’s willing to give up what he’s been asking God for since he was fifteen. “That’s why you’re all be patient, wait it out, blah blah blah. Well, I’ve been waiting my whole life.”

“Yeah, I do. I want to keep you as long as I can because when there’s another Alpha in the picture you’re not…” he lapses, then clears his throat, “You’re not mine. And I don’t like that. I haven’t had you long enough. And I…just…” Oh, oh, oh, Louis’ heart skips too many beats. Really, it does. I’ll wait. I’ll wait to stay with you. To stay yours a while longer. “But more than that I don’t want you to rush into a union that isn’t right just because you’re lonely. That’s not you. I don’t want you hurt. I want you to be happy as you dream of. But if you just choose the first fucker that comes around…” A dark look clouds his handsome features.

Louis sighs. “With the way you act sometimes I’ve been expecting you to auction me off to the
Tension thickens between them as fingers tighten around his ankle. “What is it? Do I make you feel unwanted?”

Upset with his sudden piteous streak, the Omega shrugs, about to speak when the waitress appears with his order, setting down Louis’ stack of waffles and all (should he be worried it’s been poisoned?). When she’s left, Harry presses, “Lou.”

Drizzling the syrup, Louis mutters, “Sometimes I think this moving in idea was your worst yet. You don’t leave your room for whole days. You stay out all night.” When the waffles are drowning, “You don’t seem too partial to my company, really.”

As the Omega starts in, he cuts neat squares, though the Alpha interjects, “I love your company.”

Incredulous, Louis shoves a forkful in his mouth, moaning appreciatively the taste, watching the chocolate chips melt mouthwateringly. “I won’t ask you to explain,” he murmurs matter-of-factly once he’s swallowed his mouthful. “But I also won’t just accept that statement with absolutely no proof.”

“I don’t like staying away. You know I don’t. I always…I always find myself standing at your door whenever I’m on my way to my room. And I can hear you in there, doin’ all sorts of shit. Listening to old records. Playing video games. On the phone. Who are you on the phone with every Thursday night?”

“Well,” Louis murmurs tightly around another bite, peeking up at him, pale and agitated. “You’ve proven you’re a creeper.”

Regarding him, Harry’s stare is hard. At the attention heat shimmers to life in his veins. “And why is it you feel the need to tell them what you’re wearing?”

Now Louis blanches, and hisses, “Oh my God, H! Personal space!” As to preoccupy his mouth, Louis gulps hastily at his OJ.

“I learnt some interesting details about your nightwear. You don’t tell me things. Like your interest in lingerie.”

Louis chokes on another gulp, then sputters, “That’s…That’s none of your business!”

A small, playful smile tilts Harry’s full mouth. “‘M sure whoever is on the phone appreciates the visuals you create with that mouth of yours. Buttercup lace with a frilly trim. Mmm. Yummy.”

A blush heats his cheeks as he realises that’s what he has on now.

“You know no boundaries, do you?”

“I didn’t know you liked lingerie. I would’ve bought you an entire wardrobe of lingerie.” And the Omega doesn’t doubt it, because Harry tries to spoil him like nobody else, but that’s that what makes his trousers so tight or his hole damp like this; it’s the idea of wearing what Harry picks out, what he likes. And feeling pretty for him.

“I didn’t want you to know!” Louis shrills, panicked by his reaction. “That’s so embarrassing, Harry. Why are you listening in on my private conversations! I don’t do that to you!” Lie, and Louis knows it, because he doesn’t believe in privacy where Harry Styles is concerned; he wants to know what is on his twisted mind because Harry never tells him.

By the glint in his eyes, the Alpha knows he’s lying, too, though he murmurs easily, “To be quite
honest I don’t think you should be giving people images to wank you. Really.”

“You probably do so all the time,” Louis says, stifling a grin with his hand when Harry rolls his eyes. “And to be quite honest I don’t care what you think.”


Louis pouts, “You’re the only one who thinks so.”

“My opinion is rather important.”

“Maybe to your little whores. Me? Not so much.”

“I reckon Thursday I’ll hear you’re wearing pale pink panties.”

Louis takes a measured bite. “Doubt it. I don’t even own that colour.”

“You’re quite resourceful. Just don’t let whoever is on the phone know who you’re wearing them for.”

Oh, boy. “I’m done with this convo,” the Omega grumbles, shoveling food as Harry watches, annoying in his amusement.

“I’m not. Who are you talkin’ to so late at night, paradise?”

“If you must know,” Louis sighs, “His name is Aiden. The Grimshaw’s heir.”

There’s a brief pause, and when Louis looks up again the Alpha’s face is blank, but how his knuckles are white on the table and his body rigid tells Louis he’s not so heartless. “You could do better.”

Louis rolls his eyes. “I like him. He’s a…change.”

“A change?” the Alpha asks tightly.

“You know…” By now Louis is simply playing with the mushy leftovers. “He’s sweet.”

“Sweet enough that you feel the need to tell him what you’re wearing in order to keep his attention?”

Irritation wells up as Louis hisses, “I don’t need to do anything. I want to. Jesus, H, don’t be an arse right now.”

“I don’t like him,” the Alpha mutters mulishly.

At this, the boy’s brows furrow. “Why not?”

“He probably wanks to you every night, that’s why not.”

Unbidden giggles bubble from his lips until Louis’ biting the bottom one and batting his lashes. “Babies for me.”

Hostility mars his features as Harry twitches, nostrils flaring while his skittish stare bores into Louis’ soul. “You don’t even want babies.”

“You don’t know that. Maybe I do,” Louis mumbles, prodding at him. “You’ve never asked.”
It seems that’s what does it as Harry all but slams his coffee cup on the table and growls, “Do you want babies, paradise?”

A bit intimidated, Louis swallows, then breathes, “Its killing you to know I can have what you want so bad, innit?”

“That’s not it,” the Alpha bites back, canines like daggers flashing as he does.

“No?” the Omega asks quietly, “then why—,”

“Don’t mock me. Don’t shove that shit in my face,” Harry snarls, rage ablaze in his eyes as Louis’ own go round. “You think that’s funny? You want Grimshaw’s pup? Fine. Go right ahead. But don’t think I couldn’t get any…” As Harry rants, Louis zones out, watching dark, crimson liquid seep from his nose. It runs, staining his skin as Louis says numbly, “You’re bleeding.”

And he does not have to listen to know Harry asks him what he’s said. Dread lances through him as Louis stares, so sick as the changes come to light. “Your nose. It’s bleeding.” It doesn’t sound like him; it sounds empty as Harry stills, and wipes at the blood like it means nothing. Louis must be the blood. Meaningless. Just an indication of betrayal.

Of course, that’s it. He’s high. It’s all there in the blown pupils that dart every which way, the nose bother, the way he’s been running his nails over his wrist like it itches.

Numb, Louis stands, and walks away blindly. Escape is all that’s on his mind as betrayal’s knife cuts deep in his chest. Of course. He’s so stupid. So stupid to think Harry would take him seriously. Like he matters.

In the near distance Louis can hear his name. He can feel the stares. But his vision is blurred by tears, throat seized up enough that there’s no way to find his voice, and he’s…

Overwhelmed. Yeah, that’s it.

That’s…it.

Louis exits the diner, and stands there for moments with his trembling hand over his mouth, his rapid heartbeat climbing up his throat.

Thoughtlessly, the Omega starts down the road, aimless. He barely takes two steps before Harry’s hand takes his wrist, halting his movements. Without turning, Louis hears, “It’s just a drip.”

A firestorm of fury sets flames to his heart as Louis whirls around. He doesn’t really realise but he’s reeled back his arm, prepared to slap the high out of him, though his chance is stolen when the Alpha immobilizes him. “Let me go. You shithead!” Louis shrieks, struggling until Harry crushes him to his chest and his fists are just slamming into his stupid chest. With any luck, he’ll break a rib or…or… “You liar. You fucking liar. You pinky promised.”

The icy rage that fists his heart scares the hell out of him as Louis buries his face in Harry’s throat, and breathes raggedly, “You pinky p-promised.”

And he hates his body, mind, heart for warming under his touch, for forgiving so freely.

“I’m sorry.”

“Liar. You’re n-not sorry! You don’t give two fucks about anything but your next f-fix!” Scalding tears spill down his face as he shakes his head, “I’m movin’ out. You…You’re…I won’t watch you kill yourself. I won’t.”
Tension builds in Harry’s body, until his holds become unbreakable. Frantically, “Don’t say that. Please, don’t say that. I need you.”

Those words slice straight through him as Louis recoils, trying to step away, to hide the fireball of pain. “I can’t. I can’t. You don’t need me, you need your b-bloody fix.”

Airways all closed up Louis struggles to breathe, freaking the fuck out as the seconds drip by. He can’t breathe. He can’t—, “Louis. Louis, listen to me.” His arms are pinned to his sides by strong hands, and Harry leans in so those blown, flat eyes are level with Louis’ blurry vision. He wants to vomit in his face. His hands fist the material of Harry’s top as the Alpha says with that tenor, “Breathe. In and out, in and out, in…” Helpless to him, Louis listens, breathing in when Harry says to, then out, until the dizziness dwindles. “We can do this at home. This ain’t the place. Let me just get the bill, okay?”

Numb, Louis nods—three heartbeats run away from them until Harry leaves him.

As soon as the Alpha is out of sight, the Omega turns on his heels and walks away with a nearby cab company on the phone. He steps into the vehicle just as Harry appears around the bend with a focused stare.

Solo, Louis sinks into the abused seats, and doesn’t dare look back as the car starts away.

&&

It’s the night before life goes on that Louis sits up on the roof of his home. Speckle sock-clad his feet dangle, but the boy, only fifteen, doesn’t notice, sneaking a smoke by the chimney and checking out the moon. It looks so lonely up there, but even the moon has the stars to comfort her.

He isn’t startled when someone he knows all too well takes the fag between his fingers and tosses it. Louis watches soundlessly as the orange glow plunges into the nighttime darkness below. He wants to follow it. “Shit kills you,” says that disapproving someone.

Unaffected, Louis shrugs, then shivers when the breeze bites at his fragile, bare skin. Like an instinct, the Alpha takes off his flannel shirt and drapes it around his shoulders, all the while sliding up behind him. Arms round his waist, and Louis can’t help but sink into him.

It’s when one tear falls from his cheek, right when it hits his arm that the Alpha murmurs, “C’mon, sweets, let’s get out of here.”

“I don’t want this night to end. Why’s it gatta end, Haz?”

There isn’t an answer. Louis doesn’t think Harry has one for him.

Ghostlike, the both are silent as Louis’ mum waves them off with so-sad eyes.

All they do is take one last drive around the city. It already looks different. They’ve been dreading this moment all summer long.

Startling him, Harry slams the wheel, and almost shouts, “Life ain’t fair. I just don’t want to let you go again.” But, that’s the thing, isn’t it? He will. Tomorrow, he will leave with only seventeen years in his rearview, and a trail of blood from the heart he shouldn’t have hiding in his pocket.

In shambles, Louis just mumbles, disconcertingly stable for him, what his Mum told him only nights ago, “There’s nothing you can do. There’s nothing you can say. Life goes on.”
He didn’t want to listen, but it’s then Louis knows exactly what it feels like when love goes away.

&&

Louis is all giggles, wilted flowers adorning his hair. Senses stunted from the bubbly stuff he fancies so much, Louis leaves Niall with wet kisses, and stumbles through the front door ready to fight.

It’s like those films where the child comes home from sneaking out and as soon as he or she walks through the door the light comes on to reveal the angry parent.

Except this light reveals an angry Alpha with the Devil living in his blown stare.

“Well, ‘ello,” the Omega giggles, running his tongue along his bottom lip before taking the flesh between his teeth.

“You been drinking?”

“Duh.”

“Where.”

Louis grins. “Oh, nowhere, jus’ around.”

Propped up against the opposite wall, Harry is pokerfaced, giving him no reaction whatsoever. He’s gotten quite good at it. At…At…Louis sways, then flattens one damp palm on the wall and points the other hand at Harry who moves to help him, “Ah, ah, ah,” the Omega slurs, dizzied, “Keep ya filthy paws to yaself. Stay away. Or I’ll puke on you.”

“You’ve had a few too many, paradise.”

Residual resentment rages, and Louis is on fire, dripping diamonds and sweat. He wants to scream. He wants to sob. He wants to wish Harry Styles away. “Says the fookin’ crackhead. I’ll drink as much as I wanna. In fact I’ll go drink some more!” Prideful, the Omega stumbles around boxes and trips over his own feet to the dimly lit hallway towards the–

An arm rounds his waist. With a surprised chirping noise, Louis flails his limbs in attempts to squirm free, but Harry’s mouth is flush to his ear, breath hot and slightly heavy from keeping him, “Paradise, no more for tonight.”

“Get off ah me!”

A hand smooths back his damp hair, and flower petals flutter to the floor. “You’re gonna fall as soon as I do.”

“Am not! Let go!” He does. Louis doesn’t expect this, and staggers forward, headed straight for the worn wood he despises so much. Before this happens, he-who-Louis-also-despises catches him around the waist again and hauls him up on two feet. “See?” he’s so smug.

“I see shit! Let me go the right way!”

“What is the right way?”

Louis tries to think, but frowns. “I…dunno.”

“You hungry?”
“No.”
“I think so. Want some cereal?”
Cereal…Too tempting.
“What sort?”
“We can do a Louis mix-up.”

How is he to say no to such an offer? “Thas’ not fair. I’m not hungry! ‘M sleepy, and me mouth tastes like arse!”
“Does it?”
“Wanna taste?” Louis pouts.

It might just be his intoxicated imagination but before Harry mutters, “Milk won’t help that,” he thinks he hears a maybe.

“Take me to bed.”

Louis doesn’t know when or where but along the way the Alpha lifts him so Louis transforms into a baby monkey, hanging on by loose limbs with his arms around his shoulders and his legs loose around his waist. He’s drooling on his shirt, and is more than happy about it.

Being lolled to sleep with every step, the Omega slurs hazily, “’Ey, Haz?”
“Mmm.”
“I hate you.”
“Why?” Like he doesn’t know.
“You hurt me. Always hurtin’…me,” that the boy has to say so is one more sharp sting.
“You just love me too much,” the Alpha whispers sadly.
“I’ll stop,” Louis promises, worse off.
As his bedroom door is shown open, the Omega wants to crawl under his blankets and sleep sleep sleep it all away.
“Don’t stop. How about this: How about I love you more?”
A small smile spreads on his mouth, but slips because, “You couldn’t love me more than your precious fix.”
“You’re wrong.”

Louis’ never wrong. Of that he’s sure.
“Gonna sleep now,” is all he bothers to respond.

“What do you want from me?” He wants a lot, but most of all, *I want to be your one and only. I want to be what matters most.*
“Nothing. I want to sleep,” Louis mutters blandly before pushing weakly on his shoulders.

“As you wish.” Just like that, without hesitance or care, Louis is left alone.

It’s nothing new.

&&


Louis quits chewing on his pencil to regard the Irish Omega blankly. “I am tired. How are you alive right now?”

“Well, there’s this thing in my chest called my heart and–,”

“Niall,” the Omega warns darkly. “I don’t need an anatomy lesson.”

“You jus’ need to learn to love yer liquor, Tommo. Love it and it will treat you right.”

He means to respond right away, but is sidetracked by a text from the contact Coco-Puffs: how’s ur head?

“Who could that be?” the Irish one singsongs sarcastically, craning his neck to see Louis’ phone.

“How is that going anyway? How is Harry?” At the sound of his name Louis feels like he’s been hit by a train, and locks the phone to shove it between his thighs.

“The same.” It’s an old scar.

He focuses his stare on their professor mostly to avoid Niall’s stare, rather than pretend he’s paying attention.

“What’s your plan then?”

“Run,” the boy mutters, wishing he meant it.

“Well, I have an idea,” Niall whispers dubiously.

Trusting the Irish lad only because he’s desperate, Louis turns his head to smile tightly, prompting him with his eyebrows.

All smiles, Niall says simply, “Cut ‘im off.”

Deflating, the Omega mumbles, “I can’t. I don’t know where he gets his shit from.”

“Louis,” the Irish boy boos, “C’mon, mate! It’s not rocket science! Get yer little paws on his phone, delete all the sketchy contacts and boom. Then, find the stash, and flush that shit down the loo.” Just like that all the jammed up cogwheels in his head start to turn, and his hope is revived.

“Niall, you brilliant little shit.”

“I know, I know,” the Irish lad doesn’t even try to sound modest. “Smarter than yer average cokehead. Just make ‘im think it’s all fine and dandy first so he ain’t suspicious.”

Louis intends to.

&&

Between his Council prerequisites, the boys, and the unholy hours of his current Council
courses, Louis doesn’t have the time to think or feel or be. As of now Louis simply is.

At last it’s Thursday, and though Louis wants to crash, to sleep away any remnants of school, there are schemes that need to be carried through. Curse his ruthless nature—now why can’t I just be a pretty, meek Omega?

Well, because those Omegas are utter twats. That’s why.

So, exhausted, running only on sheer will and seven cups of the strongest coffee he could find, Louis trudges into ‘their’ house. In the entry room, Louis heaves his three thousand stone backpack, stuffed to its capacity with Council scriptures that need to be memorized (ugh), to the floorboards that whine in protest (damn it the wood really needs to go).

“Haz!” the boy calls around a yawn, toeing out of his shoes. “I’m home!” It feels like an eternity, though it’s only a minute, of swarming anxiety before—, “One sec.”

Fleeting, Louis thinks he should tell the Alpha not to bother…but he doesn’t. If tonight goes horribly wrong then Harry will be right pissed for at least two days, and Louis has to play nice first. So he waits there in his uniform, shoeless and toying nervously with his beanie.

Footsteps approach abruptly, but before he can track them with his eyes he’s taken around the waist in an embrace. The arms that circle his waist are unbreakable hands, and his body knows so as he softens, pliable and loose. Oh, lovely, now he wants to be carried to bed and cuddled and–

“Well hello there,” Louis greets him playfully, in need of distraction.

“You’re home late,” Harry prompts into his beanie.

The scent that emanates from Harry’s skin clouds his mind, intoxicating him; evergreen and cologne and something Alpha, dark and thick, weaving through his every sense. “Mmm,” the boy hums softly before yawning, though he assures him, “Was just class. Ran late.”

“You should rest.”

Louis smiles broadly. “Yeah, in a bit. I need to shower first. I smell like old Council Alphas. I’ll tell ya, that old bat, y’know the one with the skin that’s melting? Yeah, she’s so feeling me. She doesn’t leave me alone, H. I’m just trying to survive, and she won’t give it a rest! It’s gross.”

Louis feels Harry’s answering laugh on his lips, and his bones tremble under the force, knees ridiculously weak. “Lady Carnell, paradise? She’s harmless, about six feet under. I’m sure she’s not tryin’ to get it in with you. She’s old enough to be your Nan. She has a grandson.”

“That’s the problem,” Louis groans, grimacing in disgust. “They both want this. She wants me for her grandson! Jacoby who is thirty seven! Though I don’t think she’d refuse an offer either.”

“Council scandal of the year,” the Alpha teases, thumbing at his leaping pulse-point. “I’m going to Parliament Monday to see about my political prerequisites… So maybe I’ll be around to rescue you from the Carnell scandal. You rescue me from my boredom. Agreed?”

Grateful, Louis nods, “Oh, thank you baby Jesus! I was wondering when you’d come back. Everyone’s been missing you. I hope Carnell takes the hint, though I’m not so sure about Lady. I’ve tried everything. Even snogged Ni so the rumor of same-status-sex spread.”

“Christ,” the Alpha winces, “I take break and suddenly you’re into Omegas, and even worse, Niall? Oh, paradise, what are we going to do with you?”
You can do whatever you want to me. Wait. What. No. Shut up me. “We are going to let me wash away Lady and the second Carnell from my body, and pray Ni works his magic until you’re back. You’re the big guns, bud.”

“Hardly. They all think I’ve lost it. Don’t think I don’t know what goes around. They think I’m headed to the bedlam. And I know my parents must hear of it.” The offended edge to his voice makes Louis’ heart ache, makes him want to throttle every dolt that’s opened their mouth concerning Harry Styles—even knowing Louis’ father is a part of that crowd (at least his dad only runs his mouth to Harry’s dad–his best mate. And with genuine concern for Harry, but more so Louis). Damn it, Harry hasn’t given them to think otherwise. Not with the way he’d acted the last time he’d stepped foot in Parliament (even now Louis cringes, praying Monday isn’t a repeat).

“Even better,” the boy jokes lightly, nosing at his jaw. “If you’re scary and insane with the reputation the Reaper, the Carnell’s will have to back off.”

“Everyone will back off.”

“I don’t mind. Everyone that doesn’t matt’ah will and that’s a-okay with me. ‘Sides you know Ni lost his marbles long ago. Z doesn’t care. Liam is in la-la land with Sofia next to him, Cara adores you, and Grimmy just…you know.” Really, he doesn’t mean to say Grimmy in such a bitchy tone, but Louis just isn’t fond of him, and doesn’t like that Harry shows a particular attachment to the other Alpha either. Because when Harry isn’t with Louis, he is with Grimmy and God knows who Grimmy brings along to do God knows what. Humph.

Snidely, his Omega turns his pert nose, turning all shades of green.

“Well even so I will be on my knees tonight, wouldn’t want to put a dent in your sterling reputation. ‘Sides you do reek of old Council Alphas. It’s most unbecoming.” Sadly, the Alpha takes his arms back, and Louis pokes his tongue out at him, which earns him another chuckle. Like it’s weightless, Harry tosses his boulder-bag over one shoulder, then drapes his free arm around his shoulders. “C’mon.”

“You don’t need to walk me to my door,” Louis mumbles, colour blooming on his cheeks for no apparent reason. This is routine; Harry always walks him to his room. So why is his heart beating like he’s run a bloody marathon?

“Need to? No. Want to? Of course.”

Wordless, Louis nods, leans into his side and lets him all but tow him to his bedroom. Inside, Harry places his loveseat. Here it is… He expects Harry to wish him sweet dreams then go away, but oddly enough he lingers, and with him here in the room that’s a master suite everything feels small. The air of influence that coats his skin pours into the room, all over his skin as Louis fidgets.

“Um,” the boy whispers, shyly. This certainly isn’t routine. “What’s this?”

“Dunno,” his voice disrupts the still in the room. “I haven’t seen much of you this week…” And why does the disappointment in his voice excite him so much? Did you miss me?

“Oh,” Louis mumbles, indebted to the darkness for veiling his fiery cheeks. “’S been a long week.”

“C’mere,” Harry beckons huskily. Louis doesn’t know how it happens but then his arms lock around the broad of Harry’s shoulders, and he’s tucked small against the solid lines of his best mate. “I wanna lay with you.”
Stunned, the boy jerks backwards to peer up at him because this is so new. Two years—it’s been two years since Harry’s initiated prolonged contact, and his Omega body aches for it, him. Even so, Louis searches the Alpha’s face shadily. With seemingly nothing to hide, Harry stares back in the darkness, and for the first time in what feels like so long he is looking at him, stare sober and so clear.

“Let me hold you.” A persuasive breath that almost threatens to waver his resolve.

“Not tonight,” the Omega murmurs, toying with the ends of his thick, silky hair. “’S Thursday, and I’m tired. I have to be up by the crack tomorrow. It’s nine now and I still have to shower, plus I have to make a call.”

Tension grasps his shoulders, though Harry only nods as Louis retracts his arms and settles on his feet again rather than his tiptoes. “Okay,” he mutters, tucking his hands in his front pockets. “Yeah, alright. Sweet dreams.”

Before the Omega has the chance to respond or change his mind Harry backs out and closes the door behind him.

Alone, Louis shivers, then hastily turns the lights on low low low, tears the beanie from his greasy hair, and all but hops over to his backpack to pull out the merchandise.

Now to play his role…

&&

At just turned sixteen years old Harry never thought to be tied down, but here he is, with what used to be the bane of his existence, now his entire world, clinging to his right leg and screaming bloody murder as he tries to take his place in line. “Never! Never! Don’t leave me! I’ve only just gotten you back! Please, Hazza, stop! You don’t have to go back! You don’t have to! I have nobody without you!”

The just turned fourteen year old boy’s voice bleeds with betrayal as Harry, who presented Alpha last year, shakes him off, fighting the spearing moisture gathering in his eyes. Damn it, no. The little pup on the mosaic floor of the entry hall of Parliament’s main house looks…devastated, eyes red-rimmed from tears that have yet to be shed, his cheeks flushed pink with exertion.

Around them the other trainees pretend not to watch the entire bit, checking their watches, shuffling their boots, the likes. Meanwhile, the Father’s look in with disapproving stares that say, “Get your Omega in check, boy.” Supreme Styles is nowhere to be found, but Harry knows why. He’s in the States on business. Some things are just better off missed.

More than anything Harry abruptly wants to shout in their aged faces, shout that it’s not his fault, that this isn’t his Omega, that he’s trying to get the hell away, that he’s trying trying tyring, oh God he’s trying, to make his Father proud…

Angrily, Harry crouches, then leans forward to hiss in his ear, “Get up, pup. Stop causing a bloody scene, and go play with the other brats.”

Of course Louis does not listen, never does; rather he stands unsteadily, storms up to the Generals permanently red, plump face. “You fat bastard! You’re making him leave! You’re taking him away from me! I hate you! I hate all of you! I hope you burn–, ”
Before the General even reacts to the sudden, child’s outburst, Louis is reeling his arm back, little hand fisted and-- “ENOUGH!” Without warning Louis’ Father (thank God), one of the thirteen Council Alphas, like his own Father, storms up to his son, who shrinks from the hand that takes his upper arm in a firm hand and pins it to his side. “That is quite enough, Louis. You will not treat your elders with such impertinence, no matter the reason. Apologise to everyone, especially Harry. Then excuse yourself to the Meditation Center where you will refrain from showing your face for another night as punishment. To reflect.” When the boy exhales shakily, pure Alpha instinct rears through him, and Harry suddenly wants to destroy every and any idiot who’s ever upset this easily-upset boy. But that is simply not his place; this is not his Omega… “Now, Louis!” it’s an Alpha’s no-nonsense bellow that forces Louis to sniff through his stuffy nose with an air of regal sarcasm, hissing to his audience, “My most sincere apologies. I wish to be excused.”

“Permission granted,” the General states tightly as Louis’ Father tries to bring him over to Harry, though the boy turns his pert little nose away and starts towards the spiral stairway. “I will not apologise to him. Like it or not, papa.” With that the to-be Omega, who has never dismissed him this way, darts up the stairs, scrubbing at his face. Only footsteps are left in his wake.

Vicious bonded Alpha instinct rips through him, venom eating away at his bone marrow, though he holds very stiff and still until Louis’ Father, the most influential figure in the room, clears his throat pointedly. As his head snaps up, his eyes meet expectant, steely ones as the older Council Alpha motions to the stairway. “Are you going to take care of my son, Styles? I would hope so as you’re the reason for his tantrum. So, am I going to have to beg his forgiveness for allowing you to leave without a private farewell?” When his eyes dart to the stiffy annoyed General, the elder snarls, “They will wait. My son cannot, I fear.”

No, Louis has always come first in everyone’s life. Needing no more reassurance, Harry bolts up the (what feels like endless) stairway, stopping on the third floor to start in direction of the Meditation Center, where he shoves his way through the doors in less than one minute. At the sight of the curled up boy in the far corner, hugging a pillow to his chest, his heart hammers.

More desperate than he could ever express, the Alpha doesn’t give him any chance to react, ripping the pillow away and yanking him into his lap, into a crushing embrace.

“Louis,” he whispers into his choppily cut hair (that he insisted Harry cut) as his little fasts pound at his chest, and he shrieks unintelligibly. “Louis…please, please stop. Stop making me want to stay. I can’t stay. I have to do this.”

“No, no, you don’t! I hate you right now! I hate you for being so bloody honorable! I hate you for loving everyone and everything else more than you love me!” No, he thinks, horrified, I love you more than I love anyone or anything.

“That’s okay,” Harry assures in a harsh breath, eyes stinging even screwed shut. “That’s fine. Hate me. It will hurt far less for both of us if you do.”

“B-B-But I can’t! I can’t hate you,” Louis cries dryly, fisting his shirt. “I want to so much, though. God, don’t think I don’t want to. I just… I could nev’ah hate you, Hazzy.” At last the boy is still aside from his hiccupping breaths, like he knows nothing will change Harry’s mind. So selfish is what he is to be relieved by this revelation.

“I don’t ever want you to hate me. You’re not allowed to hate me,” because he’s so tired of acting like he hates this beautiful little pup who’s become his favourite everything. “I thought I did for a while. ‘Cause you’re so loud and obnoxious and you hit like an Alpha and well there’s lots
of reasons, Lou…but I don’t want you to hate me, I don’t could never hate you.”

Giggling stuffily, the boy burrows into his chest, “Aren’t you such a charmer? Don’t know what the Omegas see in you. Really don’t.”

“Less than you see in me…”

Against him Louis stiffens, then breathes, “Way less. They could never love you like I do. They don’t know you like I do. They can’t help you. I’m the only one that can. You know that. You like to pretend it’s not true because I’m a bit younger than you, but you know it, that’s why you let me act out and be a little brat to every Omega you shove your penis in. You don’t care about them. You don’t knot them.”

It’s so dirty coming from this innocent child with those damn lovely blue eyes, squirming to lift his face and reveal an ingenuous expression. Ice needles at his skin—confess. He wants to confess it all—how his body reacted to the sight of the subtle changes of Louis’ growing up; how he hadn’t had a type before watching him make a mess with that bloody Popsicle four months ago; how he forced his attraction to his extreme opposite out of fear.

“They hated me, but you didn’t care, and you never have. Because I’m the mostest important, aren’t I, Hazza? Even though you don’t fancy my company…I mean more to you than anyone else.” Fancy your company? I couldn’t even hold a conversation with them because they don’t ramble on and on about footie or fashion or music or pigeons or world domination or any of the trivial shit you do. It was so silent…and I don’t like the silence so much anymore.

“Yes, I am. Because I make you feel bett’ah. I make all the stuff inside stop.”

“Stuff inside?”

Huddling close, the boy breathes, “Don’t be angry…but um…sometimes I overhear you when you...um...when I come over…I stand by the door for a little while...and I listen to you um, t-talk to yourself.”

A heartbeat of silence that Louis scrambles to end, “I-I don’t think it’s weird or anything. Okay, I do! It’s weird, Harry! You don’t make any sense! You’re like speaking in another tongue! I’ve tried every night to make out what you’ve been going on about! But it makes no sense! I memorised. Nine twenty twenty four-0-seven RTG, forum—.”

“Stop,” Harry interrupts sharply. “You don’t repeat those things ever again, pup. You hear me?”

“But—,”

“Are we clear?”

With an annoyed sound, Louis nods. A tender smile softens his features when Harry strokes the hairs at the nape of his neck, staring in awe as his face scrunches adorably. “Once again you’ve impressed me with your dedication.”

“God, H, I’m not a pup anymore! Stop looking at me like a proud papa! I hate it when you look at me like that,” the boy snarls, baring his little canines. Christ, he doesn’t know what idiotic expression he’s wearing but it’s not one of a Father for his son. It’s everywhere; Louis’ peak to puberty, and he’s more than aware of it. Every time Harry sees him...

Confessions lay heavy on his tongue; he wants to tell it all and see his reaction. He wants to tell him how many times he’s popped a knot using only his hand, thoughts consumed by the sight of his bare body (the glimpse he’d caught when he’d walked into the guest bathroom expecting
Louis to be in his own), how ‘mine’ has been a broken record ripped form his chest as his knot pulsed pools of come onto his stomach and chest. He wants to tell him how he’d been ramming that one Omega with the unattractive blonde hair with his eyes shut, visions of Louis underneath him, taking him as his hands gripped his soft love-handles, how hard he’d come on that. He wants to tell him that whenever he’s rambling all Harry can hear is a lovely purr, and all he can think to do is shove his trousers down and see if his mouth can trigger his first heat (even knowing it’s not due for another two years, and Louis is so convinced he’s an Alpha– certainly not with the way all the Alphas seem to be drawn to him like little black flies to his incredible flame– and how the slick leaking out of him will taste, if he’d ride his face–

Intrusively, someone raps on the door. “Times up,” Louis’ Dad, an incredibly tolerant Alpha considering his status, calls from the other side. “Are you two decent?”

“Ugh! Go away, papa!” Louis groans furiously, obviously embarrassed with how his cheeks bloom pink.

“Louis, that is quite enough. Let the poor fellow—,”

Childish as ever, Louis whines, then mumbles into his neck, “Just ignore him and he’ll go away eventually. That’s what I always do. Works every time.”

“Not surprised, seeing as you are a spoiled brat with no discipline whatsoever,” the Alpha responds dryly, though Louis simply carries on, “Stay. And tell me what this look is all about.”

“What look.”

“This look,” the boy breathes, leaning back again to stroke his jawline, brows knitted. “You look…hungry. Or guilty. I can’t decide.”

Damn him for being so intuitive sometimes. Affectionately, the Alpha smooths his brows with his index finger. “You’re beautiful, you know.”

Self-conscious, the boy lowers his eyes, shrugging with a snort like the compliment honestly means nothing. By now Harry’s an expert Louis-reader, knows the slight tremble to his dismissive hand, the bate of his breath, the lack of constant squirming, means discomfort. Tucking two digits underneath his chin, Harry tips his face, gazing into his beautiful ocean eyes. “I’m serious. You are so beautiful. Sometimes I look and I feel like it’ll hurt to look away. And I know you think ‘m trying to leave you on a good note or summat, because I’ve given you no reason to think otherwise…but…I don’t know, I just think you’re the most beautiful thing I’ve ever laid eyes on.”

So much for detached.

Now his pretty mouth parts to release little warm puffs of air, and his eyes are dewy and round and how could anyone think the ice blue shards in his eyes are anything but the waters of paradise? “Not beautiful enough. Everyone you find beautiful is grown up and really…stunning. But you think ‘m just an exasperating pup. I’m not beautiful; everyone knows that, I do. I’ve never been beautiful. My personality is ugly, nobody really fancies me. I don’t look thin or long or sexy. I’m short, I’m pudgy, and I have a terrible haircut and little canines. I’m still just a pup to you. Nothing about is like…them. Like Veronica or Nathan or the others.”

Curving his hand along the left side of Louis’ face, tapered fingers stroking his choppy tuffs of hair, Harry thumbs at his subtle jaw. “And yet I don’t see half the beauty in them that I see in you every waking minute. You’ve made me love you better than I could love anyone, my exasperating pup of a best mate. You’re the most beautiful. I’m saying it now and I won’t repeat myself, got it? You’re my paradise. Your personality is just massive, Lou, and you overwhelm people, but it’s why you’re so damn special. You make me crazy with this eccentric personality that gives no
fucks. You’re delicate. That’s attractive. When you are old enough you’ll make someone,” me, “very pleased, though I hope next time you let Jay take you to cut your hair rather than having me do it. You’re a paradise. My puppy paradise.”

And now his pretty mouth beckons as Louis’ round eyes beg kiss me kiss me kiss me, and more than anything in the world Harry wants to. More than he wants to leave, more than he wants to make something of himself, more than he wants to make his Father proud; more more more.

As he dips forward those lashes flutter shit, and they’re suddenly so close his breath is hot on Harry’s mouth, and their noses touch and lissome little fingers are twining in his curls and–

The door comes open.

Jerking away, the Alpha swallows, mouth dry and yearning as Louis turns all delicious shades of pink.

Of course Harry knows who it is, knows what it means. “H, they’re waiting. And you are far too touchy with my son right now,” the council Alpha murmurs, far too pleased.

Swallowing, Harry nods numbly, but doesn’t risk looking over, drinking Louis in these last seconds. “Come, my lord.”

As Dan’s footsteps retreat, the door remains open. Harry clears his throat.

Louis slides back onto the plush mats and mumbles bitterly, “You know I’m going to have to find a replacement. Who am I gonna find that will tolerate my pestering for two years?” There’s a line of Alphas waiting for that opportunity. He wants to scream.

“You’ll find some fool,” Harry says, just as bitter as his Alpha snarls, nobody nobody nobody only me, you’re mine, I’m the only one you want to bother.

Stupidly, he reaches out to him, though Louis flinches and shakes his head. “There’s always one. Well, at least by then I’ll be officially grown up and you can start treating me like it.” Lord that does not sound comforting.

Smiling tightly, “Don’t rush it. Enjoy this. You’ll miss it once it’s gone.”

“Whatever,” the heir grumbles. “Get out. I’m done with you. You are dismissed. I better get busy finding some other poor soul to brand as mine.”

“Louis–,”

“Shoo. Go on,” the boy encourages, sparing him such a heart-wrenchingly sad smile. “Don’t worry. You’re my first, Haz, which means I’ll always come back to torture you. Go before they leave your sorry arse. And don’t let General Eats-A-Lot brainwash you anymore. Or I’ll makes sure my papa isn’t there to stop me from beating you both.”

Not at all assured, realizing this is Louis’ goodbye, Harry stands dazedly, and doesn’t dare allow his eyes to latch onto the boy again for fear that he might crumble in these last minutes, make promises he surely couldn’t keep, swear to love him better once he’s home again…He knows one day he won’t come home. Physically he might. But that’ll be as deep as it goes.

Stumbling to the exit, the Alpha mutters, “I’ll hold it to you, pup.”

Returning, Louis’ Father claps him on the back, obviously on his way to comfort his son. “Safe travels, son. And come back, yes?”
“I intend to, my lord.”

As he’s walking away, the last words Harry catches are, “Don’t die, Haz, I’ll be pissed as hell. But I still want you to come home.”

And he promises over and over and over that he’ll make sure he does just that this time.

&&

Alone again Harry wills movement, unable to center on his body tonight because his thoughts just won’t quit. Except tonight they aren’t everywhere. Not at all. They are directly below him. Directly below where he stands Louis is probably in a tepid daze (because that’s how Louis always leaves his showers; claiming to love how the unbearable heat dizzies him). And he’s always so soft when he’s like that, when he’s wrapped in one of those fluffy towels, skin pink and–

No, not the directions his thoughts should be headed. Now when Louis is damn well taken tonight. Which means he’s…Damn it. Without conscious permission, the Alpha strides away from his room, unable to acknowledge that his followers trail him, constant shadows in his peripheral vision. It doesn’t ensnare him because they can’t make it into Louis’ room (he counts his blessings).

But fuck, why, why does he do this shit? Why is he like this? Why can’t he just leave the poor boy alone?

Because he’s a selfish obsessive bastard. That’s the only plausible reason.

In seconds he’s descended the stairway and rounded the first to the first hallway. There, Harry stands before the barrier denying his Alpha all he wants.

This is what happens when he’s abstemious—the animal within is allowed some fragment of control over his actions, his thoughts. A sexual drive the high steals from him.

It’s not that Louis is the aim of his Alpha’s fixation—that can’t be it because Harry has constructed those mental boundaries with extreme care and dedication. No, it’s that he’s not had sex in nearly three years. It’s not that he has trouble finding someone else. It’s that there has been no desire to do so. Right now, the desire is everywhere, it’s flared, but the right thing to do would be to leave. To turn away from this, to find an Omega that’s nothing like this one…an Omega he can have.

Except now that he is here, he is stuck, and his hands have planted themselves on the structure. This is what happens when he’s desperate to feel close to the creature on the other side, he indulges in silence, in private. The only way to preserve his steadily decaying sanity, to save the body from his slippery-slope, is to be the bad guy, to distance them, to hurt him just enough that he stays away, but not enough that its permanent damage and he leaves for good.

See, the line between best mates and mates, is so fine with Louis it’s difficult to make concrete distinctions because the Omega does not draw any; so Harry must.

Which is not difficult because his mind works on careful designs and logical progression, how he’s survived those years in the Institution; people are predictable. Most actions are forewarned. What is difficult: Louis’ spontaneity. Because none of his actions are thoroughly thought over—that
is how he wins. Wins at everything against anyone.

But he’s been with Louis awhile now (ten drawn out years) and he’s been tossed his role one too many times. By now he’s learnt to play his part to perfection.

Yet here he is, senses heightened and focused.

Oddly enough there are more rustles than ever, but then it’s quiet, and there are whispered footfalls. A content “mmm” that backs up the notion that Louis is crawling into bed. Yeah, fuck, he’s in bed. In bed–just the thought of the Omega, soft and petite with all his sun-kissed skin exposed and glowing in the darkness with the pale pink lingerie emphasizing his delicious complexion, fattens his cock enough that it’s straining hard against the metal of his zipper.

Stealing all sober thoughts, Louis’ voice is soft and shy, “Hi.” And he wants to remember that the boy isn’t speaking to him, but all he can really hear is that Omega voice, submissive and soft. This is the only time he’s allowed to hear Louis use it, when he’s in bed on Thursday, describing what he’s wearing in excruciating detail.

The response is unheard but it’s worthless to him. Not when Louis’ scent, a clean breeze, stirs in his body; sets fire to his veins.

Words are exchanged, more than enough snickers, and mumbles. The more Louis talks, the more on edge he becomes because he doesn’t want Louis to really fancy another Alpha; he doesn’t want Louis to tell another what he’s told Harry, doesn’t want them to know he’s competitive, that he does silly things when he’s bored like swim in thirty degree weather or snowboard down slopes nobody wants to think of or read Council scriptures in outlandish voices or make up words or–just no. Christ, it’s taken him ten years to learn these facets of this boy, and he’s still learning, and damn it he does not want anyone else to have that opportunity.

“A pretty outfit, too,” the boy’s voice, reedier than before, pierces his reverie. “More pieces to this one. A garter slip, panties, and thigh-highs.”

What colour? Like this, with his eyes shut, and his body rigid, the Alpha wills the bastard on the other line to ask. Because it’s not like Harry can–that fucks with his head, unscrews one more faulty bolt. “Pale pink.” A breathy excited response that draws and forces the enduring air from Harry’s lungs in a hiss. Mine–the word sets another wild, possessive fire to his body that has his canines extending from his gums, and his hands fistig with the control it’s costing him to remain here on the outside.

“Mhm,” the Omega agrees to whatever the bastard says. “The slip is pastel pink and very see through. The panties are thin, lacy trimmed. And the stockings are gossamer material that reaches the tops of my thighs with lacy tops that are attached to the garter to match the panties. All pale pink. It was…recommended. And I really do feel pretty.”

Pretty; his pretty boy. For him. This is for him. What he wanted, pale pink and pretty. Now he wants to see it, to feel the flat expanse of his belly underneath the slip, then trace the tops of his thick, creamy, laced thighs, and undo the garter so he can drag the slip up over his hips and see the panties all on their own, see how well the colour does with his skin, how the panties match the thigh-highs. All pale pink for him.

A fierce growl starts low in his throat as Harry refrains from palming his cock like some pubescent. No, he refuses to be reduced to a fumbling, horny teen for him again.

“Weeelll, I mean I could take it all off for you,” Louis ponders, which fuck no he can’t, “But that
would ruin all the fun. Plus I quite like this little outfit. Feels nice on my skin.” Don’t you dare take it off, I want everything on, I want the slip bunched at your hips, and I want to fuck you in those thigh-highs too.

Mouth dry, the Alpha doesn’t bother trying to swallow around the sound in his throat, instead breathing that scent urgently into his lungs as the visual of Louis in his little scanty outfit flowers behind his eyelids. Torment–need bullets through his bloodstream, burns straight to his diamond hard cock.

“I don’t wanna touch you. I want to be touched. With it on.”

Where? Where d’you want to be touched, princess?

Somewhere lost to him, Harry knows he’s spoken out loud, knows because even his voice is nothing like Louis’, it’s gravel and rasp.

“Everywhere.”

Almost more than his hands ache to touch, Harry wants to know Louis’ answering him, but the boy continues, and somehow despite how achingly loud he’s being, his voice is soft soft soft, “My belly.”

Belly. Christ, does Louis know how Harry adores the soft of his belly, adores it because that’s where baby’s will round him one day.

“Why? Why there?” Of course he asks, because he has no control over himself right now, and he just…needs to know this.

“You know why,” Louis breathes, and it’s needy, more so than before, and it’s for him. There is no doubt in his mind that Louis can hear him, knows he is there, listening to him, talking to him. “There is more I could do in this outfit. Lots even,” Louis is offering, and the need to rip that bloody phone away, to destroy it so he can only talk to him, to possess tears through him because this boy belongs to him, belongs on his knot wearing pale pink lace and satin and silk and skin and just– “I have something in mind right now, actually.”

“Tell me,” Harry demands. “What are you goin’ to do in that?”

Except the boy doesn’t, instead Louis giggles girlishly, “wait wait,” before there are shuffled movements. Impatient, the Alpha straightens, and works his jaw to strangle the animalistic sounds crawling up his throat.

Without warning the door is shown backwards, and Louis shrieks, so pleased that Harry is stunned into stupidity because fuck no no no not supposed to happen. “You just can’t stay away, can you!? I knew it!” With the phone to his ear the boy starts to speak in a rush, “Aiden! Aiden! Say hi!”

And the phone is on speaker because then a male voice, rough and confused as Harry feels, speaks, “Uh, hi?”

With a chiming laugh, Louis hops up and down like a child at the candy store, then, “Now you!” Those amused eyes call to him on instinctive levels as Louis pokes him in the chest, “You bloody creep. Say hello.”

Canines bare, exposed, the Alpha tries to snatch the phone from his cruel little hand though the boy makes a little noise, then scrambles back into the room.
“Hey! Stop right here, pal! Ah ah ah!” Disapproving, the Omega’s little bow mouth is in a provocative pout as those ocean coloured eyes scold him. “Don’t be rude! I’m talkin’!”

“No. You aren’t.” The timbre coats his voice so that it’s undiluted Alpha, and Louis’s eyes round in innocent confusion.

“Y-Yes, I very well am,” it’s so breathless, so helpless, his cock jerks, and before he can think through his actions Harry is stalking into the room. Squealing, the boy scrambles away one more. “Help, help! Aiden! Get this! My roommate, well my best friend, really, is—,” breathless laughter as the boy makes it to the opposite side of the sumptuous bed. “Now he’s chasing me! He’s so pissy ‘cause he…he has…an erectile dysfunction. A-And…” Another mad rush, Louis rolls onto the mattress, and somehow once again they’re on the opposite sides. A smirk marks his mouth as the boy continues to giggle.

“Er….…” discomfort is thick in Aiden’s voice, “Is this a bad time?”

“Shh!” Louis dismisses him to carry on with his little game, “S-See I know this…’cause—oi! Back off!—’cause he c-c-cries ‘bout it all the t-time! Sometimes he li-listens to me…talk about my pretty lingerie to get…it…up!” At that moment the boy tries to make it to the door, but Harry is quicker, catches him around the waist, and before he can thrash, pivots and tows him in order to pin him on his back to the mattress.

With the boy lost to his delight, snickering madly, trembling with the force, Harry steals the phone to snarl,

“Goodbye, Aiden,” and hurls the phone at the wall, where it shatters on impact, effectively ending the call and all contact.

“Harry!” the boy pauses, mouth a perfect O as he cranes his head in order to look at the now destroyed phone. “Harry, what the hell!? You monster!” Like he’s so fuckin’ upset, like the mirth isn’t dancing in his eyes.

Remorseless, the Alpha realises he’s standing there with the boy sprawled out for him. And the lights are on their lowest-watt glow like embers in his wide, dewy eyes. “You owe me a new one,” the boy says breathily. A low snarl forms in his chest as his knee nudges his miniature legs so the boy spreads them a bit. Mouth dry, the Alpha forces his hips between them, braces both hands on either side of his face and leans down, hovering.

“Still on with that temper,” Louis whispers as rose spreads on his sharp cheeks. In this moment all Harry knows is this, the phone doesn’t exist, nor Aiden, nor the Institution, the followers, the drugs. Without permission his eyes rake over him to find the outfit blessedly intact, and oh fuck what he can see now is perfect. More so than he could have thought up—the slip is so thin, and the pink so does it, contrasts beautifully with his golden skin where the material starts so low, revealing his tight little nipples underneath, the flat expanse of his belly, the sharp pelvic cradle lastly seen because he’s draped over Louis’s small silhouette.

Lifted, his eyes latch onto the revealed sensuous lines of his clavicle, where the diamond necklace he’d bought him fits between the sharp bones. And he traces up to his throat, and draws back sharply; his slender neck is marred with various shades of discolored love-bites.

Dark, vicious fury returns to him, thickening his muscles, strengthening his bones. Mindless, the Alpha curls his hands into fists and tries to look away. “Who?”

In obvious confusion, the boy asks, “What?”
“Who the fuck have you been with?” Unable to tear his eyes from the once flawless skin, Harry watches as his throat undulate with his nervous swallow.

“Nobody,” Louis whispers, hands flying up to his throat, like he’s only now recalling the bites. “It was…uh, nunchakus. Uh. N-N-Niall did it. At p-practise. We were…screwing around.”

“You’re a terrible liar,” the Alpha spits, and it’s like the boy is pouring acid down his throat straight to his chest, eating away at him. “Do better next time.” In a numbed-out state Harry tries to stand but Louis’s arms round his shoulders, and he’s clinging to him. “N-No. Wait. I-I’m just scared to tell you. You’ll b-b-be angry.”

“I already angry,” Harry says hoarsely, reaching around to unhook his arms. “Whatever. ’S not my place. Don’t tell me. I just might lose my mind.” Well, it was bound to happen sometime.

“’S n-n-not what you think.”

“Explain.” Even so the Alpha removes his arms so the boy falls back to the mattress, scrambling to sit up, and whispering with those bloody bottomless, sorry eyes. “I-I can’t. But I promise I wasn’t…I don’t have anyone. I don’t. Pinky promise. You don’t have to be l-l-like this. You don’t have to be jealous.”

Jealous? At the word, the Alpha’s skin becomes tight over his muscles. “Jealous? Hardly. I’m livid. Because some fuck had their dirty mouth on you. You’re an Omega of worth. You know the rules. But you let someone put their mouth on your skin.” And it wasn’t fucking me.

Defensively, the Omega crosses his arms, pert features contorted in disbelief, “You are so jealous! For absolutely no reason!”

As his fury intensifies, the acid crawls up his throat and becomes words he doesn’t intend to say, “No, Louis. You know what? You won’t find love like this! You need to be good! You want to be loved so bloody bad, do it the right way and wait for a proper mate! Don’t dirty yourself.”

Abruptly, Louis jerks to a stance on the mattress, hands in little fists as those striking eyes become sharp, voice scissor-sharp. “Are you serious right now? Fuck. You. I haven’t done anything wrong. You are being such a fucking Alpha bastard right now. Are you forgetting I am not yours? You never claimed me! You have no say in my love life. I stopped waiting for you to…Nothing has ever happened between us. There is nothing but friendship and fucking friends don’t do this. I’m over it! Over the whole I think you’re beautiful, but not beautiful enough for me bullshit! Boo hoo! You never wanted me, and that’s okay. You don’t have to act like you’re my Alpha or whatever. I don’t expect that! I never did. But don’t you dare put me down! I am so fucking good! And I can be good for anyone I choose! I want to spread my legs, I damn well will! It doesn’t make me dirty because there is no reason I shouldn’t do what I want! You’re so…You know what, H? You want to know what fuckers dirty mouth was on me? Look in the fucking mirror! And get the fuck out of my room while you’re at it!”

The episode jacks Harry’s fury so high he becomes his own ring of fire; the air around his body feels magnetically charged. Mindless, blindly enraged, the Alpha storms out of the room, slamming the door so hard behind him the structure shakes weakly. And he just stands there, shaking.

Like this is mind is in overdrive; he’s right. So right. And Harry is wrong. So wrong, always twisted and bent and fucking wrong in every way. All the time Louis is so good for him. And he’s such a wasteland with absolutely no right to feel like this. Like he claimed him, bonded him, like Louis is his and his only. What bullshit–Louis hadn’t waited for him, they hadn’t played catch-up because the boy had laughed and taunted the mere mention of them together when Harry had been
ready to drop on one knee and ask him for the honor. And now he’s over it? Yeah right.

A cold sweat breaks all over his skin as Harry rests his forehead on the jamb of the door. In a rush his anger becomes a yearning that frightens him.

His mind must hotwire because he isn’t aware of his zombie-like movement, but then he is in the bathroom. And he faces the doublewide mirror where he blinks wildly, disoriented by the shift until his reflection summons him. There an Alpha of the worst kind stares back at him. A mess—his hair is tied back but strands have fallen, damp in his blood-drained face. Since last year he’s lost more weight. And his muscle density has started its inevitable wear-and-tear from the lack of nutrition and the surplus of intoxication.

The shadows beneath his eyes are bruised, almost permanent. A literal fucking mess. With his Alpha prowling underneath his skin, pupils blown, canines exposed.

His mouth is intact, but it’s filthy with the violations he’s committed. Denial screams in his head, screams not me not me not me.

But damn it Louis is not a liar when he’s angry. So when the fuck had it happened? Surely he would remember something like that. Even past the clouds high. It doesn’t make sense.

As his hands brace on the counterpane, the Alpha thinks, tries to recall the exact day Louis had started to cover his neck with the new-style excuse.

Saturday.

And the night before. Yeah. It was him.

Faultless, the puzzle pieces match up, because Friday night is when he’d had that dream while in bed with him. By now, it doesn’t surprise him that he could take advantage sexually, not when he’s been able to choke the boy in his sleep.

Vomit creeps up his throat as Harry screws his lids shut, trying to find an explanation for his behaviour. There isn’t one.

Hell, it makes sense that he would want this Omega. Because he’s stifled the desire for him with distance, and now there is none to hold it at bay. So it makes sense that he would end up…trying to bond with him. Because now his scent is a part of the place, driving him mad. And oh, fuck, he’s been acting out, ruining his careful measures. Putting his mouth on Louis without consent like some…some…Rapist.

The sensation crawls in his chest. A recollection of the past; terror is icy in his veins as grimy hands force him to the sandy floor, trying to shove his trousers down. No. No. A killer, a self-preservation, rips to life. A knife is hot against his side, the rough breathing and the triumph of escape even as his side bleeds a river and his muscle wear from running, dystrophy conquering after blood loss.

Harry bends over and throws up the apple he’d forced for dinner.

After flushing down his sick, the Alpha sinks to the tile, shaky and nauseous. Like this he tries to take some deep, calming breaths, but all he can smell is…Louis. His lovely perfume is all over him from the proximity. Desperate, he whips the shirt off and tosses it, needing to dim the scent that seems to paint him now.
In a rush the past overcomes his vision, it all returns. The attempted rapes placed upon him. The humiliation. The abuse that followed him always until it became him, all but dead expect for the incessant beating of his heart and the rote suck and push of his lugs.

A weird sound echoes around him. Realisation falls heavy on his shoulders: sobs.

*Oh…paradise…*

Quieting the noise, Harry wipes his sweaty forehead on his bicep. *Paradise.* God, Louis makes him so ashamed of his ugliness, his ruins, and his black, nasty nature.

At every ballroom even the Omega effortlessly talks to his Council brothers and sisters, smiling, laughing, *mouthing.* Because he has a charm and an easiness about him that speaks of the comfortable life he’s led. Fuck, *Harry* is the only reason he’s known unkind deeds. He’s certainly never shown cruelty or harshness by any other Alpha, they all worship his every breath. Like Harry does in silence.

He’s an Omega of extreme worth, not at all like the trashy, angry Omegas he’s used so many times over.

Disgusted with himself, Harry shudders as his shoulders cave in under the weight of his sins; more than Louis ever lets on, Harry has hurt him time and time over.

Once again his stomach heaves and he lurches over the toilet.

“I…I thought you were just…angry,” a tiny voice says from behind him. “I didn’t think…I actually make you sick.”

*Fuck.* Of course he hadn’t thought to lock the door.

And it never dawned on him Louis would come back to him now, after what he’s done.

&&

Marrow an icy slush from how cold he is inside, Louis wraps his arms protectively over his belly. Of all the crap his active imaginations dreamt up, this pushes the friction envelope. There, sprawling out nearly naked in front of the toiler, dry heaves make Harry twitch.

While the Alpha curses, Louis stares at his body in the crisp light. In two years he’s never seen him so clearly because Harry is private, and *this explains that.* The broad expanse of his shoulders, the line of his back is streaked with scars. *Oh…Haz…*

“Why are you here? You have your own bathroom,” he says, voice echoing around the porcelain rim.

“I, ah, wanted to yell at you some more,” he admits, *but I didn’t expect to find you like…this.*

“Mind if I finish purging first?” Water rushes and gurgles as he flushes.

“Are you…alright, Haz?”

“Yeah, this was just loads of fun,” the Alpha mutters as Louis scurries into the very clean, very while, very impersonal bathroom; back to sarcastic asshole-lism. Fine, two can play this game.
Except in the blink of an eye Harry is up on his feet and facing him.

*Oh, no…no, baby.*

Though his time away has his increased his body mass, his muscles now stand out in stark relief, the individual fibers striated and visible in the worst ways. For any Alpha, he’s thin. Too thin. Close to starvation. But that’s not even what stuns him. It’s the scar that does it. Worse than the others, a thick, telling laceration from his side just to his stomach.

“What h-happened…there?”

“Do the math,” Harry mutters, making it to the sink where the tap runs as he washes his mouth.

“But that’s…”

“Not supposed to happen to someone like me?”

“You’re a noble. Des is the Councils *Supreme*. Y-You’re the most vital heir the Council *has*. Y-You had guards, didn’t you?” *How could this happen to you?* When there is no reply, Louis shrills, frantic and desperate for reassurance, even aware that there will be none. “Didn’t you, *H*?” *Please tell me you didn’t request an out. Please tell me you didn’t…*

“Fate is such a cruel bitch. I didn’t need guards. I’m not dependent on anyone.” God, Louis wants to run, run far away because Harry might as well have handed his life to the Institution. *How could he do that? To himself? To Louis? Selfish. He is so selfish.*

“You’re such a selfish bastard,” the breath leaves him without permission, but Louis will not take it back. “You set yourself up.”

“Yeah, stupid I know. Trust me, I learnt my lesson.”

Any residual vehemence dissipates into nonexistence as his heart begins to *weep*, and the loss hurts worse than anything else. Louis never…God, dad had said it was *hard*, a basis of survival of the fittest, but Louis never thought it would leave him scarred like this, in every way. No, he’d thought stupidly that Harry just…just couldn’t handle a weight so massive.

This isn’t *weight*. This is…*horrifying*. A nightmare. Scars like these aren’t *hard*; they’re an indication of *cruelty*, *sickening abuse*.

On impulse, Louis takes a step in his direction.

A frantic flare fires in his narrowed stare. “No. Stay…Stay away from me.”

Louis doesn’t listen; Louis closes the distance though Harry retreats until he’s caught in the corner between the glass shower and the wall. God, he could face *death*, but not Louis…

“What the hell d’you think you’re doing? Are you angry or pitying or what?”

He doesn’t answer because he isn’t sure. Nothing is clear. It’s all blurred and indistinct and he wants his Harry back more than anything else. Needs him right now.

But he’s not here; he’s been replaced by this hostile, hurt man. The notion suffocates him until Louis struggles to breathe around the jagged ache in his throat.

“Back off,” the Alpha snaps, opening his mouth to bare his white, dangerous canines.

Sadly, Louis shakes his head, reaches out to put his trembling hand over Harry’s heart.
Of course Harry shrinks from him, flattening against the glass. Now his voice has thinned until it’s barely a sound. “Don’t. Please, don’t touch me. It will…hurt us both.”

“Why?” the boy asks desperately, pausing with his hand outstretched. “It won’t I need…touch. Please.”

“Paradise, stop. Just…go. Leave.” And he can barely get the words out as Louis’ heart constricts. “I’m about to destroy something. And I don’t want it to be you. I’m…I’m done hurting you. Go back h-home. Your dad was right. Everyone was right, okay? This…I shouldn’t have thought this would help. You need to take care of yourself, leave me, and go back home.”

“I am home. I am taking care of myself. You are what I need. You’re my best friend, Harry. You will not hurt me.”

Pained, his eyes close. “Louis, what do I have to do in order for you to see I’m a lost fucking cause? You’re so bloody refined. You must be bred to get off on torturing people. Torturing me.” And it’s a sharp lash on his heart because Louis isn’t dense; he isn’t unaware that he’s forced his way into Harry’s heart; that he’s always been unwanted.

“Haz, we come from the same place. You’re refined, too, silly. And you…you’re…I’m trying to help you heal.”

When he speaks his voice has lost all intonation. “You can’t help me.” And the Alpha lunges at him, taking him down to the tile, and baring his canines. “I could hurt you right now.” It’s true. He’s physically capable of it. Built to snap someone like him in half. But emotionally Louis doesn’t think so; doesn’t think he could consciously lay a hand on him. That’s not Harry, not now, not ever.

His thoughts cannot keep track of the pace of Harry’s actions, nor his emotions. But then all goes absolutely still. And he’s just draped over him, panting, frozen in place, breath a loud rush in Louis’ ear, so loud…Is he sobbing?

“I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. God, I’m sorry! I want to be better. I want help, Louis. I want to be…I don’t want to be…I don’t want to lose my mind. I don’t want to be lost. I don’t want to be this way. I’m terrified of what I’ve become. But I’m not fuckin’ broken, paradise, I am ruined.” And his rolls onto his back, putting his arms over his face.

“Please…stop allowing me to hurt you,” it’s a broken sound, “…paradise.”

Louis wants more than anything to reach out to him, but he’s so tense he doesn’t dare. Because he’s terrified the same. But he’s not about to give up. Ruined. Broken. Whatever it is, Louis is here to stay and damn it this is going to end.

Shame causes tears to blur his vision because Louis didn’t help, Louis prodded at his wounds, teased him like it was nothing, hurt him intentionally to get a reaction. So convinced Harry was just…going through a rough spot or something. But this…this is real. He’s suffering. And there is nothing entertaining about it.

In an abrupt rush the Alpha sits up, and looks at him. While the whites of his eyes are bloodshot, he’s not crying. Maybe he was just…hearing things. Wouldn’t be the first time.


“You don’t want me to leave. I refuse to leave you alone here. No. I want to be here and I am staying.”
“Please. Louis, don’t let me drag you down too.” You don’t take yourself away from me again.

Unmoved, the Omega states quietly, “Remember what I said? I don’t take back my word. I listen to my heart. And I know I want to be here. You’re mine. My best mate. And you’re not allowed to lose your mind. So sorry to ruin your pity-party, but you have been stuck with me, Styles.”

“Louis…” Harry tries again, but Louis lifts his chin and squares his shoulders. “I am only leaving to my room. Come find me when you’re ready. I’ll be waiting.” With that the Omega holds his head so high it’s believable that he’s not about to come apart at the seams as he marches to his bedroom and softly shuts the door behind him.

And that is when the inevitable breakdown comes over him. Hyperventilating, Louis curls up small in bed as sobs wreck through him. Sobs he is careful to muffle into the pillows because he doesn’t need Harry any guiltier.

The trauma is why Harry is who he is now.

Louis can’t think of what the Alpha must have been through, put himself through, without suffocating. So the boy lets his mind wander back to better times.

Over and over Louis has practised his moves; and he is convinced that this will be what does it, what wins Harry over. Papa even said it was his most stellar move. Papa is pretty smart, almost as smart as Louis.

That’s why when class is dismissed Louis happily follows the older boy out, and like always Harry Styles doesn’t spare him even a look as he goes. Somewhere along the way their bodyguards trail, watching like hawks though both are used to this by now, disregarding them easily. Gleeful, Louis tugs on Harry’s arm, “Haz! Haz!”

“What.” So serious all the time. Yuck.

See, Louis is ten, and he’s a very big boy, but Harry is bigger. Harry is wonderful and amazing and a whopping twelve years old. Oh how Louis adores him. Papa assures him Harry will come around, Louis will help the other lad out with that by being his wicked self.

As Harry trudges on Louis realizes he’s fallen behind, and Harry has paused to look at him with raised brows. Harry has the prettiest eyes. So green and mossy. Rare is what everyone says. Louis loves rare. “Coming or not?”

Oh! Right, right.

Excited to be acknowledged, Louis asks tentatively, “You’re not goin’ to make me walk behind?”

“We need to talk.”

“Okay! What about?”

“How I really really really don’t like you,” the older boy grumbles which makes Louis frown, a bit wilted now, “But not here. Let’s go to the field.”

“Oh! Oh, that’s perfect! I need to show you summat, too!”

“Sure.”

Louis smiles toothily, and scampers along, hanging on Harry’s arm and prattling about the lad who’d tossed his lunch at him just for talking above him, and how he’d been placed in time-out
for punching the fool back. Honest, it’s not fair, Papa says to always defend, and that’s what Louis always does!

Humph. “Well, that’s daft.”

“I know!” the ten year old agrees, pouting. “He even stained me shirt, see!” To prove so Louis shows him the collar of his white button up with a red splotch from ketchup.

“Well I’m glad you cuffed him one proper then.”

Beaming, Louis perks up at the approval in his eyes, then continues to talk about he honestly doesn’t understand how to divide because Mrs. Casey is a rubbish teacher, not because it’s an advanced class.

“You’re bright. You’ll figure it out. You always do.”

Wow, he is so full of compliments today. Louis hugs himself, then continues to talk about how he was forced to read out loud and it was so boring and he truly just wanted to kip. He misses nap time in English. Otherwise he is so full of energy it’s criminal.

By the time he is finished, they’ve walked most the short way to the impressive manor Louis resides in, not even a mile from Parliament. “Haz. Will you hold my bag? I tripped on my way up the stairway today. And my back hurts very bad,” insert wet, puppy eyes and a pretty pouty lip. “Pleasse! Please! Oh pleeeaseee–.”

“Oh, Haz, did I tell you–,”

“No. Shush. You agreed.”

Sighing, Louis does so, and they walk the rest of the way in silence. Once they reach the great gates, Louis insists on entering the security code, and as the gates slowly come apart his nerves start in until he’s almost hopping he’s so nervous.

When they are open enough to walk through Louis does so, waving happily at the gardener, “Hiya, Mr. Clarke!”

“Afternoon, young master!” Swinging dangerous looking sheers Mr. Clarke calls to Harry, “Master Styles, nice to see ya again!”

“Afternoon, Mr. Clarke!” Harry returns the greeting grudgingly (he does not like anyone below him…which is everyone) where endless landscape stretches on and on and on. Humming, Louis follows Harry through, and they walk on until they’re hidden by the slope of the hill where Harry drops his bag.

“Show me what’s so important then.” Louis is caught off guard and hesitates…because what if Harry thinks he’s a loser, what if he’s unimpressed (that’s always Harry), what if–, “Louis, hurry up.”

“What if you don’t like it?” he mumbles, lowering his eyes to his shoes.

“I don’t like most things you do, but ‘m always surprised. I like that.” Louis brightens. “Really?”

Without answering Harry motions to him so Louis giggles, removes his shoes, and takes two deep
breaths. Like he’s practised, the younger boy performs perfect cartwheels, back to back to back to back to back until he’s flushed and dizzy on two feet.

When he looks at the older boy he’s smiling so wide Louis can see the craters in his cheeks, then he’s applauding, and Louis feels like he’s flying. “Brilliant!”

Louis squeals and throws himself at Harry. “You liked it?!”

“’Course! It was wicked!”

“It was, wasn’t it?” Louis giggles, beside himself with joy even as Harry shoves him away gently. “Yeah, five in a row? I wish.” It doesn’t even sound like he’s being sarcastic.

Oh please, Harry is perfect. He doesn’t need to perform cartwheels for everyone to know so. Plopping backwards with the grass to cushion him, Louis breathes, “I’m so in love with you, Haz.”

It’s quiet before the older boy bursts into laughter, and Louis frowns, looking at him where he’s shaking some measures beside him. “You don’t even know what love is! You’re ten! You’re just a pup, Lou. You can’t be in love. Especially not with me! I don’t even like you.”

Louis’ frown deepens before his eyes flood with tears, stingy with rejection. “Wh-What?”

Peering at him, Harry frowns, “Oh, c’mon, Lou! Don’t cry!”

Bottom lip wobbling, Louis let’s all his tears tumble down his cheeks.

“Louis, stop it!” the boy murmurs frantically. It only makes him wail like the baby he is. “Okay! Alright! I’m in love with you, too! Sheesh. You should know that already.”

At the words Louis sniffles, then looks through blurry eyes at his cherub face. “R-Really?”

“Yes,” Harry sighs, swiping at his tears. “Now quit cryin’ like a babe.”

Louis smiles watery as the tears slowly dry up and happiness flowers all over him. “Here. I got this for you.” Louis sits up when Harry does, bubbling with excitement as Harry snatches his own bag and pulls out a pretty, sparkling diamond the size of a rock. Mesmerized eyes round, Louis scrunches his face up to feign disgust, “Ick! I don’t like that stuff! That’s girly!” Even though he secretly loves sparkly stuff like that, and it’s so pretty and it will look quite nice next to his gemstones in his box. He’s never been allowed to have a diamond. Papa says that’s for big boys. And much too precious to be in his ‘careless forgetful’ hands.

“Why I!” Harry squawks, pinching his sides until Louis is yelping between giggles. “I thought you were oh so in love with me! You won’t even accept my gift! How can you accept my love?”

Suspiciously, Louis sniffles, “Was it for? ’S not my birthday or nothin’.”

“Well it’s my early goodbye gift. I’m leaving just after my birthday. That’s only four months. And I know you have that box you hide underneath your bed with all your girly stuff. ‘Sides I was goin’ to tell you never to talk to me again and leave you with somethin’ nice. But since we are in love now I reckon I can’t do that.”

Louis beams, and holds his hands out for the diamond, making a startled noise over the weight, then bringing it close to his face. “How’d you get this?”

“My Dad. I told him it was for you. He likes you a lot.”
Louis blushes, then giggles, “Thank you, Hazza.” And then it’s the older boys turn to blush a pretty pink Louis giggles over. “You’re welcome.”

When Louis just stares, “Oh, yeah. There’s this.” Now there’s a little piece of thick paper that the boy tosses at him. Louis places the diamond carefully on his knee, and then opens it to read a messy sprawl,

‘I really don’t like you, but since you won’t quit following me I’m going to have to. When I come back, let’s go for ice cream.

Your most awesome mate,

H.S.’

Louis squeals and crushes the paper to his chest. This is the best day ever. “A date?!”

“No!” the older boy crows, looking very scared suddenly. “Just ice cream! Going on…to…um get ice cream. Like um I’ll buy it for you, but it’s not a date! It’s just a friend outing. Like our dads do sometimes! Like that, yeah. Except not so grown up. Fun. Like you’ll talk a lot and, oh, I’m talking a lot now…I should shut up. It’s an ice cream outing, not a da-date, got it?”

“I’ll take it,” the younger boy giggles, tucking the diamond in his bag with the paper. And he curls up next to the older boy, closing his eyes and soaking up the sunlight. Perfect, pretty day.

“What kinda ice cream will you get, Haz?”

“Vanilla, probably.”

“You’re so plain.”

“Sure am,” the boy says proudly, and lies beside him, holding him.

“Hey, Lou?”

“Mmm.”

“I…uh, nevermind.”

“Tell me. Tell me. Tell me. Tell—,”

“I’m scared. I’m gonna miss you. I wish you could come with me. Why do you have to stay?”

Louis takes his hand. “Don’t be scared. You’ll do great! You’re Harry Styles! You were meant to do great things! I wish I could, too. Mummy told me that’s only for the…the…destined or summat. You’re the destined, Hazza!”

“Why can’t you be destined too,” the older boy grumbles.

“I…” Louis frowns, “I dunno.”

When there is only silence the younger boy mumbles, “Will you still be in love with me in three years?”

“I’m no fortune teller, but I’m destined for you so I reckon so. You’re too lovable. I still don’t like you more.”

Louis wants to just explode with hopeful happiness. “I’ll always be in love with you.” He means it
with all his heart.

“Pinky promise?”

_Eagerly, Louis holds out his pinky, and Harry’s takes it. “Pinky promise.”_

It’s funny that pinky promises never really did make it through anything. Because Harry hated him more than ever by the time he returned, and Louis learnt to stop loving him with all his heart and only half of it.

That’s how they worked as two.

As Louis smiles, he wishes he could turn back the hands of time, go back to that day, and make Harry pinky promise to never fall out of love with him.

Because he’s realizing all this time he’s been sitting in his unrequited love.

&&

_It’s old tradition; his Father, Supreme Des Styles, has invited his Council brothers and sisters, along with their families, to stay the week in the used-to-be-comfortable estate._

And to say Harry is unhappy with this is an understatement. _He is miserable._

_Because as of now Harry cannot escape the hoard of pups brought along. They are everywhere—tittering and daft and simply frustrating._

_See, Harry Styles is grown up now. He’s bloody twelve, and does not want to be bothered by little drooling pups._

_Especially the one Harry despises most out of the pack. The cute tiny one in the overalls. The Tomlinson’s heir. The one who bloodied his nose._

_It’s been three months and the little pest feeds on his misery._

_Blessedly, Harry has managed to escape him for the moment, having roamed on the trail towards the neighboring estate, now seated cross-legged with his back to an aged Oak tree. It’s quiet, and Harry enjoys the quiet. It’s nice._

_Except the sounds of dead leaves crunching underneath footsteps interrupt the serene. A little blur plops before him on the ground; winded light hair, chubby, flushed cheeks, doe eyes and a huge, silly smile greet him. “Whattayadoin’?”_

“How did you find me?” _Harry demands, crossing his arms._

“I’ll always find you,” the boy giggles, so immune to his fierce scowl.

“That’s creepy.”

“Is not!” the Tomlinson boy frowns, then toys with his light blue braces. “Okay! Fine! I watched ya leave the group! Your Daddy is lookin’ for you.”

“My Dad,” _Harry corrects snidely. Daddy? Such a pup._

“Daddy,” _Louis retorts, pouting adorably._

“Dad!”
“Daddy!”

God, Harry doesn’t know why he’s even going on with this, but they go back-and-forth until Louis, the pup, shucks leaves at him. “DADDY!”

“DAD!” Ready to strangle him for his attitude, Harry lurches at him, but with that movement the two go rolling down the slope of dead leaves and little giggles are sweet in his ear. It’s a nice sound, he admits as they finally stop. There’s a tiny body on top of his own.

“Ugh! Get away!” he groans, shoving at him perhaps a bit too hard as Louis plunks backwards. He does not know how it happens but then he’s sitting up, cradling his scraped elbow. Tears flood Louis’s blue eyes, and he starts to cry. Good God, what is he supposed to do now that he’s bleeding?

As he jerks upright, Harry tries to get closer to the scrape, but the boy whimpers and hides it fast. And he’s crying for his Mummy now, bird-like wails.

Swell. Now he is in trouble, too.

“Stop crying!” he rushes frantically. “Please, Louis, don’t cry! It’s just a little cut!”

“I-I-It hurts!” Louis whimpers. It’s a painful sound, even for Harry. It makes his tummy turn. He almost feels sick.

“Let me see,” Harry murmurs gently. When the boy shakes head, the leaves stuck in his hair fall–then he’s giggling, shaking some more.

Absolutely confused by the three-sixty, Harry cocks his head, then smiles because leaves fall from his own hair, too. For some reason this makes Louis laugh with more mirth…so Harry does it again and again until there are none left and Louis is wiping his snotty nose with the back of his hand. Which, yuck.

At the exact moment Harry says he’ll find Louis’s Mum, his own Father comes rushing down the slope. “What was all that ruckus?”

When he is sure Louis is going to snitch, the boy mumbles, “Laughing too hard, S-Sir. Haz had leaves in his hair!”

The suspicious look on his Father’s face melts into fondness. “Did he now?”

“Yuppy!” Louis beams, and Harry thinks that maybe he’s not so evil after all. Maybe he…really likes him. “It was all sorts of funny!”

“Indeed,” the Alpha nods, crouching to ruffle Louis’ feathery hair. “Alrighty, then, kiddo. Your parents are becoming sick with worry. You should let them know you’re alright. Harry and I will walk you back, won’t we, Harry?”

Stifling his grimace, Harry nods, and his Dad smiles and straightens. “Come along, little heirs.”

“’M not little,” Harry grumbles, standing.

“Help him up, son,” his Dad motions to where Louis waits with an evil smile. Not understanding why in the world he has to help him up (he’s not crippled), Harry sighs, but sticks his hand out for Louis to take, brushing leaves from his back as he bounces and holds his hand so tight there’s no taking it back.
On their way, Des says, “Louis, I think we might be on the wrong path. Why don’t you go ahead and check? Just follow the path, please, son.”

“C’mon, Haz!” Louis exclaims excitedly. Oh, no.

“Louis, this is your mission. You must do it on your own,” his Dad murmurs fondly. “Can you manage, kiddo?”

“Oh! Oh, yes Sir, I can! I won’t let you down!” The little pup falls for it so easily that Harry smirks, though it’s wiped right off his face when Louis plants a wet kiss to his cheek. He turns all shades of red. “Bye, Hazza-bear!”

“O! Gross!” But, he’s already hopping (yes hopping) away, giggling delightedly as he goes.

“That boy has his heart set on you, son,” Des says warmly.

When Harry only grumbles, “Harry, I know you want him to leave you alone, but one day you’ll change your mind.”

“I truly doubt that.”

At this his Dad laughs, booming and amused. He thinks the forest shakes. “One day you’ll be on your knees for that boy, bud. You’ll never want him to leave again. You would rather have God take the very breath he’s given you, your heart from your chest. It happened to me with your Mother.”

An unwelcome pink heats his face. “No!”

An arm comes around his shoulders, pulling him close. “Yes. You’ll give up anything as long as he doesn’t go. Take any other boy in the world, but not that one.”

“More like PLEASE LORD TAKE HIM AWAY!” the twelve year old bellows, throwing his arms out to the heavens.

“You’re so young. You’ll hit your knees praying to never lose him, I promise you that. You’ll beg to be taken out of this world first.”

Ugh. Why is Dad being so daft? As if.

“Of course I don’t want him to die!” he mumbles grudgingly. “No…I just want him to leave me alone! Not get hurt or nothin’.”

“I don’t doubt it.” And the knowing look his Dad gives him has Harry’s face on fire.

“Wait on it, son. That boy will be your whole world one day. Don’t say I didn’t say so.”

It isn’t until it’s time for Louis to go home that Sunday that Harry actually begs the boys Dad not to take him away. “Please! Please, Sir. Don’t take him! I promise I’ll take my best care of him! Just one more night!”

And that was the very first night Louis stayed with him.

A very nice night.
When able, Harry rises to an unsteady stance, muscles screaming in protest to the abrupt use after what feels like hours of restriction. Black crowds the edges of his vision, threatening as he breathes raggedly, dragging his weight. It’s pathetic how many times he has to pause and clutch the railing, working his jaw with the effort it takes to say conscious and functioning.

Fear has come to him, hard and vivid, no shadow of the past anymore, now a very present panic that Louis is revolted by him, growing cold as Harry wastes precious time because he can’t contain how useless he’s become from the lack of everything his body actually needs.

At last, in his room, the Alpha’s stare locks on the desk drawer where his stash is currently calling to him. It’s been two days. Two days without. And his exhaustion is borderline excruciating; leaving him in tremors and skin that refuses to fit around his bones. In this gluttonous moment, Harry is starved, but not for food. Careful, like the floors might collapse underneath his burden, he takes his first step towards the powder that calls to him like larks call for heaven on a summer morning.

Anticipation curls in his stomach as he kneels before the bottom drawer, yanking urgently to remove a fresh baggie. Yes, the voices hiss, do it.

As the white contrasts in his palm, Harry pauses, and closes his hand around his only out, then closes his eyes to find what he wishes he wouldn’t.

But this is how his mind works; at war with psychosis and clarity.

While his skin becomes tight and his nerves burn with need, the image of Louis standing outside that diner, scrubbing at crystal tears spilling down his paper white cheeks, the betrayal and hurt evident in his wet stare haunts him.

And he can’t do it. Not when that same boy is expecting him to come back, not the addict with all the bottled shit that can’t seem to stay hidden, that always is directed at the one he loves the most.

He’s done what he can to protect Louis. Gone to hell and back for him. Bent over backwards for him. Taken knives to people’s backs for him. Chained his Alpha for him. Given up his every desire for him. Given up on finding a mate for him because no other meets his expectations like Louis does.

Like shit hadn’t fazed him. But fuck when he sees his paradise, suddenly he doesn’t feel like he’s fucking crazy anymore.

Abruptly, that’s all he wants. To be worthy—to never have be the source behind the betrayal in those beautiful ocean eyes, to never feel like razors are slicing away at his heartstrings. Like the world is almost over.

Except…he always comes back to me…

And that is all he has to consider in order to pry his hand open, to watch blankly as the baggie falls back into its home with the rest. As his hands shake uncontrollably, physical responses to stress, Harry shoves them through his hair, ripping at the tuffs as agony screams in his body.

Louis Louis Louis. The name is sanity, clarity that drowns out the calls of the drug, the calls of the followers lurking in the corners and shadows. Louis Louis Louis.

In a mad rush Harry stands and scrambles to escape what has become necessary to live, to function. Makes it to the bathroom, breathing chopply as he runs the shower and his nails run over his arms viciously, needing out out out of the skin that barely fits him anymore.
As steam clouds the space, Harry shimmies clumsily out of his trousers and throws his body at the scalding stream. “A problem, a problem, I have a problem. Dad and Lou were right,” his mouth won’t quit, but he’s burning in the best way, his scrubbed raw skin hissing, so much better than the shake of his bones. “Won’t be me, it won’t be me. God, it can’t be me. I can…I can do this. Just breathe, Styles, breathe.” Really it will be him; he thinks that collapsing and never getting up again will be escape from the broken pieces inside. Except the pieces aren’t even broken anymore; they’re ruined, have been for years now. Because nineteen had been his year, his year of ruin. Where the broken had shattered wholly, irreparable spectacles, too diminutive, too fragmented, too useless.

Even if he could fix them…he doesn’t know that it would be worth all the hassle. Not when they won’t ever fit the same again, when chips and shards will never be able to return to their rightful places.

It’s bearable, though, has to be. For a little while it’s bearable. Because he’s been living on the cusp of death a long time now. He still ain’t there yet.

With his hair soaked in his face Harry focuses on the takes to better the distractions, and once he’s clean on the outside (the inside grime just won’t wash away), makes his way out because he really can’t prolong the inevitable. Soon Louis will come looking for him.

Snatching a towel from the bracket, Harry ties it to his waist and works to brush his teeth and mouth, desperate to be…clean enough to touch Louis in any way, to dare. The man in the reflection looks no cleaner though, no different; not that he expected otherwise.

He can’t believe what he’s become; remembers when he used to think he’d never fall victim to a drug. Growing up, Harry swore he’d be someone, someone as great as the mighty Desmond Styles.

Yet here he is: sinking to the bottom, twenty one and headed straight into the nothing, unable to face the world, his parents, his Council, his friends, like this, to face anyone.

Except…Louis. Louis who matters more than any of them. And were the Omega not so stubbornly attached to him, Harry would have succeeded in pushing him away too.

Now he has the only one he wants, and the drugs, to keep him up.

Unable to stand the sight anymore, to see the demons lurking in his sunken eyes, the Alpha makes a beeline for his bedroom only to make it out, dressed and decent, in less than two minutes because that’s the capacity of time before he is forced to change his mind, before it’s all too much again.

Nerves frayed, the pain is not easily left behind, but tonight he is going to be what Louis wants. A quick stop in the kitchen to guzzle three bottles of water, quenching something else within, is all he allows to delay what he’s approaching.

Christ, then Harry is there again, at his door. But he cannot breach the barrier, throat seized up with the devastation in his chest, the anxiety drenching him.

This is going to be a mistake. A very bad one.

It’s going to happen anyway, has to.

A few minutes of deep breaths are what it takes for his fist to rap on the door in announcement. “You don’t have to knock, Haz.” Voice soft and sleepy from the other side; his bones ache for
something more than coke, for Louis.

Nervously, Harry opens the entrance to be saturated with the warmth of his breezy vanilla scented safe-place. Awkward, his eyes search the room out of habit. Empty. The only light comes from the flat-screen attached to the wall, on mute and playing Skins, and the hallway spilling from the door’s bottom.

In the center of the canopied bed, Louis sits with his legs tucked underneath his bum and his hands in his lap. The bloody slip remains over his skin, the thin strap loose on his right arm, obviously having slid down his fragile shoulder. He’s peering at him through soft, sleepy pools. “Come,” Louis beckons gently, wayward fringe wilted in his face.

In some numb trance the Alpha locks the door and approaches the mattress. “Turn off the telly,” he orders briskly, in need of some sort of control, and desperate to obscure his shame. For once Louis doesn’t question him, simply does, and then there is the darkness he’s sought out as Harry crawls onto the plus mattress and makes quick work of pulling the thick, sparkly canopy (just in case a follower does manage to intrude…Better safe than sorry). “Underneath me.” Like nothing else it calms him to have the Omega concealed by his body, hidden from the outside.

Obediently, the boy settles on his back, but he’s so stiff, and Harry figures it’s because he’s so exposed, and as far as Harry knows he’s never let anyone see his beautiful body like this (talking about it is nothing like having someone see it). His eyes are screwed shut, bottom lip between his canines. Harry knows he’s trying not to speak (he appreciates it so much too).

Alas, Louis has never been the most restrained creature, and blurs, “Can you take off your shirt? I don’t want to be the only one basically stark right now. Even if it’s dark.”

Swallowing thickly, the Alpha does so to sooth him. “Don’t look and I won’t.”

“I wanna look.”

A bitter smile tilts his mouth as Harry shakes his head. “Sure.”

Nonetheless he doesn’t let that happen, “Open.”

Bottom lip between his canines, the boy parts his creamy thighs a bit. Not nearly enough for him to fit. Permission enough for Harry to spread them to his approval, keeping his eyes shut as to not invade his privacy any more than he is as he settles between his thigh-high clad thighs, and circles his waist in flexed arms. Like this, the boy feels so soft and tame, and his mouth just does, “Paradise, you feel…nice under me.” So breakable. Don’t let me break you.

Little hands curl on his biceps as Louis gets to the point, “Talk to me.”

Dread caves in on him as Harry buries his face in the neck his mouth had taken. God, it’s so fucked up how knowing this suddenly makes him proud. Because he thinks everyone will know he has someone. Has him. “Dunno what to tell you,” his voice is a rasp as his arms constrict, and he relishes in the proximity.

“Can I ask then? Will you answer me honestly?”

“Yes,” Harry says, meaning it.

With an uneven breath the Omega asks in a tiny voice, “Do I really make you sick, Harry?”

“No.” And that the boy doubts this makes him want to shove his fist through a wall and then show him how much he loves him. But he’s done more than enough. With all he’s done there is all the
Another unsteady breath. “Then why are you so m-mean all the time? Why do you make me feel unwanted? Why does the idea of your mouth on m-me make you vomit?’

To anchor himself, Harry inhales his scent rapidly, until he’s also running his mouth along his skin in silent apology. God, he’s so smooth and silky and… “I have to be. I have to be careful not to get too close because then I will hurt you so severely you will have to leave me. And I can’t let that happen. I haven’t had you long enough. And the idea of my mouth on you only disgusts me because it’s sick. I touched you without consent. I violated you. And I hurt you.’

“Your mouth didn’t hurt me, fool. What hurts me is when you hurt yourself. What hurts me is when you push me away, or stay away. Doesn’t that mean anything to you?’

Stemming the moisture lining his eyes, Harry mutters, “Of course it does, but I can’t have both. And I have to… I know what will hurt you more at the end of the day.’

“Hardly,” Louis chides, nails biting into his skin now. “You can’t make choices for me. You can’t.’

At war with his better judgement Harry agrees, not that it changes his consistent mind. If there is one measly thing Harry knows how to do right it’s protect. “I have to.’

Underneath him, Louis tense. “Sometimes I really hate you.” Ironic that the tables have turned; at the start he had really hated Louis a lot of the time, now Harry adores him, breathes him, and Louis is suffocated by him. Which is for the best.

“I know, ‘m sorry.” He is. So sorry for being this way. Especially towards Louis.

“Not sorry enough, apparently. It doesn’t change anything, does it?” Well, he has always been scarily attuned to him, and sometimes Harry wishes they ran on different frequencies; but they really don’t. Over the years they’ve leached onto each other for everything; disappointment, anger, pain, love, happiness, comfort. They have traded and shared and fed on each other’s every emotion. Every time Harry returned home became inseparable.

“No,” though he hates to have to confirm it.

“Okay,” Louis says, obviously upset as his nails draw up his shoulders in silent reproach. “What about right now then? While we are being honest, and not Dickheads. Can I make my own decisions right now, Mr. Control-Freak?’

“That’s a shit idea. You already have enough power over me without decision making.” It’s true. His damn heart is stuck underneath Louis’ little shoes

“Don’t take this from me, or so help me God I will never talk to you again.”

“That’s kinda hard,” the Alpha smiles slowly. “We share the same living space.”

“Don’t underestimate my ability to be as cruel as you.” A concrete thought that kills any amusement.

“I don’t. You’re cruel, and I know it.” But you’re not so cruel because too many times I’ve made you cry being the crueler one.

“Ace. Now. I have another question. Will you have my sachet?’
As his brows knit in confusion Harry takes the moment to search for any trace of a scented box in his memory. Realisation is a thousand bricks to the head. The sachet in the safe where the Omega preserves his collection of precious jewels—gems, diamonds, gold, pearls, the whole package. A secret attraction Louis hasn’t let anyone see (aside from Harry).

“No. That’s yours. You love your box. You’ve been adding to that collection for ages. Since when? Seven?”

“Yeah. And I don’t want it anymore.” Louis sounds so thoughtful. With his constant modifications and unpredictable nature, the Alpha might actually believe it. But it’s been fourteen years that the boy’s been improving his collection, and once Louis is truly attached, it’s a permanent bond.

“Liar,” he says softly, tracing the lacy tops of the thigh-highs over his left thigh. “What’s the real reason? ‘Cause I am not buying that. Once you love, it’s hard and endless. You don’t let anything you love so much go.”

“I just…I want you to have it. Watch over it for me.” So sincere, so soft.

“I don’t want it.” I’ll fuck it up. I’ll ruin it.

“I know…but it’s either you or I give it away.” The mere mention of Louis giving his most prized possessions away bashes at him.

“That box is a fortune worth of jewels. You can’t just…give it away.”

“I’m worth more than those bloody jewels. I’m bloody wealthy enough. It’s nothin’ I can’t afford to lose.” God, that’s fake, Louis is worth so much more, because he is who he is. A male Omega heir. But that’s not what matters to Harry. Hell, Louis could have presented Alpha or Beta, a nobody, a beggar on the streets, whatever, and he would still be worth more than jewels. “I will just have to give it away then. Moving on.” He isn’t bluffing. It’s in his tone.

“Wait,” Harry mutters, and takes a deep breath before, “Alright. Have it your way. I’ll write you a check for it tomorrow.”

“What,” the boy sputters, and that he’s stunned him streaks satisfaction through him. “No! No! This isn’t a damn sale. It’s…Ugh. Don’t twist this around on me! You want to play? Fine. Forget it. I am giving it away.”

“No, you’re not,” the Alpha growls, and lifts his face to stare down at critically. Even underneath the intensity, Louis is bold. “You aren’t the only wealthy one, paradise. I’m paying. It’s not up for negotiation.”

“I refuse. It’s mine. I do what I want with it. Therefore, you can piss off,” Louis hisses, bottom lip jutting in a petulant pout.

In this moment their eyes bore. The bottomless pools are heated with a stubborn flare. Somehow his stare falls to the boy’s mouth. “You’re so annoyin’.” And his lips are definitely kissable; thin and pink and bitten raw.

“Says you, queen of annoying.” How his mouth parts to form words, how his breath is warm on Harry’s mouth, mesmerizes him. Those lips would look so sexy stretched around his cock. “And will you look at me, damn it? Not my mouth.”

Damn it. Leave it to Louis to call him out on his perverted thoughts. Instantly, the Alpha returns to his ocean eyes, which are narrowed and stormy with kittenish fury. “Yeah, thanks. Now, moving
“This isn’t over.”

“Whatever,” Louis dismisses, then, candidly, “Am I ugly to you? Not only physically, but on the inside too.”

Like he’s been slapped, the Alpha recoils from the question, tries to get the fuck away, but Louis clutches him close. “No,” the boy shrieks into his throat. “No! Answer me, damn it!”

“This has nothing to do with anything.”

Now, the boy shrinks back into the mattress; and vicious waves are crashing into his ribcage with the hurt look Louis tries so hard to hide. No. “Why?” now his voice is so small. “Why am I so unattractive to you?”

“Louis, I–,”

With his face in the mattress, Louis whispers, “Please, just tell me.”

“Because I… I can’t have you,” his voice is hoarse, grated.

Of course this makes it worse, as Louis looks at him once more. “S-Says who?”

Is that an offer? God, why, even now, is he so achingly bountiful with himself? “I don’t want to talk about this,” Harry mutters uncomfortably.

“Of course not. You don’t want to talk about anything ever. Fine.” Glassy, the blue solidifies into ice. “You know… I think it’s so funny that you find those trashy sluts better than me. Like they could ever amount.”

“I don’t. They couldn’t.” Because you’re Louis Tomlinson, my paradise, but Christ we’ve only ever held on to let go.”

“Shut up. I’m not finished.” When the Alpha clenches his jaw, the Omega persists, “You make no sense. You want my innocence so bad it kills you to think ‘m with anyone else. You think I don’t see it? I’m not dense. And you very well know I would spread my legs for you in a heartbeat. I’m naked, I’m open for you, and you can’t even get hard. I am like this under you, and you don’t want me. God, why are you so grossed out by me?”

“I’m not… You’re just so much better than this.” Please, don’t tell me things like that. Don’t let darkness into your body. Please, don’t make me want it.

“I know…” Louis says, out of breath. “I know that.”

The weight of those words is crushing. “Don’t stop.” his voice trembles as he buries his face in the boy’s neck, needing the reassurance that even without reason, the boy is staying. “Be brutal. I deserve it. Don’t let me be any different than the rest. Make me feel how I always make you feel. Don’t let this be something good.”

“Y-You’ve been inside whores. You’re probably festering with disease.”

Not sexual disease. But disease of the mind, yeah. I’m so fucking sick.

“Monthly tests,” Harry informs blankly. “I’m clean.”

“Don’t defend yourself. Not when I’m trying to make you feel like dirt,” Louis hisses.
“I am dirt.”

With a sharp breath, Louis pauses, then, “No. You’re not. You’re bett’ah than that.” Yeah right.

“Just continue with your questions, paradise.”

There is no further pressing needed as Louis asks, “Have you ever…like been attracted to me, at all?”

Irritation shimmers to life, a curtain to shield the panic. “What the fuck is up with these irrelevant questions?” Harry spits. “The answer changes nothing. It means nothing.”

“How?” Like he knows Harry can’t stand to not grant his every desire. Soft, barely-there fingertips leave heated trails across his shoulder blades. “Please, H. It means something to me.”

“God damn it, Lou, yes. Yes I was attracted to you from fifteen up to seventeen.” I still am.

Underneath him, Louis whispers, “You promised to be honest.”

“And I am,” the Alpha mumbles hoarsely, burning up with the mere thought. “So honest. I meant it when I said you were beautiful. Every time I meant it. I couldn’t stop…feeling it. All I could think when I came was you. God, I always felt so sick, because you were so young still. You didn’t even think about that shit. Yet whenever you were rambling all innocent and hyper I was trying not to tackle you and find out if you’d taste like vanilla breeze too.” By now his heart threatens to beat out of his chest, and he’s almost hyperventilating with the confession.

“Oh…” the Omega mumbles, seemingly in a daze. “You’re…really serious.”

“Yeah. Yeah I am. I’m sorry. I’m sorry I did that. I’m sorry that when you were angry at me I wanted to bend you over and fuck you ‘til you were screaming my name. I’m sorry I thought about you every single time up until seventeen. I’m sorry I…couldn’t control it. I swear I tried. I was…I was just always with you in my head. I couldn’t get you out. I’m sorry when you called me crying because you presented Omega and all I could think was mine. I’m sorry I wanted to love you like that. And I don’t blame you if you want to kill me. It was wrong. But I promise after…after I left again I stopped. I didn’t ever do it again. Pinky promise.”

“Three years!” he shouts into his face, followed by another slap. “Three years you acted like you cared about my feelings and all you were thinking about was how I’d be in bed? So help me God I am going to cut your dick off! I told you everything! I poured my soul out to you! I was s-s-o lost! I needed you! Oh, God, H, this is bad. This is…This is…” with a broken noise the Omega starts at him and through the sharp pain Harry is lost to his magnificence.

Little chest heaving hurt breaths. Tears streaming down his flushed face. Hair sweat dampened from exertion and stress. Trying to make Harry hurt like he is.

Until Louis collapses on his chest from exhaustion, breathless. “I thought…I thought I need a moment to…not kill you.” When he lifts his face to look at him he’s slapped so hard across the face that blood shades his mouth, and stunned he does nothing to stop the boy from backing him so he’s on his back. Nail’s catch and leave marks as Louis strikes out time and time again, furious and vengeful. “Three years!” he shouts into his face, followed by another slap. “Three years you acted like you cared about my feelings and all you were thinking about was how I’d be in bed? So help me God I am going to cut your dick off! I told you everything! I poured my soul out to you! I was s-s-o lost! I needed you! Oh, God, H, this is bad. This is…This is…” with a broken noise the Omega starts at him and through the sharp pain Harry is lost to his magnificence.

Little chest heaving hurt breaths. Tears streaming down his flushed face. Hair sweat dampened from exertion and stress. Trying to make Harry hurt like he is.

Until Louis collapses on his chest from exhaustion, breathless. “I thought…I thought I was so disgusting because you wanted everyone else. And y-y-you let me think that! How could you d-d-do that to me? I thought you cared about me. H-How could you want my body, but not me?”

“I did care,” Harry says, equally out of breath, and his face throbs like Hell. “I cared. Because I wanted you does not mean I didn’t care. I wanted you. I hung on your every snarky word. I
remember everything you told me ever.”

But the boy only cries harder, trembling with the force. *This is why I don’t talk.* “Paradise…”

“Don’t call me that! Please, just don’t.”

“No, because you aren’t listening to me,” he says fiercely, staring up at the ceiling wishing it would collapse and just end this. “Don’t you cry. You are not the only one who bared yourself. I gave you my all. I listened to you for hours upon hours when I really didn’t want to. I was so engrossed and I love when you get lost in that head of yours. I loved it then. I love it now. I remember how you were fifteen and still wanted bedtime stories. I remember how many times I read *The Littlest Bunny,* to you that summer. I took you stargazing because you begged to come. And I was happy I did because everyone was so quiet and into it. I liked it better when you were talking and I liked that we had to leave the group because you and Justin got into it. I taught you how to swim, Louis. I let you *drag me snowboarding.* I held you for hours upon hours when you were bawling your eyes out because you didn’t get your way. I promised to be with you always. And there was nothing sexual about any of it. Nothing sexual about watching you do your happy dances or cartwheels or when you got me to tell you my worst fear, which I refuse to ever say out loud again, or when I got you to tell me your biggest dream. Or when you told me you peed the bed twice dreaming about the Teletubbies! Or when I snuck into the Meditation Center constantly because you couldn’t control your mouth with your dad. Or…or…when we had our first slow dance at your coming of age! I remember every little thing, Louis. Don’t say I never cared. C’mon, you know that’s bullshit. Give in to me.” I *burn for you.* *When are you going to melt for me?*

“U-Unchained Melody,” Louis mumbles through ragged sounds.

“I know,” Harry breathes soundlessly, letting his eyes slide shut just to find the memory again. “I remember.”

*Honest, Harry doesn’t know why he’s showed up—certainly not to stand on the sidelines with swarming Mothers attempting to introduce their children (whom they claim to be perfect matches), or to watch Louis flirt shamelessly with other Alphas. Why the boy feels the need to throw himself at them when he’s so certain he’s going to present Alpha is beyond him.*

*Louis always has been. To this day, Harry doubts there’s an Alpha gene in his body.*

*Because Louis Tomlinson simply screams Omega—even without having a prominent fragrance Omega radiates from his pores, a beaming luminosity that draws every Alpha within a five feet vicinity. Which explains why Harry can’t seem to stay away either—an instinctive attraction. Not to mention Louis won’t leave him alone—a stray puppy that seems to think Harry is his owner.*

*At the spiteful thought Harry winces; that would certainly have hurt Louis’ feelings. Which brings him to his next thought: where is the little pest anyway?*

*It’s been ten minutes with no sight of him. This sets him on edge; Louis is not cautious whatsoever of the people around him, and Harry knows he’s been handed more than enough alcohol tonight. Sadly, even nobles have their perverts.*

*With a heavy sigh Harry waves away yet another ‘ideal match’ and motions to one of the stoic security guards lining the wall ask above the music, “Louis?”*

*Wordless, the male tilts his chin in direction of the archway leading out onto one of the many balconies. In seconds Harry starts that way, inwardly panicking because the thoughts he’s conjuring up aren’t pretty.*
A grueling five minutes is what it takes to shove through the throng, and when he takes his first step outside the chill of winter greets him unkindly. Mercifully, the space is not very stretchy and opens directly onto the balcony.

And there he is; leaning on the stone frost laden railing with his face in his little hands, looking up at the partly veiled moon. It’s the most still and quiet Harry’s ever seen him: which means something’s wrong.

Even so…this is why Alpha’s are so mesmerized by him.

Because he’s pretty. So damn pretty. With perfectly teased chestnut coloured hair and golden features that have chiseled slightly over the years with maturity, though the eyes are what sets it all off. Clear bottomless blues that Harry’s always wanted to wash his soul in. Or drown in, that might be the best way to end all this.

“Why are you out here all alone, paradise? Shouldn’t you be enjoying your party? I mean, it’s your coming of age. You’re not supposed to be alone.”

The boy does not startle, nor does he spare him a look at those eyes as he sighs sadly, “Why’re you here? Maxine told me what you said,” the slight slur to his voice symbols his intoxication. Without permission, Harry makes it over to him, where his warmth caresses his skin. Always warm, his Louis is.

“What exactly did Maxine say I said?” he asks, following his stare—tonight the moon is quite lovely. However, it’s plain in comparison to the lustrous boy beside him.

“You don’t wanna be here.” Another oh-so-sad sigh as his body sways. A fool for him, the Alpha places a hand on the soft of his side, steadying him. “I thought my growing up would change your mind.”

“No. I don’t. And there is nothing to change.”

“Why’d you bother then?”

“Because you’re here,” he admits softly, trying to hate himself for the words. “Because you want me to be here. If you want me then I’m here.”

“You don’t gotta pity me, ‘Az. I don’t need to be looked aft’ah anymore. So you can jus’…leave and do whatever you’d rather be doin’.”

Closing his eyes, Harry inhales a reassuring breath. A scent fires at his olfactory sense. It’s so thin, and faint, that if he were inside with all the others he wouldn’t have caught it. It’s beach-y. A breeze. Or vanilla. Or both.

Christ does it smell lovely. Starts a fire in his body, even in this weather.

A mere moment of lapsed control is all it takes for Harry to act out; somehow his hands circle Louis’ slim arms, and he forces his back to the balcony’s edge, dipping forward to nose at his jaw.

“What the hell, Haz?” the boy hisses, hands shoving at his shoulders though Harry inhales urgently, seeking the fragrance out.

It’s there on his skin; breezy vanilla that steals his Alpha’s attention, causes his trousers to feel too tight.
"You smell so lovely," Harry whispers, "Are you wearing perfume?"

"When have I ever worn perfume?" Louis asks bitingly. "Get off of me already!"

Reality always ruins it. In a haze, Harry jerks away, and Louis’ wide eyed stare makes him feel like a right blockhead. "Sorry, I just…You smell nice."

A pretty pink kisses his pale cheek as Louis squirms, batting at his fringe nervously. "Oh. Ah, okay. Well, um, bye now!" And he tries to make for the crowd inside but Harry takes his arm again fast. "Wait, wait." When the boy snarls, panicked, "No, I have…people to entertain! Get lo–,"

"What is it? What are you hiding from me?" the Alpha asks, reeling him in to tuck two fingers underneath his chin so he has no choice but to look him in the eye. The icy specks of fear in his sapphire eyes makes his throat feel tight though it doesn’t stop him from trying, "What is it? What’s wrong?"

"Nothing," the boy mumbles grudgingly. "Get your paws off ah me."

"You aren’t like this with me. You aren’t ever scared to talk to me," Harry breathes in confusion, and the doubt in Louis’ darting eyes are wasp stings to his chest. "What did I do? Y’know Maxine was just talking shit. I don’t even talk to her."

"I-It’s not that," Louis mutters, and Jesus his face is scarlet now. "It’s…I dunno, I feel…weird, okay?"

Concern lances through his veins. "Weird how? Sick? Are you feeling ill, pup? Do you need–?"

"No," the boy raises his voice a little to cut through his. "No. I’m not sick. Relax. I’m just…feeling off."

Realisation settles over him in a rush of lucidity. "Off like…presentation off?" So soon?

"No! No, it’s not that! Not yet. You just…You smell nice, too, okay. And you’re making me feel weird. Like, um, like soft? And I am not soft!" You are so soft. "I’m n-not, okay? I’m not soft. Please…I…" the panic is deep in his voice, and his lashes are becoming wet with it too.

"Hush," Harry breathes, nosing at his temple to do what he does best lately: lie. "You aren’t soft, baby. Not soft at all." Christ, why does he always go out of his way to please him like this? Never will Harry understand the aspects of them, or what they are. Never will he understand Louis’ inability to accept who he is meant to be.

With a trembling breath, the boy sinks into him, and he loves when Louis allows him the privilege of touch. Nobody else receives it. Not like this. Not with Louis’ hand little fists against his chest, and his mouth against his collarbone, for once quiet and simply there to savor, all soft and—the spell is shattered when Louis mumbles, "I gotta go. My slow dance is due soon. I-I need to be there. James is waiting for me."

Tension clasps his shoulders as Harry murmurs tightly, constricting his arms around Louis’ waist (when had this happened?). "Screw James. All your slow dances belong to me."

"But–."

"No. You already made me pinky promise. So either you run along and tell James to fuck off or I will. And if I do it, it’s not going to be pretty." Because two Alphas claiming the same Omega (presented or not) is a danger to everyone, especially the Alphas themselves.
The boy distances them a bit to unleash round eyes, though after minutes realizes Harry is serious and placates, “Okay! Okay! I’ll tell him it’s off. Just don’t getcha knickers in a bunch. Jeez.”

At the entry, Louis pauses, looking back at him with soft, affectionate eyes. “Thanks, Haz. For always telling me what I need to hear. I guess thank you for being such a liar.” With a whimsical giggle, Louis scampers away, becoming lost in the crowd. Harry wants to tear himself to shreds.

Fifteen minutes surpass with no reappearance from Louis.

As his Alpha’s agitation intensifies, Harry seeks him out, plowing through bodies and laughter and noise. Except then it’s quiet, and those on the crowded dance floor disperse like roaches in the light. What this reveals clouds his vision in crimson.

Rage infests his entire being as Harry storms over to where Louis is in James the fucking Omega-Look-Alike holds him around the waist in the middle of the dance floor. By now his canines have extended, and his eyes must be red with the murder he aches to commit as James looks ready to piss his pants. “You wanna step away, kid,” Harry suggests through clenched teeth. “Or do I have to remove you myself?” “Haz!” Louis hisses, grabbing his arm though Harry shrugs out of his weak hold to crowd the other boy. “Well?”

“H-H-Hey, mate! I didn’t know he was yours!” James squeaks, dark eyes darting from him to Louis in confusion.

“I’m not!” Louis cries angrily. “H, back off!”

Disregarding him, the Alpha murmurs, “This is your last chance, pup. I really don’t want to have to do anything–,” before he’s even finished the other scurries away, and his Alpha snarls in victory though Harry straightens and offers his hand to Louis. A smaller one lands in his, little fingers tight and crushing as Harry reels him in, finding his slim, soft waist and leaning in to speak into the curve of his ear. “That wasn’t very nice. The poor lad is going to be humiliated for ages now. Satisfied?”

One arm slides around his shoulders. An old, slow tune comes over the atmosphere, “I love it when you’re all Alpha-y.”

Such an Omega. Honestly, Louis is lying to himself when he looks in the mirror and doesn’t see a manipulative, achingly soft Omega staring back.

‘Ooooh, my lo-looove,’ a man sings softly. ‘My darling…”

“Yeah well I don’t appreciate you purposely making me all Alpha-y.” Which is nothing new.

‘And time can do so much, are you still mine? I need your love…” By now he’s moving to the tune with his nose buried in Louis’ soft hair

“Wait for me, wait for me,” Harry breathes, the lyrics tattooed to his damn heart. “I’ll be coming home, wait for me…”

Louis sways elegantly, breathing back, “You’re making me feel weird again.”

Good. He rests his head on Harry’s shoulder nonetheless. It feels right. They fit. “I love it when you’re all Omega,” the Alpha sneers because this is how he gets when he’s scared. Mean.

The boy goes right and misses a beat. Really, not right. “I didn’t really mean that…”

“Just shut up,” Louis sighs dreamily. “Shut up, and make me feel Omega some more.”
“Styles, are you even listening to me?” An enraged shriek tears through his reverie, hauls him back here, where he’d rather not be. It is what it is.

Rapidly, the Alpha blinks to find Louis on his knees beside him, flushed prettily with his fury. “Of course not. Well while you weren’t listening, I asked why the attraction didn’t last.”

It’s honestly such a pathetic story. One that burns behind his eyes, that broke his damn thrown. To his ears his own voice with excruciating clarity, “’Cause, I mean why would it last? I had nothing to offer you. I didn’t want you to be some meaningless lay and destroy our friendship. I would never do that. Plus, I wasn’t there for you…and you were aware of that.” Though Harry means to shut the fuck up… “Do you remember how your dad would always mention our inevitable union?” Christ, this is so not happening–his eyes burn (more due to the lack of blinking than any tears) as Louis says, in such adorable confusion, “Yes?” There’s also an anxiety in his voice that leaves the impression that he knows where this is headed. What particular time he speaks of.

“Summer ‘09. You were just fifteen. I dunno when or how it really happened, but I remember one night you slept over and I told you, like I always did, that I really didn’t like you. Before you laughed it off, like you always did, you looked like I’d crushed all your hopes and dreams. And I realized those words actually hurt you, that I was being pretty stupid. I mean...you were perfect. You were brimming with life. You loved the little things. You were optimistic. Loud. Hyper. Cruel. But you were humble. And I loved it. I loved you. Like loved-loved you. I couldn’t stand thinking you might find someone else while I way away if I didn’t ask for your love-love,” a bitter laugh crawls up his throat as he blinks away the tears. “I was leaving that same day. But I just had to ask. To know. The butler let me in, nice fellow. You and your parents were in the third floor sitting room. As I was about to come in I heard you dad bring it up again. I didn’t mean to listen in or anything. But,” another useless laugh. “I obviously did. Always creeping. I just wanted to hear what you’d say to that, y’know? I reckon you don’t even remember this. ‘Cause it wasn’t like you hadn’t shot down the idea before, but this time you laughed like it was so...funny. You weren’t uncomfortable or shy or nervous...No, you thought the idea was completely absurd. And d’you remember what you said, paradise?”

When there is no response Harry recites numbly, “You said, ‘with him? With Harry? Dear God, no. Papa, have you lost it? That is just never happening. Honestly, why would I ever choose him? He comes back crazier and crazier! How can he take care of me when he refuses to take care of himself? I need someone to love me. Not hate me, or whatever else H has going on. It’s so not like that for me. Just no.’ Yeah, just so you know, because I never did explain myself, I didn’t mean to leave like that without a goodbye. But you can imagine I wouldn’t stick around after that. Like what that fuck would I say? I have a temper. And it would have made everything uglier.”

With a crystal-clear clarity Harry remembers that day; a memory he’d rather not delve into ever again.

There’s a crowd of silence before, “You heard that?”

Scowling, the Alpha looks at him. Of course he looks devastated, like this hurts him so much. With his trembling hand over his mouth, and his eyes, already red rimmed and puffy, collecting enough tears to flood the whole house. “Don’t you dare cry for me, Louis. Don’t you dare feel bad for being honest. Or so help me God I will lose my shit. I never treated you right. You had no reason to love me like that. Everything you said...It was right. I didn’t deserve your bond. I still don’t. But I am over it.” I have to be.

“No,” his voice breaks as he shakes his head wildly. “I-I didn’t know, Haz. I...Why didn’t you tell me before? I...Oh, no.”
Damn it, no, he’s not the one who fucked up. Wired, Harry diverts his stare and sits up to rub at the back of his neck. “So. There it is.”

With nothing more to say, Harry swallows, then shrugs helplessly. *Yeah, time to go…* 
*Definitely.* Yet, “I reckon you’re ready to leave now. ‘Cause that’s a lot of shit. And I don’t want you to look at me different now. So um I can drive you home? No, let me not. ‘M sure you probably want to not see me for a while anyway. Understandable. I will call one of the butlers. ‘Cause you shouldn’t drive right now. So, yeah, I’ll go…do that. Uh, I’m really sorry, for everything. I hope you can forgive me ‘cause I really need that. O-O-Or maybe I can like…Shit. Now I’m making you feel sorry for me. I just…I want you to know it wasn’t your fault. ‘S all on me.” *Everything must be meant to be broken for me.*

When there is only more nothing, Harry nods numbly. “Okay, going now.”

Yeah. Sure.

Zombie-like the Alpha edges towards the door, but a little broken noise reaches him first. *Ignore it. Ignore it. Ignore—*

He’s never been able to leave Louis—who is the closest to heaven he’ll ever be.

It’s no shocker than he’s selfishly staying.

With an unsteady breath, and the weight of the world threatening to snap his neck, Harry lies back down slowly on the mattress, head towards the foot. What feels like miles away, Louis is curled up in a ball of limbs and tears. “I’m sorry I’m not sorry for the time I called you a tiny bug. That was possibly the best day of my life. Meeting you definitely makes top ten at least.”

Another wrecked noise.

“You know when you cry I always feel like crying. You hurt, I hurt. You smile, I do too. I wish you’d smile right now.” *It might make me feel like you understand that what doesn’t kill you makes you wish you were dead.*

“H-How can I smile wh-when I feel so sick?” Louis gasps around all Harry’s wear-and-tear.

“Well, remember all those better times? Like two weeks after you turned eleven you ran around your parents’ house in your Mum’s blood red robes telling all the staff we were intended to be mated. You were stark underneath. That was funny. I wish I could’ve seen that, even though the idea was damn gross back then. And then a few months before that we were in love. God, we were in love, Lou.” A raincloud must be over him because his face is pretty wet. “I was counting on forever, too. Even though I didn’t really think it was love-love. Remember, Lou?”

“O-Of course.”

“Good times,” he smiles softly. “Sometimes love slips away. Our love was like that.” After all the *shit,* finding it again would be like pouring raindrops back into a damn cloud. Burnt out flames were never meant to be re-ignited, though Louis never stopped thinking theirs might. “You know…all this coke doesn’t really kill any of the pain. I wanted it to. But I’m breaking everyone I love by trying to *save myself* in the wrong ways, eh? My parents…My *Dad.* I-I saw him a few months ago. Well, really I went to his estate in London. And he was pretty surprised to see me ‘cause it’s been…so long. I know you two talk like every day, but…He cried, Lou. I made *Supreme Styles* cry! He told me…it’s time to be an Alpha, and stop living for yesterday. ‘Cause apparently it’s over now, and I can *fix it now.* And if I c-couldn’t then I wasn’t his heir
anymore. I think I’m ready to listen. I don’t want to wake up one day and find I have nothing because I wasted my life away. B-But I just can’t seem to find anything reparable.”


“Mmm. How ‘bout that time I was so convinced I failed my admissions. You forced me to come flower picking with you. I didn’t understand how that was supposed to make anything better. Somehow having that bloody flower crown in my hair did. Or maybe it was how many times you told me how brill I was. I believed it, ‘cause you were ten, and still believed honesty was the best policy.” Salty wet trickles down his face, between his lips.

“What ‘bout when we were older? I always tried to make up for that missing time, y’know. I took you to that party on the beach. You were so lovely and drunk dancing in the firelight. I watched the entire time. I had some boy in my lap and all I could see was you. I know I wasn’t the only one. You were so…effortless. There was nothin’ wrong in the world when your toes were in the sane and a bottle of Jack in your hand. Well, that is until you were running towards the shoreline and I had to tackle you in the water. You said we were playin’, but I was freaked out. You scared the hell out of me.

“And you’re such a blackout drunk I know you don’t remember this ‘cause I never told you, but you begged me to fuck you in the sand. You whispered the worlds I always wanted to hear, I love you, take me. But you were plastered, and you didn’t know what the hell you were saying. I had to carry you, drunk and loud and drenched, to the car, and then upstairs to my room because we couldn’t go to yours without your Dad skinning me ‘cause you were only seventeen and it was damn well past your curfew. You were so upset. You know I’ve always hated when you didn’t get your way or what you wanted. Not because your attitude or how you’d act after. More so I feel you should always have whatever it is you desire.”

“Y-Y-You’ve always spoiled m-me.”

“I know I do. You can’t imagine how I hated not being able to make love to you in the sand.”

Louis snivels, and then whimpers, “Y-You weren’t even tipsy.” That’s what makes it worse.

“But at the end of the night I really didn’t mind. I wasn’t as special as knowing you were safe and in bed and asleep. You’re so beautiful when you’re asleep. So unaware of your beauty. Not ruining it with all the rambling. I think that was the only time I really took care of you. I never wanted to stop after that.” Christ, lovely, now he sounds pathetic.

“I-I wish I c-could remember.” Would things have been different? If I gave you the impression I could have done it?

“I am happy you don’t. It’s mine. You just have to trust me when I say it was one of the best moment’s we’ve had.”

“I don’t.” I don’t blame you.

“I really can’t choose a best. I quite enjoyed when you told your Dad we were in love and eloping. I almost spit tea all over your poor Dad. I swore he was going into cardiac arrest when you dragged me out of that room. He was going to kill me, Louis. You didn’t it, didn’t you? Loved that us being in love was so believable.”

“Y-Yes.” Have we been living in sin because we’ve been really in love and living as friends?

I should’ve just asked your Dad for permission that day. We wouldn’t have needed to elope. Our
love would have been easy.

&&

Curled up, Louis suffocates his sobs in order to listen to the thick drawl of Harry’s voice. The words are echoes of the past, of what they were. As his heart weeps, the denial that had become a thin film over Louis’ vision...clears. And the memories are shed in a novel illumination.

Even in shambles, an irreplaceable emotion builds within him; shimmers in his veins, warms his blood, supports his sensitive heart. And oh God suddenly it’s not all so bad.

Because Harry is here, with him, reminding him of who they are, who they’ve always been. As the Omega trembles, his Harry shows him what he couldn’t see back then in soft, fond words that rattle his bones.

They are not a tragedy.

Not then, not now.

It all feels like so long ago, so far away, but no matter it’s never disappeared because they won’t let it.

God, Louis feels like a demon from the foulest pits of hell, because he’d always thought it was Harry. Harry who ruined their chances, who abandoned any bonded future for them...but no, no it was him. Louis gave up. They had been so close to what he’d always begged God for every night before bed, what he longed for. So close.

But, of course, Louis just couldn’t shut his fat mouth; because what Harry didn’t hear couldn’t hurt him, right?

Of course he could never forget that day either because Harry had left him without any goodbye; not a word or a note or an anything. Louis stayed up the whole night with the frantic hope that maybe he hadn’t even left, or maybe he sent something, for anything to comfort him that he hadn’t just up and left.

When the sun peaked through any faith was shattered. Louis remembers spiraling into a conniption. Remember storming into Harry’s bloody room at 6 A.M. and destroying all his shit Records. Clothes. Jewelry. Pictures. Furniture (don’t ask how that happened because Louis doesn’t recall doing it, just knows his hands bled afterwards). Anything his hands touched. Remembers locking himself in his wardrobe, and leaving a voicemail that still shames him to this day; ‘I destroyed you, really. You’re going to be s-s-s-so angry when you’re back. You wanna be free of me so bloody bad? Fine. I’m gone! I’m n-never calling you again! A-And don’t expect me to b-b-be here when you come home! I’m glad you left, too! I w-won’t miss you. There’s nothin’ to m-miss anymore. You sh-should just stay there! ‘Cause that’s all that matt’ahs, y-yeah! You’re makin’ me look crazy too! Your parents are t-trying to break the d-d-oor down! Y-You’re such a l-liar. You d-don’t love me! You just used me for your s-sick pleasure! Let’s see how I can b-b-break Louis this time! Hahahaha! Good fun! You sick motherfucker! I-I hope you regret this! Go die in a hole! I hate you! I hate you! I HATE YOU, HARRY STYLES.’

Remembers the door had been broken down, and the phone confiscated. Louis refused to cry in front of Harry’s parents, because they’d surely make a story out of Louis’ meltdown. So, he held his head so high, marching through his ruins in his batman pajamas, and promptly ran five miles home in the pouring rain.
The rain had been his savior on that day; because you honestly couldn’t tell raindrops from tears.

Remembers how scared he’d been when the Styles’ reported to his parents; how scared he’d been when Harry called him back–too scared to answer the one hundred plus calls.

“Remember that costume party as Niall’s?” his voice pierces the imprints of hurt. *Oh, no. Anything but that disaster.* “You were so upset because Liam thought you were supposed to be an angel. You worked so hard on those costumes for *months.* You were so cute in your primadonna stage.” *Oh, yeah.* Louis was right pissed. Because an angel? An *angel?* Harry was the one with the bloody wings! Really, they were Peter and Tink. Louis was bloody Peter. Only thing was Louis has made some *minor* adjustments. Dressing Harry in black because that’s his colour, and black and green didn’t really match so Louis had opted for white instead. So the makeup hadn’t been ideal for Harry and Louis had thrown on some glitter. Louis was not, and never has been, a bloody makeup artists. And he will always think Harry looks so *fit* in all black with little fairy wings and drippy eyeliner and flat ironed hair. It was a very good night for the nineteen year old Alpha. “I looked *ridiculous.* Absolutely gross, paradise. My worst night yet. Meanwhile you looked gorgeous. In your white little tights and boots. All glittery and flushed.”

*But you didn’t even look at me like the others had?*

Or, Louis hadn’t *noticed,* not then. Now that he thinks back on it…*yeah it was right in front of my stupid face.* It was everywhere. Harry always looked so deliciously Alpha with blown pupils that made the mossy green of his irises thin rings, and thrillingly pointed canines that flashed whenever he spoke.

And he *looked at him* with an expression Louis always thought to be disgust, but in this light Louis thinks it was hungrier, and he *had* looked him up and down again and again.

Another soul-sucking sound wrings through him though Harry mutters, “Hey, I thought we looked like a Goth Peter and Tink. People are just stupid. Even Liam. You know that night was just *bad* though. I mean you poured fruit punch all over me! I didn’t even know what I did.”

Louis can’t help the heat that creeps up on his cheeks. “Y-You t-tried to leave me for some bloody *waffle.*”

“Oh. Yeah. Yeah, I don’t know who let her dress like that, honest.”

“Well, you seemed to *like it.* Nasty.”

“I liked making you jealous. You’re adorable. But I didn’t expect an entire punch bowl to be dumped over my head. I think I nearly spanked the hell out of you right then and there. You remember how livid I was?” *Yes.* Scary. Even Niall, who *encouraged him,* had scurried away; the traitor had all but fed him to one angry shark.

“Yes, you must. Because I definitely dragged you up to Ni’s room and tried it.”

Oh, no, no, *no.* Louis cannot think about that; but he can’t *stop* either.

He *liked* being manhandled and tasting fruit punch where he bit Harry in attempts to escape. He *liked* being tossed onto the bed in the dark and having Harry look at him like a target. He *liked* when being sprawled out on Harry’s knees and involuntarily perking his bum out for it.

But he did not like how Harry *stopped* without touching him. Or how he left. Or how he didn’t touch him ever again afterwards.
“I couldn’t look you in the eye for weeks after,” the Alpha whispers. “I was so ashamed. C-Cause I’d never…force you…”

Louis snivels. “I know. I know. You didn’t, H. You didn’t hurt me like that. You never have.”

“Except Friday night…” he sounds so sick with himself that Louis shakes his head anxiously.

“You weren’t even awake. You didn’t mean to. And I…I wasn’t hurt. Anything but hurt. Not because you were um…touchin’ me at least. I was just upset because you wouldn’t ever do it awake. You think…I’m ugly or summat.” You don’t know how to love me when you’re sober.

“Don’t say that, Louis. I don’t think you’re ugly. How many times must I say you are beautiful before you believe me? You don’t need me to say it for it to be true, anyway. You should already know that.”

A fresh bout of tears tumble down his cheeks as Louis whispers, “I-If I tell you something, will you promise not to look at me d-differently?”

“You can tell me anything. I will never see anything less than the bloody stars out of you.”

Louis smiles watery and begs any God listening to let this be true. “I, ah, I just want you to know I know…I know how you must feel all the time. Maybe not so bad, but I, ah, I realized I actually do know what you mean by followers.” I just had one.

Louis doesn’t see it coming, but then Harry Styles looms over him, and he is trapped by long, lean muscle. Above him, the Alpha looks…ominous, haunted.

“What does that mean?” his thin voice is frantic.

All the residual shame from being reduced to such a helpless creature torrents through him as Louis closes his eyes, and decides this is a bad idea when the scene comes to life behind his eyes. No.

Louis can’t go back there.

So, the boy seeks out Harry’s eyes, the irises still so clear, the mossy colour lightened towards emerald with his alarm. It’s in these seconds that Louis’ bones are still, all the strength he needs is right there, in Harry’s eyes. “I was there once, too,” Louis mumbles, toying with the ends of his curls.

“This man…Robert…that was his name. H-He, um…Well, I suppose I shouldn’t skip detail so. You were away. I was seventeen at the time. I d-dunno. He stalked me for two whole years. You know m-me…I never bothered to be aware of my surroundings so it was kind of my own fault I never realized until…I-It happened a week before you came h-home. I was just walking back home from Zayn’s. I took a bloody shortcut. I forgot to inform the guards that I was going. It’s my fault, really. I realized he was following me three blocks down, but I figured I could make it home because I run pretty fast. But t-then he started using that voice. And I…w-won’t bring you into the gruesome details. I was just scared, H. I was really scared for a long time afterwards. I thought he was still following me. I knew rationally he wasn’t because he was locked away, still is, b-b-but I just…I felt like he was always there. All the time. Every second of every day. I know…I know how it feels to be scared to close your eyes or step outside your house. I just…I know how that feels.”

“That’s not possible,” the Alpha says, and the wild light to his eyes makes Louis feel small.  
“That’s not possible, Louis. That’s not…nobody…how?”
“I felt ashamed. I felt helpless and pathetic. Dad made sure it was okay. So the press...the story was never leaked. I don’t remember most of it, so it’s okay. I forget what the doctors called it, but I think my brains blocked it out.”

“Paradise...” his voice is so much more Alpha, thick and dominant. And there is a darkness in his eyes that Louis doesn’t want there, that nobody wants there. Louis feels the walls of his skull caving in because the crystals trapped in Harry’s eyes look so much like the ones to help suppress his sorrows. “Paradise, no...Not you. Please, not you...”

He’s shaking with an earthquake that’s hurting all the best parts of him.

Louis feels like molding to him, like crawling into his heart, and spreading all his love through his body to heal his soul, to make his mind the place it used to be. To be his. Because this is it; this is the only Alpha fate’s given him.

And he wouldn’t let him go if any other ever came along.

&&

Every razor blade Harry once used to disperse his precious powder have begun to slice away at his brain. Excruciating. Painful. Awakening.

God, he’s so awake. Louis’ eyes have become mirrors; and the reflection is so clear. The greens of his eyes are so clear.

“I’ll kill him,” his voice is so broken, and he needs to alleviate this sickness now. “I’ll murder him. I’ll...I’ll...”

“No,” Louis breathes, caring fingers tacking back the emotional outlet. Stroking the tears from his face. “I want him to know he didn’t ruin me. I want him to know I’m okay. I’m happy. I want him to live knowing that I’ll never be his.” Always so strong. A solider.

“I wasn’t there...I wasn’t there. There would be...nothing to...if I just...”

“It was meant to happen. I wouldn’t have been able to understand you if it hadn’t,” Louis disagrees softly.

“I don’t care,” Harry shouts. “I would rather you not understand me. I never wanted...Louis...” and it breaks and cracks and becomes something worse; a sob. “No. You’re so good. You’re so... You aren’t supposed to go through shit like that. You’re...You’re...”

“Why are you letting this break you, Harry?”

“Because nobody should ever haunt you! You should know nothing but kindness! And I failed to make sure it was maintained. I wasn’t here...I wasn’t...I left you...I...left...” When we were together, we never turned our backs on each other...but every time I left I turned mine on you.

“Stop it! This is why nothing changes, H. You live in the past. You don’t let anything go. You left me! But it would’ve happened anyway! You couldn’t be with me every minute! You need to...realise you can’t change what’s already happened.” By the time he’s finished his chest is heaving and Harry is clinging to him.

“You shouldn’t be sorry, silly,” Louis says breathlessly. “Everyone thinks it won’t be them. I didn’t think it’d be me. I didn’t think it’d be you. But it is what it is. Until you understand that
it’s over, you’re stuck. You can’t save everyone. You just can’t. But there is nothing irreparable about you. And I’m sorry you can’t look in the mirror and see yourself right now. I’m sorry you think about putting bullets through your head because you don’t want to watch yourself deteriorate. I’m sorry you can’t just be fixed in the blink of an eye.” Which means he’s read the notes.

“Yeah, I read ‘em. They scared the fuck out of me. You terrify me with those thoughts! And you know what,” Wide, serious blue eyes stare back at him through the blur. “I will follow your arse to the grave, Styles. I’m not meant to be without you. Don’t you get it by now? So help me God if you try to be a natural disaster and leave gunpowder all over your mouth I’m going to have to be a self-induced disaster and throw myself off a fuckin’ bridge.”

The mere thought terrifies him, has him holding Louis so tight he can’t breathe. He’s gasping. “No. Don’t do that. Never ever do that, paradise.”

“Get better. Please. Please, don’t leave me alone again… Don’t make it permanent this time. ‘M so scared all the time that I’m going to come home a-and you’re nothing going to be breathing. Please, stop giving me panic attacks when you don’t answer the phone. Please, stop giving me panic attacks when you take a whole minute to tell me you’re coming to greet me at the door. Please, don’t lock yourself in your room. Don’t leave me to a written I love you goodbye. Because you won’t be killing your demons, Harry, you’ll be leaving them to me.”

He doesn’t know at which part he falls apart, but then he’s on his side with Louis tucked small against him. He’s still clinging to the small boy. “I won’t, I won’t,” he breaks over and over and over with the demons looking for out of his skull, wanting out at the prospect of having Louis instead, pure and innocent. “I won’t leave you with them.”

Sometime during this Harry blacks out. Exhausted from withdrawal, from overload, from life.

The escape is momentary, but it’s what he needs to find some semblance of himself again.

&&

Ice rains down on Harry, drowning him. With a disgruntled groan the Alpha tosses, trying to escape the cold.

“Oh! Oh! Okay! Movement! Sound! That’s good. You’re not dead…” a whimsical voice chimes. “Yet.”

“Not anytime soon, Louis,” Harry mutters, burying his face in ocean breeze vanilla scented pillows. Smells so lovely, he could sleep here all day.

“And you said my name!” the boy gushes in relief. “And you aren’t crying! Progress.”

“Paradise, please. Let me sleep. ‘M so tired.”

“Okay,” Louis whispers nervously, shuffling. “Sleep, baby. But promise to get up and eat soon. ‘M going to get ready for class, yeah?”

“No. Stay. Skip the day.”

A shy, tiny giggle. “I can’t. I have to teach the class today.”
“Teach the class?”

“Mhm. Apply my knowledge or some shit.”

“Fine. I’m coming.” Despite the screams of his weak body, Harry sits up, anchored by the headboard as there are two Louis’s in his vision. Two very worried looking Louis’–ah, well, the more the merrier.

Blinking wildly, Harry’s vision focuses and Louis is damn well close to his face now. “No. Please. Stay, sleep. Sleep the entire day. Eat a cow. And then wait for me to come home because we have an appointment with your desk.”

Panic threatens to devour him at the thought of Louis discarding his sanity, before his little palm greets his face. “Hey. Hey. We’ll talk about it first. Just…stay in my room today? ‘S comfy. There’s a telly. A stereo system with wicked bass. A mini fridge in the wardrobe for Niall. I’m sure there’s something in there. He won’t mind. The loo is right there. There’s this comfy bed with the canopy and…”

He zones out. Just closes his eyes and listens to the sound of Louis’ voice. It’s quite calming. Even so pitch. “Okay, Mummy,” he mumbles, pink hitting his cheeks. “I’ll be fine. You’re forgetting I spend 95 percent of the time alone.”

Louis jerks away, and when Harry goes to reprimand him for taking back what grounds him, the boy is biting his lip and blushing beautifully. “Sorry.”

“Wait, I–,” but somehow in his mad scramble to reel the rushing boy back he falls over him, and knocks their foreheads.

They both wince. Louis glares, and Harry smiles sheepishly, “Oops.”

His face melts into a mischievous smile. “Hi.”

“Hey,” Harry breathes.

“You’re very wet right now,” Louis purrs suggestively.

It’s only then that Harry realizes he is, his hair is falling in his face and his chest is trickling with in. “You got me wet, pup.”

It’s serious. But he’s laughing. Really laughing as Louis giggles in delight, and lurches up to kiss his cheek. It’s so warm. His mouth is. So are Harry’s cheeks. “I did, didn’t I?” The sound dies immediately as his nerves spark. Which Louis catches, “Hey. Hey, no. Don’t stop. You haven’t witch cackled in a long time.

Which, lovely, not like he needed the reminder. “Oh, damn it. That was the wrong thing to say, wasn’t it? I’m such a knothead… I don’t…”

There he goes again, a bullet released from its chamber. Something aches in his chest. He’s missed this so much. Missed touching him. Really feeling the contact, and listening to him ramble.

“Louis,” he interrupts, watching the Omega’s mouth go lax and his eyes round. “I was rambling, wasn’t I? I don’t know why I do that. It’s not even like–,”

“God, paradise, shut up,” but it’s fond, and he can’t help his grin.

“Hi stranger,” Louis whispers, all dreamy like.
“Huh.”

“Hi, Haz.”

“Okay, hi, Louis?”

They boy wears a weird expression now. All silly and adorable. Not that it doesn’t make him feel lighter. A few tons off the weight. “Stay, yeah? I missed you. Stay.”

Oh. Right. The mood. This mood is way too nice—the drugs would never allow this. “If we’re lucky,” Harry mutters, and rolls away. “You’ll be late if you don’t start gettin’ ready.

“You don’t even know the time,” Louis mumbles petulantly.

“I’m implying that I’d like you to leave.”

“Wellcome back, asshole Harry,” the boy mutters which Harry rolls his eyes over all the while staring at the ceiling of the bedframe. Mahogany. Nice. “And this is my room, I come and go as I please. You’re burrowing it.” He rises to a stance, and there’s pattering footfalls as the Omega hums some pretty tune.

God, Harry turns his face to watch him through the slit in the thick canopy.

“I know you’re lookin’,” the boy singsongs.

And he should look away, he doesn’t nonetheless because he’s sitting on the rocking chair (which he needed to have) and undo the garter with quick, nimble fingers, and slowly peeling the thigh-thighs down. Looking calms him like nothing else, watching inch by inch of his creamy thighs being revealed, and the part of his legs gives the sweetest veil of the silky panties barely covering his pretty cock.

There is no noise but his heartbeat and the material fluttering to the floor.

And then he’s up and sashaying to the drawer bare-arsed—and what an arse, so perky and full, and there is no sign of the panties except for the lace circling his thin waist.

Head spinning, Harry doesn’t breathe—heavy and hard his cock is pounding with his heartbeat.

And the sweetest part: how Louis stumbles around while squeezing into those ripped jeans. How they hug his hips and thighs as he giggles, fumbling with the button.

“They’re new,” Louis whispers shyly, “And very very tight apparently.”

“They look…nice,” the Alpha croaks.

The Omega snorts. “They’ll have to do. Now a shirt, hmm,” he smiles wickedly, scampering back over to the bed and crawling to the other side where Harry’s shirt, a plain white V-neck is caught in the blankets. “Perfect, now, I–,”

Mindless, railed with instinct, Harry pins the boy on his back, braced over him as he gasps. “Haz stop doin’ that!” He doesn’t push him away nonetheless. Harry searches his face for any traces of fear or discomfort, but there’s nothing but round oceans that dance with curiosity, and sharp cheeks that are kissed by a delicious rose, and a parted supple mouth...

Tracing down his body Harry at last discovers the last bit of pink remaining; loose over his soft torso and belly. The sparkle of the diamond nestled between his collarbones catches his attention.
At the sight, an overwhelming, possessive instinct flares within him once again.

At the wrong time, the Alpha realizes he wants to mark him. Mark him as his. Christ, he wants that special scent all over him so no other Alpha will even go near him. So that they will know whom he belongs to. So that they will fear the repercussions of wanting to possess him for themselves.

Except he knows he has no right to do that. This boy ain’t his. Despite all the night has unfolded…Louis is not his.

Underneath him, the Omega squirms, and when Harry forces his stare to meet his round, innocent eyes, bottomless in their shade of sapphire. “Haz?” Concern drips in his voice. “What’s wrong?”

Harry makes to pull away, but the boy catches his face in small, dainty hands. “You okay?”

“No,” it’s his voice, but wrong, unstable as his weight sinks into Louis. A gasp floods their space as his cock, tenting his trousers, presses tight to his soft belly. “No, I’m not. I haven’t been for a while.” On their own accord his hands work; somehow his fingers sweep his ruffled fringe from his face, and he palms the sharp jut of his hipbone over the denim, squeezing to carry the lacy top up. Desperate to savor this, Harry buries his nose in Louis’ thin silky hair, inhaling the scent.

Cruel, his ribcage constricts around his heart, but it’s barely felt with the soft pressure on his cock as Louis lets out a tiny noise that makes his eyes roll into the back of his head. “Remember what happened when I gave you those tags?”

“Yes,” Louis mumbles, breathing shallowly.

His body has definitely taken its power over the situation. “I want that again. I want to kiss you. Will you let me?”

When the boy hesitates Harry can’t say he blames him. This isn’t them. This has never been them. Clearly Louis knows this, too. It could have been them. But it can’t be anymore.

“Ignore me. I’m sorry, I–,”

“No. It’s just…new. Why d’you want to kiss me?”

_Because my Alpha thinks you’re mine. I’m starved for you._ “Was stupid, I was…I don’t know. I’m sorry.” Yet his nose is still in his hair, and his hand is still toying with his lacy little slip.

Once Harry musters the strength to start away, Louis’ hand land on his biceps, then whispers, “Do it, H. Kiss me.” _Do you think you’ll ever need me, love, more than I need you?_

A moment of weakness. A moment of need. Whatever it is…it is.

Harry leans into him and puts his mouth right on the Omegas, brushing his lips hesitantly.

Except then Louis runs his hands up his arms, leaving goosebumps, to encourage breathily, “’S okay. More.”

Shoring up whatever control remains, the Alpha strokes his mouth, then tries to ease back. But Louis follows, keeping them linked, and before he can stop himself he runs his tongue across the velvet of his bottom lip. With an erotic sigh Louis parts his mouth and he has to, can’t turn down such a blessing.

Then his tongue is in Louis’ soft, wet mouth, tasting the delicious contours as the boy lets out a
breathless mewl that straight need through him. His sweet tongue meets Harry, and it’s obvious he hasn’t kissed much, so very shy.

As the boy tries to get even closer, alarms ring in his head as Harry is reminded just how desperate an Alpha’s bond can be when he has his Omega horizontal and underneath him.

“Paradise, I…should stop.” In another minute he’s going to have him on his belly and his jeans down his thighs.

“No,” the Omega mumbles, beseeching. “Just a little more.”

“Louis, I’m getting raw. You aren’t thinking—”

“Kiss me. Please.” Cared for nails dig into his shoulders, the sting cutting in a serious of delicious little flares. With a ragged breath Harry takes his mouth. *Bad idea.*

The harder Harry kisses him, the harder Louis kisses back until he’d dominating his mouth, teeth clamping down on his plush bottom lip. “Oh,” the Omega sighs, so puzzled, so *sexual,* that the Alpha sucks softly, his every muscle twitching to mount him proper.

Because the boy is squirming underneath him, and moaning breathily into his mouth until he painful line of his cock swells slightly at the base. It’s the taste of him, the taste of his mouth, so sweet, taking his mind to another place that’s so wet the perfume is everywhere; spellbinding, for *him.* Knowing this, the pleasure that shouldn’t exist is deep, endless. Terrifying.

Already on edge, Harry tears away, considers running, considers carrying on with this, and settles on holding him because neither are possible when his Alpha is crazed and possessive like this. As his mouth rises to Louis’ temple, the boy pants underneath him. “T-That was nice.”

“Yeah,” his voice is raspy.

“C-Can we do that again?”

“Yeah.” His hands spread his thighs as his tongue teases Louis’ again. Responsive, the boy’s legs circle his waist, heels digging into his back as his hands fist his hair, anchoring them. The sharp pain from the yanking thrills him, causes his cock to throb as he holds his weight again, keeping his hands to himself. “You’re so sweet,” he groans into his mouth, taking his bottom lip between his teeth again just to hear that gasping whimper.

*I gotta pocket gotta pocket full of sunshine,* pierces through their haze as Louis mumbles, “*No, no, not now…*”

“Time to get ready?” Harry asks, which gives him fifteen more minutes to strip

“No. Time to go, that’s my second alarm!” Louis moan miserably.

“Stay.”

“Let me up or I have to leave with this slip on,” Louis threatens, even as his hands stroke the sharp blades of Harry’s shoulders, causing his muscles to bunch.

Not willing to risk that, Harry rolls away, staring blindly and trying to ignore the obvious bulge in his trousers.

Louis giggles, eyeing it suspiciously as Harry goes pink. “I’ll make it up to you when I get home.”
Which ain’t happening.

Harry doesn’t answer, just keeps staring because he hates watching Louis leave and foreshadow the future. Oblivious, Louis stands, fumbles around to finish dressing and slip into his white shoes while grabbing his bag and keys.

“Please, H,” Louis mumbles before going. “Don’t relapse today.”

“Pinky promise,” Harry mutters just to get him out.

“I’ve given up on those,” Louis whispers sadly, and doesn’t wait on an answer.

Without his presence, Harry lies there, listening to the whispered conversations starting from behind the entrance. The knocking. The scratching. How the door shakes under the force of their beckoning.

_We’re supposed to be in love_, he thinks again and again.

It’s only thirty minutes that he’s been alone when he finally finds his phone lying on the side table (had he left it there?).

_‘Let us help you, help you, let us help you.’_

Everyone wants to help him now. Funny.

Their calls become screeches until he’s nauseous trying to sleep, until he’s sitting up torn between scrubbing his skin raw and covering his ears.

Well. At least he tried–what’s behind the door greets him the second he opens it. And fuck it’ll help him alright. Without looking back, he takes its hand, smiles back and starts towards his only available help.

∞∞∞

“My, my, _someone’s_ cramming,” it’s Liam who startles Louis whose nose is buried in a book he’d meant to finish _weeks_ before his exam this evening. He’s always been such a bloody procrastinator. Awful habit.

“You’re sitting with me sixth hour,” Louis murmurs distractedly.

“Why ever?” Smug twat.

“I need to cheat off you, that’s why.”

“You know, Lou-Lou, cheating is–,”

“Never the way. Yeah, got it, Li-Li. Either way I’ll finish with better scores.” He smiles sweetly. It’s true, it’s one of his finest talents–coming out on top with little to no effort.

Shoulders slumping Liam mumbles glumly, “Twat.”

“Did someone say _twat_?” Aiden singsongs, plopping down beside Louis. “What was last night ‘bout, Tommo?”

An unflattering colour greets his face as Louis trains his eyes on his book, not really reading the

“Is that what this is about?” Anger bleeds into his voice as his fingertips touch the faded bruise on his neck, then lowers to an almost nonexistent love-bite. Louis flinches, then mutters without explaining, “No.”

Scrolling through his phone Liam asks conversationally, “Harry? How is he these days? Doin’ okay?”

“Yes, Harry,” Louis snaps uncomfortably, closing his book with more force than necessary. “No, Liam, he is not okay. And no I do not want to talk about it.”

“Woah, chill, love,” Aiden murmurs like that tone doesn’t make his blood boil.

“Oh, this is always how he acts when you bring up you-know-who,” Liam says simply, whistling low and loud when Louis clenches his teeth and shoves his book in his backpack.

As Louis is walking away Aiden calls, “Aw, c’mon, Lou, baby, come back! We didn’t mean no harm!”

Louis wants to tell Aiden he’s not his bloody baby, but opts to shoot them both the middle finger. Getting the hell out of there before the Alpha can follow, Louis trudges through Parliament only quitting when the coast is clear. Leaning in the Omega presses his forehead on some random, but blessedly cool wall.

In a whirlwind of thoughts Louis just is, stress and exhaustion toying with the raveled ends of his nerves.

“You ain’t sinking into that wall any time soon, Lou,” an Irish voice pipes up once he’s just gotten comfortable with his wall.

Louis groans, “Won’t anyone just leave me the hell alone?”

A hand takes his upper arm. “I’d never! Let’s go.”

“Where are we off to exactly?” Louis mumbles, pressing the heels of his palms into his eyes. Lights burst behind his lids and light up his lagging brain.

“We’re off to meet the Wizard! The wonderful Wizard of Oz! Who is in the loo with a lot of happy-smoke!”

“In the loo?” Louis gasps in hoax fascination. “With happy-smoke? Why I never!”

With one of those laughs that works wonders on his mood, Niall tows him into the bathroom on the outskirts of the vast estate. Rarely does anyone come around these parts—it’s just spare space.

Its ten minutes in that Louis’ back is to the wall, doubled over as their laughter shakes the stalls. It’s this mad laughter that summons Zayn, who crams in with them as they pass a spliff back and forth.

Taking it between his artist fingers the other Omega regards them through low lids, “I can’t believe I wasn’t invited to this little get together.”

“Cool kids only,” Louis giggles, already spacey.

“I wish that I could be like the cool kids,” Niall sings softly, red-rimmed eyes glassy.
As his thin lips take the roll up, with every drag, gold lights up Zayn’s usually chocolate eyes. Smoke begins to crowd them, suffocating and inescapable. Annoyed, Louis bats at it, though Niall beckons him over so they can shotgun. As the Omega locks the clouds in his lungs he feels like he’s floating, giddy and out-of-this-world.

“Omega on Omega. Hot,” Zayn comments around melting laughter, rifling through his backpack all the while.

“Aye, want some of this, Zaynie?” Louis giggles, running his hands down his chest suggestively.

“I’d rather not have me head offed by Styles.”

Louis’ smile wavers, but he laughs anyway and tosses the roach into the toilet.

Lighting another Niall asks, “Did you ever get into Harry’s phone, Tommo?”

Zayn takes a swing of a fresh bottle of Jack, then passes it to Louis, “‘Ere, mate, thought you might need this after earlier with Li and Aiden.”

“What happened with them?”

Louis sips, then spits at the searing taste of liquor. “I did. And they were takin’ the piss. Motherfuckin’ Alphas, hate them all.” As he passes Zayn returns the light up.

“You did what ‘xactly?” Niall asks after impressive chugs. “And I’ll ‘ave you know I love my Joshie.”

“I agree with Lou,” Zayn mutters as Niall passes the bottle to him. “Not all of us have Alphas that think our arse is made of gold.”

“No, yer just a prude!” Niall giggles, smoke floating from his nostrils. Niall is one sexy dragon Louis think hazily. “Louis has an Alpha that thinks his arse is made of gold!”

“Louis’ Alpha is just fifty shades of fucked up!” Louis’ giggles are cathartic, bubbling in his belly with alcohol. Brilliance, pure brilliance.

“Lord, this lad still can’t handle his liquor,” Niall sighs solemnly, bowing his head. Louis slaps a hand over his mouth but every time his eyes skitter over Niall’s unimpressed face he just loses it. Gah–I’m a mess.

“Louis, Louis, mate,” Zayn intervenes with much more concern when Louis’ been laughing ten minutes. “Calm down. It’s not…funny…”

It really really isn’t.

With a sharp, painful breath, Louis carries his shaky hand up to cover his teary eyes. He could play the tears off as laughing too hard. But that’d be bullshit, and they’d all know it.

“There, there,” Niall coos softly, “Take this, my little bird. And fly free.”

Louis peeks through his fingers to take the joint again and pull in a drag that has his heartbeat flying for sure.

Zayn squeezes his shoulder as his body sags again, loose by intoxication. “Love is such a bad habit, Louis. Sex is what you need. Sex is a way to feel a little less lonely.”
“Aiden’s up to bat!”

“I don’t think sex or Aiden could fill up this emptiness,” Louis sighs bitterly once he’s through burning the tips of his fingers with the clip.

“Naaaaah,” Niall stresses the word funnily. “Probably not. But ‘ey it feels good. Sex is a stress reliever.”

“Choking you would be a stress reliever,” Louis mumbles, tossing him a saucy smile.

“If only,” Zayn sighs longingly.

“You love me!” Niall blows smoke into his face.

Waving it away, the other Omega murmurs, “That I do, Nialler.”

“We’re totally failing Politics.”

“No! We have Leyum!” Louis fist pumps with cherry lipped conviction.

Giggling, Zayn tosses the second roach into the toilet. “We do! And if he asks we are straight as lines!”

“You two aren’t very convincing,” Niall points out around a huge yawn.

“Whateva that means,” Louis’ words slur slightly.

“C’mon, lads, let’s get this over with so we can come back and really bake.”

“I’m game!”

“We can see that, Louis,” Zayn mutters, standing to reach down and help Louis up (to which Niall whines, “how come I don’t get a helping hand?” and Zayn replies smugly, “because you can handle your drugs” and Louis squeaks, “Hey! I can handle my drugs! Though nobody is proper as Harry fookin’ Styles!” More mad giggles.)

And if Niall and Zayn share a disturbed look over his head Louis is glad to never know.

&&

“Wasn’t that bad,” Louis mumbles once they step out of class, only just a bit buzzed by now. Aiden, to his right, groans, “Louis, that was castration! I lost my balls in there.”

“You lost your manhood,” Zayn corrects dryly. “Cause Louis aced.”

“I don’t know that I aced,” the Omega mumbles modestly. “I think I did alright, yeah.”

“Mr. Modest, over ‘ere,” Niall snorts, scrubbing at his bloodshot eyes. “I for one am ready to forget that nightmare.”

“Your place?” Liam asks, joining them with Sophia beside him. When Louis crows, “hey there, lovely lady,” she waves shyly and Aiden chuckles fondly then swoops down to whisper into the shell of his ear, “You’re makin’ me jealous. Flirting with all the fit birds.”
Louis elbows him playfully, but otherwise doesn’t respond. Niall does, however, “Sure.” He retrieves him phone from his pocket. “I’ll just tell Josh to get ready. Hey, Lou, why don’t you invite Haz?” Beside him Aiden stiffens and Louis kind of wants to deck the Irish Omega in the forehead.

Stalling just a bit, Louis mumbles (sinking into Aiden’s possessive arm; just one more false impression), “No phone. Broke it yesterday.” How the fuck am I surviving this mess?

“How the fuck am I surviving this mess?”

“Get on that. For now I’ll text the fucker.”

Louis shrugs one-shouldered and smiles sneakily into Aiden’s shoulder. See, Harry just doesn’t do social group things that involve personality enjoyment. So, at least for now, Louis is safe.

&&

Twisted with his right foot on the yellow dot and his left on the blue, the Omega is bent with both arms splayed out in front of him to match the colors he’s dealt.

“It hurts, it hurts,” Niall whines, legs spread and stretched underneath Louis to reach the green and blue dots. His twisted arm does look quite painful. “At least your arse ain’t in the air,” Louis giggles breathlessly. “Don’t give up, Ni!”

“I will go down with this ship!” the Irish lad giggles, swaying dangerously even so.

“Aiden! Left foot green! Josh left foot…green! Double-whammey.” Staggering a bit the Alpha’s do as Zayn tells them to. Smokey as the room is Louis is having trouble seeing who is where. “Right foot…yellow, A!”

Soon they’re a tangle of limbs. Someone keeps putting joints to their mouths—Louis’ mouth is so dry he wishes the bottle across from him were in reach. Damn twister.

Niall is all dramatics, “Me leg! Me leg! Cramping!” And Louis is all intoxicated laughter, chanting, “Council Capable! Council Capable!” Aiden is all, “I can’t…I can’t…Please, Lord, end my suffering.”

Bass bounces on the walls; a rap Louis’ never heard before trips him out. It’s the deep, dreamy flow.

“Beautiful fall… I know we all ain’t perfect but you was close as I could hope for. So I try to make it work but now it’s time I let it go…Beautiful fall…But I every time I try you tell me no. Tell me where to go…”

Must everything remind him?

Damp (its sweat, damn it) lashes fluttering Louis almost doesn’t notice, but God he couldn’t not. Eyes of sea mist folded into glimmering orbs overflow his vision.

“…Found myself and got lost in you…”

“Haz,” Louis gasps, and crumbles, effectively taking Aiden, Josh, and Niall down with him.
“’Az,” is all Harry hears despite the drum of the music on the walls before the boy, in an odd pretzel around Josh and Niall and an Alpha only part of his high brain recognizes, go down to the floor.

Such a beautiful fall.

As everything winds in slow motion Harry is launched into fast forward. In second Harry carries the boy’s liquor loose body away from the others.

In the smoggy shade the Omega’s face is sheen with sweat and his silky hair is damp in his face. Jesus, he takes Harry’s breath away, with those eyes of sea foam, lit up like the joints being passed around.

And Harry swears if he were to cut him open, honey would flow from his veins. This is why he could never vocalize his love. He couldn’t bear to ruin him.

So they fight and they fight and God damn it Harry thinks he’s in love with it.

“Hey, dopey,” he says once he’s caught his breath.

“Hi, Haz,” Louis giggles, lips so wet and welcoming. “Everyone Hazza is here!”

A round of drunken cheers ripples through the room. At the new noise Harry flinches, but otherwise ignores the lot of strangers.

“So this is the infamous Harry Styles,” someone speaks up, then mutters under his breath, “Supreme Styles don’t speak of the mystery man enough.” Those indifferent words reopen an ugly wound; infection oozes like the layer of lies oozes from his mouth with every word.

“The one and only!” Louis trills happily, hang fluttering up to his mouth. He wants to stare at him all night long but has to regard the other Alpha blankly. “Aiden,” the bloke shoves a hand down towards where Harry’s crouched. “Aiden Grimshaw.”

Ignoring him rather than snatching the beer bottle not too far away and smashing it over his head, the Alpha murmurs to Louis, “Lou, c’mon, lovely. Let’s get out here.”

“No, you guys should stay! You’ve only just gotten here. I haven’t even mean mugged you yet, Styles,” Aiden disagrees airily but with an undertone of steel that riles the animal in his chest, the one that’s foaming at the mouth for a taste of blood.

“Louis,” the Alpha prompts softly, standing with the boy’s hand lax in his own. Louis follows easily, then sways, but stays on two feet with an utterly torn expression.

A hand that ain’t his curls around his boy’s frail shoulder. Harry’s gaze zeroes in on it as the other Alpha pleads pathetically, “Lou, c’mon, don’t go. He ain’t worth it.”

“I’ll wait out front for you, paradise.” If there is one thing Harry isn’t, it’s a bloody stealer. He won’t steal Louis’ choice, not now, not ever.

So the Alpha turns on his heels without waiting on a response further than the partygoers ’boo’s in his wake.
Once out front in the brisk evening air Harry lights the cigarette he’d kept behind his ear for show (but now really appreciates—he’s already a massacre inside, dealt to death, might as well speed up the process) and just waits.

He’ll away wait.

&&

Spaced out Louis watches Harry’s back as the tall Alpha goes. Like always, his damn heart follows him right on out the backdoor, staining the plush carpet with a stream of blood nobody else seems to see.

“Louis…” A different hand closes around his free, shaking shoulder. He stands very still as Niall breathes shrewdly, “Let ’m go. He does not want to be here, but you have someone who does.” With bleary eyes Louis glances at Aiden as Niall sinks back into the background. Aiden who is still staring at him with those serious, sad eyes.

“I’ll be right back,” Louis croaks, squeezing Aiden’s hand with a watery smile he hopes conveys his truth. “Have a drink ready for me.”

With an uncanny grace the boy does not feel he follows Harry out minutes later. He finds the Alpha leaning on the banister on the front porch with a kill-stick between his lips and dark ringlets of his hair falling into his shady eyes.

Ignoring how his chest aches Louis steps beside him to pluck the cigarette and slip it between his own lips. At the same time he hops up onto the banister so his legs dangle, waiting for Harry to acknowledge his presence.

He doesn’t (Sometimes Louis really feels like a ghost).

Obnoxiously, the boy blows smoke in his handsome, brooding face. “Pay attention to me, wanker.”

With a slow smile that steals the air from his lungs Harry murmurs throatily, “You are so shitfaced.”

“Really? Was it something I said?” Louis gasps, then tosses his head back to giggle around another drag of toxins.

When there isn’t any response the boy peeks at him again to find he’s staring at him. Staring like he’s never seen him before. Like he is entirely new, and--

Before his thoughts can get ahead of him Louis mutters, “What’s that look for?” and averts his gaze nervously.

“I just…You are so--,”

God they’re still playing the same game every night.

Tossing the fag Louis hops down and mutters over his shoulder, “On second thought I don’t care. Catch you later, H.” With nothing left but his memories the boy walks in and over to where Aiden’s holding his drink as asked. A smile lights up his face and Louis wishes he could feel
something for the Mr. Right—Aiden who is healthy, kind, sweet, and fun.

Aiden who is passionless, who plays by the rules, who has no skeletons in his closet or demons in his eyes.

Desperate tears jab at his eyes. Louis closes them, ignores the drinks to stretch on his tiptoes and kiss him with a mouth that must taste like cigarette heartbreak.

Even sighing into the warm contact once Aiden finally kisses him back he feels nothing.

Not one spark, not one butterfly, not anything.

“Incoming! Incoming! Abort mission! God damn it, Louis, abort—,” Niall drags him backwards just as soon as a beer bottle shatters against Aiden’s head. Silence.

Petrified, Louis shrinks as Aiden drops with a disturbing thud and Harry climbs on top of his chest to pummel his face with his fist. He can see Aiden’s deflecting with his arms. He can see blood.

Clambering upright with his heart skyrocketing in his chest and the blood drained from his face panic seizes him. “Fuck,” Louis shrills as chaos erupts everywhere, making to throw himself at the Alpha he despises right now.

Sooner than Louis can react, Harry stands and faces him. He wipes his bloody mouth with the back of his hand. He looks like the Dead-Man-Walking. The Reaper. He looks like everything that’s caused him pain.

Reckless and lifeless all at once.

White powder is smeared along his nose and Louis almost wonders when he had time for another line. His chest is heaving and his dilated stare is flat. Bloods stained his shirt.

Louis’ chest feels broken.

“You’re mine. Don’t pull that shit again. ‘Cause next time I’ll kill him.”

With a temper just as bad the Omega storms up and backhands him so hard his blood splatters along his own nose and cheeks. This is why Louis can’t have nice fucking things.

With a sloppy smirk Harry spits the blood near Aiden and adjusts his jacket. “See ya at home, paradise.”

“Get out! You motherfucking psycho! Get the fuck away from him!” Niall gets all up his Harry’s face as Louis stands there, malfunctioning. “Don’t fucking count on it! He won’t be anywhere near—,”

At this point Josh steps between them and says evenly to Harry, “Out of my house, Styles. In fact, everyone! Arsés out! March motherfuckers!”

Never turning his back or looking anywhere but Louis Harry backs out with his hands stuffed in his pockets and his stare so sick and sorry it makes him want to scream.

As soon as everyone is gone that’s just what Louis does.

&&
Louis avoids their ‘home’ for three weeks. In this time the boy apologizes to Aiden profusely who waves him off each time with, “Lou, I get it, you’re sorry. It really ain’t your fault, relax. I’m cool,” or “But if I ever see Styles again…He won’t get me with a beer bottle first. I’ll break his coke nose,” and so on. Mostly, Louis stays at Niall’s, just to avoid going to his parents’ and explaining the whole tragic throw-down.

Tonight, he is curled up in Zayn’s bed with his thumbs furiously darting on an X-Box controller.

COD is the best stress reliever—what better way to let loose than shoot zombies that remind him of Harry.

“Y’know you could always kill him for real,” Zayn comments beside him once Louis’ quit his manic cursing.

Louis hesitates and almost loses for it, shooting the runner at the last moment. “Oh? Like I’d let him take me to lock up! Over me dead body!”

“I mean…like kill the killer.”

Louis only eyes him suspiciously once the round is at its end. “Meaning?”

“Just like it sounds, genius. Cut ‘im off.” Here we go again.

Focusing his stare on the telly, Louis says blankly, “His addiction doesn’t cover how fucked he is, Z. Cutting him off wouldn’t fix him.”

“I ain’t tellin’ you to fix him, mate.”

“Then what are you telling me, Zayn?” Louis groans, temples throbbing as he flops down onto the mattress and tosses his arm over his eyes.

“Louis, tell me how fucked Harry is exactly?”

“Fucked,” Louis laughs bitterly. “Extremely so. On top of his addiction, H has psychotic tendencies such as beating blokes with beer bottles.”

“Be serious!” the other Omega presses, nudging his left thigh.

“Fine. Here’s my psychiatric opinion. Suffering from major PTSD, possible schizo. Insomniac. Perhaps a sadist.”

“And yet you still love him,” Zayn murmurs softly. Hearing those words coming from one of his closest friends Louis’ chest feels like it’s filled with needles. “At least he doesn’t sleepwalk,” Louis breathes once his body’s gone numb.

“I’m not on Styles’ side, far from it, but I don’t agree with Niall or the lot of them either, Louis. Sure, H might not be a danger to you physically, but he is emotionally and mentally. Trust me, you do not want to end up where Harry is, mate. That’s just a given. But I mean…I remember Harry too, you know. Cheeky motherfucker. I remember, and I miss, but I don’t mourn. Nothing to mourn. He’s still hanging around. Sadly.” Zayn puts his hands up with one of those model smiles when Louis glares through narrowed eyes. “Joking. I just…I don’t want you to make the decision to give up because someone else told you to. You make that decision if that’s where your heart is, Tommo. And you and I both know where your heart is.”
“What if there is nobody to find?” Louis breathes with an anxiety creeping into his voice.

Zayn smiles, then shrugs. “I think a lot of Harry has died, but you keep the best parts of him alive. I believe that’s worth something more, don’t you?”

&

As the Alpha disappears down the foggy lamp lit street Louis walks up to their drive. Sadly, the boy waves at his back, and almost wishes he’d realise there’s something he forget and come back. Maybe Louis might even be the something he forgot.

Without even a glance backwards, Harry rounds the corner. So much for that.

“The Eagle has left the nest! I repeat the Eagle has left the nest!” Niall’s words aren’t even whispered. Bloody bogus spies, Louis swears he cannot take these animals anywhere.

“Roger that, Sugar-Spice!”

“Alright, squad, let’s break through the backdoor,” Liam whispers conspiratorially.

Already up the steps before the front door Louis mutters, helpfully if you ask him, “Or we could not break my doors and go through the front?” Rocking backwards on his heels the Omega dangles his keys in direction of the car parked only across the street.

“Leave it to negative Nancy to ruin all the fun,” one of them scoffs before the doors open and three bodies pile out.

Rolling his eyes the Omega ends the call, jumping to undo the locks and entire the security code, “Bloody hell, Tommo, could you have any more security?” Niall asks skeptically.

Louis’ smile is fake. But that’s the point. “Be grateful I convinced him not to install all those bloody cameras.”

“Is this place booby-trapped? Should I expect a bullet through my leg or anything of the sort?” Liam asks, naturally good-natured. Bless his pure heart.

“Ha-Ha,” Zayn deadpans as Louis shows the door open. It’s dimly lit with the smoggy weather.

“Shit, its cold,” Liam hisses once he’s put one foot through the door, hugging himself.

Unfazed by now Louis sidesteps him to warn, “Watch out for–,” Zayn trips over an untouched box before Louis can even finish. Niall goes plummeting right behind.

“Wow,” Liam snickers, admiring the view of the two Omegas talking shit on the floor, then scanning the room, “Talk about a fixer-upper.”

“Listen here you snobby little twats,” Louis threatens with his index finger jabbing the air at each of them. “Quit trash mouthin’ my place. Or I’ll get ‘Az on you.”

“Don’t play like that, Tommo! I nearly pissed me pants and I ain’t joking!” Niall’s face scrunches up in disgust before the Irish Omega stands and helps Zayn up, who smirks, “I think I could take him.”
“You could take his fist up ya arse, Z,” Louis mumbles, gaze raking over the room to make sure nothing has changed while he’s been away (to make sure he’s not been replaced). Nothing has. It’s just the same. Worn, and falling apart. Oh, and messy. Just like Louis. Jeez, like he needed the reminder.

“It has potential,” Liam comments kindly.

“Yeah,” Zayn snorts playfully, “If you knocked it down and started new.”

Smiling incredulously, Louis shoves his shoulder, then sighs, “Alright, fuckers. Let’s get this over with.”

With cheers and “fuck yeah”s Louis shows them up to Harry’s room.

“Jesus, could these floors be any more rotten?” Liam asks critically.

Bitching the Alpha out the wood groans and Louis chuckles sheepishly, “That’s what I say, but H blabbers on and on about history bullshit and value and now I’m stuck with it.”

“I feel yer pain, Lou. Josh still won’t get rid of those ancient sofas his Nan give him three fookin’ years ago.”

“Tragic,” Louis shakes his head sadly.

“And this is why I’m single,” Zayn singsongs as Louis toes Harry’s ajar door all the way open. Zayn is first to curse, shivering, “I thought it was cold downstairs. This is Hell on Ice, Lou. How’s he even sleep in here?”

“He doesn’t,” Louis mutters blandly, then explains thoughtlessly, “Some ventilation issues.”

Analyzing the room Louis feels creeped out to the max like maybe there is something nasty in here that isn’t just Harry.

Swell, now I’m losing it, too.

“So, if I was a cokehead where would I hide my stash?” Niall interrupts his imminent freak-out with his musing. He’s posed as if in deep thought, rubbing his chin with his thumb.

“Check the desk,” Zayn offers, tilting his head in direction of the barred window. Louis pretends not to notice.

“On it,” Liam mutters, then once he’s through rifling through meaningless junk comes up empty. “Shit. Got nothing.”

Louis nods, not very surprised. “That’d be too obvious. He ain’t dumb.”

“Really?” the Irish boy scoffs, staring with icy eyes. “Somehow I’m not convinced.”

Resentment rears its ugly head, and Louis feels like he’s been chewed up and spit out. Seeing red, the Omega just…acts out, throwing shit around with all his strength. Doing so, destroying Harry’s room like Harry’s destroyed too many parts of him, let’s off more than enough steam. It’s gratifying once the boy’s join in because there’s so much more he can do then.

They shove the bed into the middle of the room, toss the mattress, haul the desk away from the wall and empty all the drawers, and rummage through the closet and the shelves. They go through every square inch of space.

“Maybe it’s not in here,” Liam suggests, painfully pitiful.

“Where else would it be, Li?” Zayn snaps, then settles beside Louis to wrap an arm around his quivering shoulders. “I’m sorry, babe. We ought to get out of ‘ere before H comes back. We can try again.” No, by then it will be too late, and Harry will know what’s been done and confront me. And oh God Louis is not ready to fight if he doesn’t do what he came here to do.

“All right, then. Let’s try to find it, then,” Zayn says, his voice firm, and Louis feels the heat of its heat on his face. “‘Ere’s the best place to start—”

“C’mon, babers,” Niall backs Zayn up, “It’ll be okay.”

With no other choice Louis stands and walks the walk of shame towards the door. It’s strange, how quiet his steps are—the wood is kind to Harry.

It’s a rush of blood to the head. A lightning bolt even. “The wood,” Louis breathes, stopping dead in his tracks.

“Can it be…” Zayn asks, his voice wobbly, and Louis swallows the bile that’s rising in his throat. “It’s in the fookin’ wood! What a genius!”

“T-The wood, guys!” Louis cries, almost passing out with relief. I did it. I did it…

Realisation lights up Niall’s features. “It’s in the fookin’ wood! What a genius!” Didn’t I just say so only an hour ago? “What are we waitin’ for? Move move move! Find something and let’s pry this shit up!” Niall cackles madly with an all-too-pleased expression.

Conveniently enough Zayn tosses a damn crowbar at Niall who gives him an incredulous look, “Hey, don’t give me that look, mate, it was in the corner!”

Seeming to accept this Niall wastes no time getting to work—they pry and they pry until Louis’ palms are sweaty and anxiety is swarming in his chest.

After the tenth vain attempt Zayn crows, “Aha! Got you now motherfucker!”

Niall tosses the crowbar aside to bark at Liam, “C’mon, Payne, show us those muscles.” With an excited grin, eager to help Liam leans down and reaches into the wood, grunting with an appalled expression. “It won’t fit like this. Lift the other two.” And so the other two Omegas do as Louis stands there stuck in his own skin, paralyzed.

A bag the size of three heads is towed out by Liam.

Acidic bile crawls up his throat, and the Omega has to look away before it spills out onto the wood. “D’you need us to do this?” Zayn asks softly, kissing his forehead.

After three deep breaths Louis shakes his head a bit madly, and mumbles, “No. No…just a bit overwhelmed. I have to do this. C-Can we do this and g-go?”

“Of course, babe. Come on, help us get this to the toilet,” Niall assures him.

Numb, Louis does so. It’s so unbelievably heavy. Almost as much as Louis’ heart—must be why Harry can’t ever carry the bloody thing.

At last they stagger into the bathroom. Louis holds his breath as they begin to pour the powder into the toilet. “Christ did he really need a fookin’ lifetime supply?” Niall grumbles.
Once the white is nearly overflowing the porcelain rim Louis realizes there is still more than half the bag remaining. They don’t have the time to *pour-flush-repeat*, so the boy orders tonelessly, “Toss the rest into the tub and run the water. Cold.”

Not questioning him, Liam and Niall do so. Once they’ve finished Zayn asks smugly, “Would you do Harry the honor, Louis?”

With still hands Louis smiles, “Gladly,” and promptly flushes the toilet.

&&

With people all around, Harry walks alone. Needing an exorcism the Alpha wheels around towards their home and soon tears through the front door and up to his room. It’s a shattering scene—how his room is ruined yet the same as his insides.

He is smothered by the spider web of addiction, but moves through the room like breathing is easy. Without coming to terms with the loss of his fix, Harry leaves the room feeling ice cold.

And he *runs*, pretending he’s running to wherever happiness is. In reality, the Alpha falls down before the railroad just miles away from their house.

Never progressing, wrestling with himself, Harry almost thinks to pray. But can’t even bring himself to do that because *how does he know his prayers will work?*

They haven’t before. He’s never been able to rely on any God.

In a blaze of pain the Alpha can’t make anything of his own thoughts—not that he’d listen anyway. Honest, what is a brain without a mind? And what the fuck is an angel with a broken heart (fallen?).

He thinks the Devils ripped his soul apart.

On his knees, doubled over with his hands on either side of his coke head, Harry shouts until only silence emerges. Panting, he drops back onto his back and lays there blanketed by darkness.

What feels like a long time Harry stays in this out-of-body disorder with his arms spread to the heavens. He doesn’t expect to be jabbed in the side. Luckily for the *jabber* his senses are too stunted, and his body too sluggish to react aggressively as his Alpha urges on.

“What ah sore sight,” a voice he hasn’t heard in a while comments. Something pats his stomach. He wants to say *fuck off*, but just squeezes his eyes shut and hopes to be left to his own sorrows. It’s the least he deserves. “Sore and sorry,” a different accented voice pipes up—that one he’s heard one too many times. He still has *nothing* for any of them. “Unresponsive. Maybe we’ve lost him. Wouldn’t be surprised after that breakdown.”

Someone snorts, “Yeah right! Watch and learn, little ones! Tommo! Louis, get o’er here! Revive this sorry bastard! Put ‘im out of his misery!” *Louis.* The word is a white-hot shrapnel ricocheting throughout his whole body. It overrides everything. All he knows is the heart-freezing impact of it and the electric throbbing that comes right after.

An instinct, his head tilts to the side so paradise, standing only a distance away, is in his line of vision.
“Viola! What’d I tell ya?”

“Paradise.” Just the word is such a power-trip. “Paradise, baby.” Light reflects from his shadow, more than Harry thought could exist. Christ, he thinks no one could ever be as in love with paradise as he is.

Without knowing it, Harry stands and staggers over to where Louis stands under the dangling moonlight, far too close to the train tracks. Mere inches away, drowning in his ocean eyes, the Alpha wishes he could go back to when all his pieces were intact. Maybe then he wouldn’t feel so fucked up for cupping his beautiful face in one hand and thinking again, nobody could be as in love with you as I am.

As the train runs through the tracks just measures away they miss it because Harry’s mouth has latched onto Louis’. And he’ll never make it right if the boy doesn’t want him around. Til then they’ll knock around and see.

He doesn’t see a fake reflection in Louis’ eyes when he breaks the kiss before it ever really begins, and cries madly over the whistling wind, “Let’s go! We’re missing it!” He bolts in the direction the trains headed. Just like always, Harry tears after him. So do the others.

Breathing is easy when Louis glances backwards with eyes so vividly alive Harry chases the light. He chases happiness. He chases paradise.

&&

Since that night nothing that matters has changed. For the most part Harry’s resumed avoiding Louis and their (well just Louis’ now) mates, sticking to strangers Louis would rather be caught on an Alpha’s knot then hanging about. They never stick around for long. Why, the Omega couldn’t begin to guess.

And so life goes on.

Though Harry isn’t around much to confirm his fears Louis knows. He is not stupid, and God damn it he is not blind. He has learnt the ways of Harry’s highs, and just can’t ignore it. Hence why the Omega dragged his sad-sorry arse out of bed (who pretends to be asleep to ditch out on family-time?) to join him today.

At last Harry helps him from the Escalade so Louis is welcomed to the sight of the ostentatious manor he once called home. The Jacobethan designed structure is one Louis has walked through thousands upon thousands of times; though it’s composed of seven edifices the architectural tone remains as it always has: brick detailed, balustrades and parapets, pillars supporting the entryways and high chimneys hardly in use by now as it’s not yet the season and very much for sure at this point.

Though the structure is technically what holds the structure up, Louis considers it to be more built on memories, kindness and love and inseparability.

In the heart of the manor is noise. Boisterous, all the time.

With nannies and butlers and maids all attempting (in vain) to tame noble brats (okay, mostly him) so determined to undermine them all. And two noble parents with the utmost respect received by
all, juggling the weight of their Council and their five rowdy pups.

Parents with unconditional love for their children; Louis as an Omega, Lottie much the same. Fliss as a just-presented Alpha, the twins as two precious little girls, Phoebe and Daisy, with no worry over presentation, and their most recent addition: two more tiny precious twins, Ernest and Doris.

All-in-all their family has become a grand total of two noble heirs and five noble heiresses.

At one point Louis had longed for a younger brother; and don’t get him wrong he adores the one he has now. But it’s a tad too late. Now, Louis longs for a boy of his own, to rid him of this soul-sucking loneliness.

See, he just knows with every fiber of his elastic being that he will carry twins or triplets in the future because that runs in his royal blood and he yearns for it.

Bittersweet, the Omega ducks his head. How he misses the depth of a family. Now all there seems to be is silence, and it’s stifling him. Has been for years now. Louis needs to fill that void. To win, to build his own family, and pronto because walking through empty halls with no raucous music is—, “What now?”

A soft blush blooms on his cheekbones as Louis shrugs shyly. “Nothin’.”

“So you look like someone just kicked a puppy.” Or someone who’s been alone too long.

“That would be you,” Louis grumbles, but takes Harry’s offered arm and lets himself be led up the stairs, past the pillars to the grand entrance.

“Well then let’s reestablish dear papa’s colossal hatred for me, shall we?” Harry mutters, already jabbing on the doorbell. It chimes, and from within shrieks can be heard all across England.

“He doesn’t hate you,” Louis hisses through an all-too-perfect smile, though it’s a blatant lie, and like everyone else Harry knows, retorting, “Hate is putting it mildly.”

Long ago Dan lost his soft-spot for Harry Styles—which might have to do with waking up in the dead of night to Louis’ terrified screams as Harry succumbed to one of his first night-terrors two years prior and cozed his fingers around Louis’ neck. Louis’ mostly forgotten that, but Dan might not ever. Who knows—it wasn’t even Harry who scared him so very badly that he pissed his own pants. No, it was waking up from his own nightmare, the one that plagued him nightly, the one that still makes him want to curl in on himself and hide from the world (naked and beaten, curled up in a dark, dingy, dirty space where Robert slithered through the darkness and tried to force him onto his belly and—,) and Louis hadn’t woken up to Harry. In his mind there was Robert, and the Omega couldn’t contain his terror that night. Not when Harry looked like Robert, not when it was dark like in prison, not when he couldn’t seem to breathe, not when his Dad tackled Harry to the floor and Louis hadn’t woken up to Harry. In his mind there was Robert, and the Omega couldn’t contain his terror that night. Not when Harry looked like Robert, not when it was dark like in prison, not when he couldn’t seem to breathe, not when his Dad tackled Harry to the floor and Louis couldn’t stop screaming at even the reality that his Dad was pummeling the fuck out of his best mate who took it like he couldn’t defend himself at all, trying to stare at Louis with petrified, lost eyes and bloody features, curling up when others came to drag his Father away, curling up the smallest Louis had ever seen, “I’m sorry, so sorry, I’m sorry, so sorry,” and that is all Harry had seemed capable of crying out, even when Des arrived to take his estranged son home and Dan swore to kill him if ever he showed his face again.

“He thinks I’m a demon. A demon who has manipulated and taken advantage of his prince. A demon who locks you away so I can—,” before Harry can finish that God awful sentence one of the great doors is shown open to reveal a nameless butler asking their names.

Louis sputters, “Excuse me?” more than slightly scandalized.
Beside him Harry winces when Mr. Know-Nothing repeats, uptight and practiced with his cravat strangling his chicken neck. “Your name, Sir.”

“Oh, my name,” the Omega seethes, pissed beyond reason. It’s a slight exaggeration, but he’s always been rather dramatic. “My name. He wants to know my name, H. How about fuck you, you’re fired, you piece–,”

“This, Charles, is Louis,” interrupts a proper northern English accent. The person responsible widens the door in welcoming. “My most pleasant heir.”

“Papa!” Louis cries happily, shoving poor Charles out of the way to embrace his Father. Lean, posh, Dan is an Alpha not to be reckoned with; wise with age, a stature of unimaginable power of mind. Louis’ missed him more than words could ever tell.

Affectionately, the older Alpha ruffles his hair and grabs his arms in comforting, firm hands to set him down and examine him (like Louis could have grown three heads in the two months they’ve not seen each other). “You look…different. Changed.”

Nervously, Louis chuckles. “Well I did trim my hair. And I shaved too, see?”

“Not what I’m referring to. It’s in your eyes. Is there something you’d like to tell me?” Suspiciously his narrowed gave wonders over to Harry, who’s yet to step in.

Inwardly, Louis panics, unable to grasp what could have changed.

Someone clears their throats pointedly–Charles. Oh thank the Lord for butlers. “I do not mean to intrude, Sir. But what of this one?” Okay, that’s it, Charles: foe not friend.

Physically Harry looks achingly uncomfortable; even with his perfect appearance in white trousers and one of his sheer button-up’s to match. He’s avoiding their stares until (after a whole minute) the Alpha looks up. Flames of shame sway in his eyes, and Louis aches to touch him, to play with his tied up hair and tell him how beautiful he is even though his Dad just can’t get it.

Louis also knows better.

“Oh, that’s just my son’s lapd–,”

“Dad,” Louis says sharply, “Be. Nice.” Then to Charles, “Sir, have you been dead under a rock the last two decades or so? This is my best bloody friend,” because that’s more important than the other titles, “and our most vital heir to Council. Harry Edward Styles. Supreme Desmond Styles’ only heir.”

In a matter of seconds Charles turns impressive shades of red. “Y-Y-Your grace, forgive me for my insolence. I meant no offen–,”

“No problem,” Harry dismisses him to step into the entryway. Faced with his rigid Father the Alpha stares straight on, meeting his stare resolutely and sticking his hand out. “My lord.”

“Son,” his Dad murmurs frigidly, taking his hands in a grip that looks painful. “I trust you’ve been taking care of my boy.”

“Yes, Sir. As much as I can with a boy like Louis, Sir.” The fond smile Harry directs at him turns Louis’ insides soupy (which of course his Father doesn’t miss).

“Yes, well we have all faced more trying obstacles.”
Louis is too busy grinning back at Harry smiling goofily at him to really comprehend Dan’s tone. Louis wishes more than anything he could despise him for this; for making him feel like he’s melting and soaring all at once, and oh no no no, not happening. “I don’t know, Papa, I’m pretty difficult,” Louis jokes just to distract his heart from Harry.

“I can imagine Harry has more difficult issues to take care of,” Dan’s tone is light, but the implication is concrete. Harry stiffens, and the smile vanishes immediately as he responds coolly, “Louis isn’t an issue, Sir. I’m blessed with his company.”

_Liar_—the Omega wants to call him out on his bullshit, but not in front of his already skeptical Father. Any more disaster in his life, one more shot to the heart, might just send him into cardiac arrest.

“I should hope so.” And at this point the two are just staring at each other, stiff and stubborn. Such stupid Alphas.

“Alrighty. This is gettin’ weird,” Louis comments uselessly, then when there isn’t any response from either, “So where’s Mum?”

“Kitchen.” Still in a piss-contest, gazing not-so-lovingly into each other’s eyes.

“Right. Well, I guess I’ll go…say hi?” the boy asks uncomfortably.

“K. Bye,” they both allow at the exact same time in the exact same (rude) dismissive voice. Honest, how can they not see they’re almost the same _person_ sometimes?

Which, _ew_, not okay.

Louis winces, but doesn’t bother to comment, scurrying through the corridors and skipping the visit wish his Mother (she’ll see him soon anyhow) to cross the botanic bridge will all sorts of exotic flowers along glass walls to the third building to dash for the spiral stairway.

Breathlessly, the Omega makes it to the seventh story (why the hell had he ever thought this was a good idea?) and makes it sluggishly through the maze of corridors (purposely confusing to deter any unwanted visitors) until locating the midnight blue, beaten-to-hell, door with all sorts of signs; _Louis’ palace, Louis’ hallway, Louis’ building._

_STAY OUT._

Etcetera, etcetera. Gee, he was such a loser back then, it’s no wonder Harry never wanted anything to do with him. Oh, well.

With a sad smile Louis creeps inside and shuts the door softly behind him. It’s quite cold—bare of his warmth by now, but still _his._

His childhood room is more than one pup should have been allowed—the one he’d had since seven, and maintained until eighteen. So the childlike decorations remain, though the walls painted red with little football prints remain most of the wall consists of jerseys, autographs, graffiti (courtesy of Zayn) and damage. There are still notes like _‘H.S. is Louis’ bitch’_, from Niall and _“Niall is anyone’s bitch,”_ from Harry and _‘STOP WRITING ON MY WALL,”’_ from Louis and, _“our wall now,”_ from Zayn, and _“I told them to stop dicking round,”_ from Liam. There are far more from Harry, which Louis _always_ wrote back to,

_H: still don’t like u_
L: u love this arse

H: I hope ur dad reads this (sir I do not)

L: me 2 thn u have to have me 4ever, arse-eater

H: u must dream bout trapping poor stupid Alphas into a mating

To that Louis hadn’t responded; mostly because it hurt his feelings, but also because it held a scary visage of truth. Louis always has been spiteful, and if Harry wouldn’t come to him willingly, he’s always imagine seducing the fool into bed because Harry was pretty old-school, and then would’ve felt obligated to him once the deed had been done (because Louis was not only his best mate, but an Omega of extreme worth). One does not simply fuck a proper Omega without mating (fine he’s a bit twisted, but it was a dream of his, to tempt and test him until his Alpha pounced, and fucked him in his parents’ house in his childhood bed for not being good).

Yikes. Moving on.

His carpet still sinks slightly beneath his feet; and there’s still the stain in the corner from when Harry spilt coolaid; yes Louis made the idiot try to scrub the red from his carpet (he’s always been a bit of a princess). After about two minutes he was bored of it and started tossing chips at his head until Harry riled up and quit.

How abused his room is really shows with it being clean like this. Spotless.

In the left corner is the bed Louis refused to get rid of because when Harry slept with him it was such a tight squeeze he’d always end up sprawled out on the Alpha and he lived for it. He remembers pulling the blankets over their heads and pretending to be strangers, how Harry would reluctantly play along until Louis finally fell asleep. He remembers doing far too much to keep his attention, begging inwardly to be shown some sigh that he wasn’t a pity-pal. Somehow Harry always gave them; always kissed his hair, and held him, and told him all his secrets and all his (stupid, really) jokes and beautiful dreams. However it was forbidden to talk about any of this unless they were alone under those blankets, when they weren’t Louis and Harry but two strangers (then again Louis might’ve just been convincing himself, hopelessly in love, these happenstances were proof).

Sighing, Louis peers up at the ceiling where little footies dangle and glow like fireflies in the darkness (he hadn’t wanted windows–why? He can’t recall).

Emotion sweeps through him; sentimental as can be the Omega sits on the worn mattress and leans over to trace the lip of the chest at the foot of his childhood bed. In there all the stuff he’d left behind rests. Wool blankets, stuffed animals and bears, board games, a footie, amongst other trinkets he’d thought better laid to rest.

A teddy bear sounds just the thing right now actually. Silent acceptance and open ears who won’t complain about him complaining.
So that’s what Louis goes for, crouching before the old heavy wooden thing and heaving it open. Collected dust attacks him at first, and Louis sneezes, waving at the air until he’s able to breathe better. Like this the boy peers curiously inside.

A wool blanket in grey greets him first. Called it. Louis smiles, then places its neat fold beside him on the carpet to continue foraging. A worn, beaten teddy bear comes up beside his dirty footie with most his memories of sports lives. Louis places the sad thing in his lap because something else catches his attention. Aside from the board games and all the journals, DVDs and CDs, there are birthday cards.

Years’ worth of them in a stack at the very top. Oh, Haz…

Emotion swells in his tight throat as the Omega snatches his hands away, shakes his head, and decides he does not need the heartache that will come with going through those; the past must be kept the past.

With his lip caught between his teeth Louis shoves everything back where everything will stay and locks the chest up for good, clutching the silly stuffed animal to his chest and crawling into the bed.

Even all worn and springy it’s comforting, more so with his old bear against his chest as he winds up and squeezes his stingy eyes shut.

In these moments Louis feels like a little lad again; but with the worries and responsibilities and pain and all the shit his privileged life hadn’t allowed him to know existed back then. All of which he’d give up in a heartbeat to go back to fifteen and tell his Dad the truth so things might be different. Maybe his love would’ve been enough to keep Harry home, maybe they would have been happy, maybe Harry wouldn’t be such a broken cokehead.

God, in those days, he’d been so sure of himself, his life’s path. An invincible heir. Now he’s learnt nobody is invincible, especially not the heirs of the Council. At least it’s not quite so disappointed anymore.

Even knowing he should at least greet his family, the Omega just wants to stay locked away in here forever. Doesn’t want to face any more scrutiny. Doesn’t want to own up to the reality that he will never have what he’s wanted since ten but some morphed, miserable friendship version.

Doesn’t want them to know he’s been refused to this pathetic brokenhearted bug. Because Louis is not going to be that person.

So, the boy decides it’s time to be selfish with himself just to preserve his strength for dinner. He closes his eyes to let all his hopes and dreams come to life in sleep.

&&

Even in sleep Louis knows when the Alpha has found him because the frost coating his skin melts under the force of Harry’s body heat. Arms circle his waist so unreasonably large hands link at his belly, and his sleepy senses come alive as the dark scent of evergreen and cologne and Alpha bundles him in a blanket of Harry Harry Harry.

A tiny sound tumbles past his lips as Louis squirms to escape what his body aches for already. “Get ‘way,” the Omega mumbles, hands settling on the ones over his belly, just to pry them from his skin. One hand simply takes his and intertwines their fingers. Louis’ surrender is speedy with the knowledge of what he plans to announce tonight returns to him
Abruptly the boy is so desperate to be close to him, to leech onto him and love him.

With softly sad sigh, Louis squeezes his hand, begging him inwardly, don’t be too upset, I’m still yours.

“Why would I be angry?” Curse his inability to refrain from opening his fat mouth.

“’M sleep talkin’,” Louis whispers, meaning: you’ll know soon enough. “Ignore me.”

“You don’t sleep talk.” It’s said with such an anxiety that Louis squirms to reposition. Reluctantly, the movement is allowed, and Louis fists his stupid shirt, buried his face in the slope of his shoulder and breathes raggedly, “I don’t know why I am always so worried about hurting you when all you do anymore is hurt me.”

“Because you know what it means to love someone.” It’s so resigned that Louis knows it’s time to let go of their ashes. “I’m a failure. Trust me, I’m headed nowhere.”

“But you do! You…do. You just have to find the right person. You have to find the right reason. You are not hopeless. Living is not hopeless, Harry, it’s hard,” the words feel like steroid-ridden fiberglass embedding itself into the walls of his throat. His tears are almost impossible to stem.

“But I’ve had him,” Harry whispers hoarsely. “I had him, and I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t love him right. I still can’t. And in time I’ll be in the same place.”

The breath catches in his throat. Don’t make this worse for me, Haz.

Desperation caves in on him as Louis looks up at him through blurry eyes. You said move on, where do I go? What am I supposed to do when you’re the one I spend all my nights with? What am I supposed to do when I start wishing I was looking into your eyes instead of his?

I’m trying to test the waters for other fist, but I don’t want any fish. I want a shark. An insane, bloodthirsty coked up shark.

But the lesson has been learnt, and Louis cannot make the same mistake so many times.

“Take us away from this,” the boy hears his voice, its borderline broken. “I just want to stay in your eyes.”

When Harry pulls him in Louis is disgusted with himself. Except once the Alpha’s mouth is on his it’s the sweetest escape from all the tormenting thoughts.

Need surges between them as Harry’s tongue teases his mouth until his lips are parted enough to possess. Louis doesn’t even try to be the dominant, doesn’t want to win, wants to lose and lose badly.

In flames Louis doesn’t know he’s crying until the kiss is salty with his tears. He doesn’t care, not when he’s being consumed, and shivers are wrecking up his spine. And he wants to focus on this, wants to scar this moment into the most vital crevasse of his soul. Wants to make this their best last moment; his blood has warmed into the thickest honey, and his skin feels hypersensitive to how Harry’s fingers yank his button up from his trousers to run up his sides.

And then: this pleasure will never amount too that of Harry’s precious fix. This kiss will never be so healing. Suddenly it’s not the sensation that runs chills up his spine, but the reality.
Lacking the heart to end it like this Louis lies there, numb and motionless. He waits for Harry to catch up. It doesn’t end without resistance; the Alpha’s tongue traces the contours of his mouth with purpose, teases his insensitive tongue, *tries and tries and tries* to seduce a reaction out of him.

It’s too late. The attraction, passions flame, has died with the lack of air, with the reminder of who they are now. Still, the Omega lets the Alpha try, wishing he could feel at all.

Actually, no, he doesn’t because all he can think to taste in Harry’s mouth anymore is chemical. It’s like pouring bleach down his throat.

“Please,” the Alpha sobs, like he feels Louis’ torment, “P-Please, paradise. Please! Please! Just… fucking feel me!” His shoulders are being shaken as Harry’s voice climbs in wild, desperate strength. Louis just *can’t*.

“That’s quite enough!” A sharp feminine voice rescues him. Well until Louis realizes it’s his Mother.

Helpless, Louis jerks vertical, and scrubs anxiously at his tears while avoiding eye contact. He doesn’t need to see the truth in his Mother’s eyes to know it.

“I—” of course the Alpha tries to remedy the circumstances, but slaps a shaking hand over his mouth as Jay interrupts shrewdly. “Quiet, H. I won’t speak a word of this. It is no business of mine. You two are adults now. I suppose. Anyhow, supper is being served. Louis, love, come escort your dear elderly Mother.”

Gratitude mines within him as Louis nods, and doesn’t hesitate to side Jay and offer his arm. Wordless, the two leave the room, and his Mother steers him in the wrong direction. Louis doesn’t question, desperate for privacy. “W-Why?” Louis asks almost soundlessly.

A hand settles over his as Jay murmurs softly, “I know when my pup is in distress. I’ve come to rescue you.”

Voice lost, Louis just nods, unable to follow their travels until they’ve entered an unknown room (there are many more like this one). Around his distress, the Omega tries to explain, to laugh like he does, but his Mum sits down and coos quietly, “Hush, love. You don’t need to explain. Just take deep breaths and ground yourself. Would you like me to step outside?”

Unwilling to hurt his Mother’s feelings, Louis starts to shake his head but his Mum only laughs airily, “Oh when will you learn I know all? Always thinkin’ of everyone else. I’ll be look out, yeah.”

“T-Thank you, Mum,” Louis mumbles though it isn’t near enough to voice his appreciation to her for being the most accepting, gracious Mother a man could ask for. With a gentle smile that tells him she understands, Jay exits, and Louis puts his hot face in his hands, gasping around the jagged ache in his throat.

It’s horrific that he wants to wash his mouth with acid to rid it of the taste of mint. It’s horrific that he wants to bathe in bleach to rid his body of Harry’s touch. It’s horrific that he wants to cleanse his brain of its love with hatred? It’s horrific that it’s horrific.

Louis laughs stuffily, madly.

God, Z had been right when he said sex is a way to feel less lonely—the emptiness that so often hollows him had, for the minute, been filled with an endless love.

Endless. Right.
“Oh, God,” Louis whimpers, hastily dabbing at the oozing tears (any evidence must be terminated least his Dad try to tear Harry’s throat out. *Then where will they be? Nowhere.* Louis has to keep them civil until Harry can manage to win his Dad over again. It will take work. But Harry has taken worse, obviously). “Let it go. Let it go before you screw everything up.”

See, the Omega is very much an opportunist, and to say this moment isn’t the chance to set the last of his plan in motion would be a damn lie. Step one is to get not Harry’s, but his Alpha’s, attention, because the odds of winning him over are *better.* And God damn it, Louis will put the odds against it all.

This is to help Harry. This is to help them. This is—, “I just need to see him,” a frantic rasp rusts the nails holding the door, the blood in his veins. “I need to make sure…to make sure…”

“H, you’ve done enough. Think long and hard before you make your next move,” his Mum warns form the other side calmly. “He needs a mo to himself. You will see him at dinner in just five minutes.”

“Please, he…I just need to make sure. Just ten seconds. I’ll leave as soon as I hear his voice.”

Louis is beginning to think this Alpha expects him to fold himself in half until he snaps. He almost wants to feed him the same shit he’s made Louis eat so many years.

But the eerie edge to his voice causes the boy to shiver, and it’s no surprise when his Mum soothingly allows this. Only ten seconds though—Jay is a woman of her word, bless her.

There’s a hesitate knock on the door, and Louis shuffles over to the barrier, rests his forehead on the jamb and whispers, “’M sorry.” *For what I have to do to us. You probably won’t like me much for a while. But it’s to help you, I pinky promise it will be okay.*

“Don’t say that. I’m the one who should be sorry.” Louis agrees, he should be. He is, just not enough.

“You should go,” Louis says softly.

“Don’t shut me out. I…I promise, paradise, I’m sorry.” On the other side Louis knows the Alpha’s forehead is hot on the cold too.

“Go,” the Omega repeats blankly. “You don’t get to ask things of me. You don’t get to be my Alpha. You don’t even get my trust. You are a liar. You’ll mean it now, but later when you’re feelin’ some type of way…”

There’s a thump that marks Harry’s head slamming into the door. “I—,”

“Time’s up, H, downstairs.”

There is a hurt noise that makes Louis want to shove his face in boiling hot water (pain has always been a thing for Harry—Louis knows because years ago the Alpha would show up places reeking of sex with a bloody mouth, bruises and streaks of angry red along his skin. He must be picking up on it). “See ya, Haz.” It’s a goodbye that will cost him.

“Paradise.” It’s only when his footsteps have faded (H used to be a bloke of his word. That is until he started lying straight through his rotting teeth) that Louis wraps his arms around his tummy as his heartrate nosedives.

All too soon his five minutes are up as Jay knocks gently, “Ready? Everyone’s waiting.”
Certainly not–but damn it Louis is no coward, though it does take him a minute more to tuck in his shirt again, button the top two again (when had they come undone) and run his fingers through his hair to smooth the gel out the best he can.

Decent, Louis opens the door with his sunniest smile and kisses his Mother’s cheek. “Thank you, Mummy.”

“Is that boy alright, Louis?” his Mother asks, tone coloured with concern as she regards him with those creepily familiar eyes. “I’ve heard some nasty things.” All of which probably come from Papa, Louis bites back.

Though his belly sinks, the Omega brightens his smile, “He’s absolutely losing it, Mum. Danced with the Devil or summat.”

She smiles back tightly. It’s their way of lightening–security cameras are far too invasive these days. “And what are you going to do about this?”

She’s so very sure in him–so confident. It’s exactly what Louis needs to feel like that invincible heir again. He will not let their love lose the will to live. He will not.

“What I’ve always done, Mum. Win.”

&&

It’s an eternal wait; the seconds drip until he’s bathed in anxiety with creeping impression that the followers have followed him here. Soulless entities slithering through the corridors, on the hunt for his fatal flaw: paradise.

Christ, here he is, between his Father and his Mother, with his sister across from him, rather than protecting–Louis is not him, not in this lifetime.

Yet he is Harry’s to look after, always has been, and every second the blue eyed beauty doesn’t step through the entrance is another that Harry’s rattled bones dissolve under his own venom.

A sinkhole would be quite appreciated right now–especially when Louis’ Father, Des’ best mate, walks through with those hellfire eyes that see straight to his black core, sees the filthy bastard that’s coveted his eldest son, his prince.

“Champ,” Dan greets lightly to Des as he settles in his seat across the grand table.

Oddly enough his Father does not have the chance to respond as the older Alpha’s stare focuses on him. “Harry, do quit that tapping.” It’s only then does Harry realise his fingers are in a rhythm with his foot. Which big fucking deal. Still, to appease Louis’ Father, Harry stills, though it’s hardly over, “Tell me, H, what’ve you been up to while you aren’t in Council?”

Tension builds in his shoulders as Harry straights from his slouch. “Just living life, Sir. Taking it one day at a time.” If that’s what you want to call it.

“With my son in your presence?” the other Alpha asks sharply enough that Harry’s animal riles in response. “That is not the environment I wish for him.”

“Dan, that’s–,” Des tries to interrupt, always the peace-keeper, but for the first time tonight the Alpha looks his Father in the eye and murmurs earnestly, “I can handle it, Sir.” Des’ aging features disagree, especially when Harry redirects his attention to Dan.
“My lord, I am in no position to influence your son,” Harry doesn’t miss a beat, can’t afford to. “Louis is indeed his own person, an adult who makes his own decisions and who has continued to do what is expected of him. You are aware that there is no controlling that boy. And do not insult him by implying otherwise. That boy is more than I will ever be and do not imply that I can guide him wrong when all he has ever done is guide me right. That brilliant boy is one with a mind of his own, completely unique. I would never try to force him into any environment. It may be against his upbringing, it may be considered scandalous to be living in the same space as an Alpha unmated, let alone one who’s on the brink of madness, but as long as I’m in the picture he will do as he pleases. When Louis wishes to leave, I will not dare tell him he can’t. But, for now, I am sorry to say, you shall have to deal, Sir.”

Silence bears down between them as Dan assess him skeptically (will anything please this man besides Harry ditching?), as Des does so with a shocked pride that Harry does not deserve for merely speaking the truth.

“Well then,” his Mum breaks the silence softly. “Now that we’ve established that.”

Before anyone else can speak (convenient really) Gemma and Lottie come through the entrance, take in the scene, and wince. “Looks like everyone’s taken it up the arse! And none of you are Omegas! So there’s some explaining to do,” Lottie, small and petite like her brother, snickers.

“Indeed!” Gemma seconds, an Alpha much like her brother (funny that she’s more Alpha than he). “At least I have an excuse to–,”

“Silence!” a reedy, embroidered shriek comes from behind them. If the Alpha breaks his neck to make sure it’s really him, not some morphed version with followers hanging on his back, nobody comments. Petite and pretty, Louis stands with his button up in wrinkled ruins, and his eyes like newly cut glass (which always happens once he’s finished crying).

At the thought his stomach clenches up, and he has to look away before he falls apart with his heart talking out of his head. God, just looking still makes him feel lit up.

Somehow the beautiful, multi-coloured vase in the corner catches his eye. It’s the one he’s seen since seventeen after the other had been taken down by their carelessness.

“Give it back!” the younger boy shrieks at the top of his little lungs as Harry tears down the stairs with the leatherback journal held high in his hands. It’s difficult to read when he’s struggling to remain upright, but damn if he doesn’t manage. This is truly Louis’ fault—to try and tell him he couldn’t read the blood thing while waving it around like an offering. Yeah right, screw honor. This is just too tempting.

“Dear Other-Me,

I can’t sleep tonight. Harry’s out with some skanky whore. His girlfriend or whatever. Still skanky–,”

“Please, Haz, stop it!” Louis cries angrily as Harry rounds the corner into the kitchen, catching his side against the counterpane (fuck that’s dangerous, surely it shouldn’t be so sharp?) and dodging the Cook to maintain his pace as Louis closes in. “This isn’t funny, fucker!”

Probably not. But...he cannot resist now that he’s had a taste of his thoughts.

“–and still a whore. I hate her. She’s too perfect, all leggy and blonde. She’s not for him. She doesn’t love him or care ’bout him or kno him or anything. Not like me. Nobody will ever kno Harry Styles like I do, not–,”
Unable to help it, winded by now, Harry stops and holds the journal too high for the other boy, who rams into him. Harry refuses to budge, reading between his cackling laughter, “Nobody ever will. Because he’s mine. And I’m his. And…” Okay, this really isn’t funny. This is sort of… terrifying. His amusement die as he reads on with Louis whimpering, “No! Please, don’t!”

“And I kno I’m not his #1 choice, I dnt have what they do at all, ‘cause I’m not meek and quiet and nice…but I just want him to look at me. LOOK LOOK at me. With alpha eyes. And make me feel more beautiful than any of them. Like I’m #1. I wished on a star tonight. Just any one ‘cause I can do whatever I want. But anyway I just want him to see me I know I’m cool ‘cause I act thick and everyone likes it…but it’s not the same. I want him to want to stay with me more than his want to leave and look at me all the time like other alphas do. I don’t want them to look at me like I want this alpha to. Like an omega. I want to feel like a beautiful omega. I want him to feel like how I feel when I’m listening to love songs I want to be his—,”

Without warning, before he can finish, Louis slams into him with so much force he topples over. In the process the priceless vase goes with them, becoming priceless pieces of a vase.

Absorbing the impact, the Alpha groans just as another weight falls onto him with an “oomph.”

“I hate you!” the boy starts to scramble for the journal that’s slid across the room, and Harry panics on an Alpha level. “No, no, no. You’ll hurt yourself.” and makes quick work of taking him around the slim waist and to the floor on the opposite side where it’s spotless and safe from the danger zone Louis was headed straight into mindlessly.

On his knees, Harry stares at him stupidly—the slim boy is so still and small, hiding his face in the polished Cherrywood (like he might just disappear if he holds still enough).

The written sprawl on that journal burns behind his eyes with every blink as the Alpha tries to think fast, but damn it he’s never been able to think fast on matter that deserve nightlong mulling.

“You’re always my number one choice,” is what he comes up with. Gee, helpful, Haz.

Louis lets out a tiny, hurt noise that marks his embarrassment, his disbelief. Oh, love…

With his knuckles Harry strokes his fine hair from his soft face. Whispers, “You’re everyone’s number one. When I look into the future you are all I can see. None of them, just you. Only you.”

Just like that the boy, who only weeks ago presented Omega, melts for him and turns his face to reveal round dewy eyes. And he looks so fairylike, sharp cheekbones rosy, childlike cerulean eyes, and a bow mouth all parted and moist. He’s staring at those lips, wanting to devour him, right here in his parent’s dining room, on the table; wants his breezy scent, still so fresh and lovely (will it ever not be?) thick in the air, and his gasps all he hears as the Omega experiences pleasures first touch and—

“You’re lookin’ at me with Alpha eyes,” so breathlessly put as Louis squirms, the blush fiery as his little canines chew on his bottom lip. “Are you doin’ that to prove somethin’?”

“Doin’ it ‘cause I see a beautiful Omega,” Harry murmurs huskily.

On the floor the boy shivers, then even breathier, “That’s a first.” I want all your firsts. I will have them, I swear it.

Christ, his cock fattens in his trousers as Harry lowers his eyes once again and braces over him, muscles straining. “Paradise.”
“Twat.” Leave it to Louis.

“Can I have you on your family’s dining table?”

An invitation Louis’ mouth parts a bit. “Yes.”

So willing… “Naughty boy. Bad.”

Louis’ thick lashes flutter as he mumbles with an Omega note to his voice, so soft and eager, “But I can be so good, I can be.”

“For who?” the Alpha asks seriously, daring to close a fraction of the space between them so Louis’ breath is warm on his face, and their gazes cling. It’s not been like this, not made him feel like this before. Not with anyone. He’s never been on the verge of knotting from a warm, compact and achingly Omega body underneath his, or fluttering lashes, or shivers. They’ve not touched, and his skin has begun to crave it, his receptors on alert as his heartbeat pounds in sync with his cock. Pleasure proximity wrecks through him. It feels…not right. Too not right to be as right as his body is telling. Something is not—

“You,” a soft mewl that intensifies the fire as Harry dips low, “You Alpha.” He’s closed his eyes to take in how his mouth is almost brushing Louis’ pretty, sweet one.

“Tell me you love me.” He’s never wanted to hear those words so much, never felt their significance, never like this anyway. Not any other time Louis’ said them. Now it’s a need. He needs to hear it or he might kill every Alpha the Omega has ever looked at for no reason other than Louis is his.

Mine. A grenade obliterating all logical thoughts or confusion. It’s simply. This boy is his. Mine.

The word becomes a fierce primal mantra in his head, drowning out everything but how Louis feels underneath him, how he sounds, all sweet sharp breaths, how his scent mingle with the bonding scent softly emanating from his lit up skin. He can smell it, stronger than his proper scent, dark and prominent and owning.

A firm, offensive hand clamps onto his right shoulder. Without meaning to, in a blind rage, the Alpha lurches at the intruder, doesn’t know where this wild strength comes from but then he has Dan on the table, cruel hands fixed around his thick throat. Baring his canines, the snarl doesn’t even sound like it’s Harry’s, “Mine!”

As awareness replaces the shock on the older male’s face, he pries himself free despite Harry’s struggle to blindly snap his neck. They’re both breathing choppily by the time Dan’s pinned him police-style to the table, his hands fastened to his lower back. Harry just…can’t stop. Has to protect, possess. Has to, has to, has to.

“Louis,” a sharp Alpha voice, mirroring his own, commands. “Tell your Mother to call Harry’s Dad.”

“B-But Papa,” the boy hiccups, and with a feral sound Harry snaps his teeth at the older Alpha, like a rabid animal. “Mine!” He’s torn between looking at the beautiful, glowing creature with a scent that calls to him on highly instinctive levels, sweet and rich and for him, and the fucker that’s keeping him away.

“Do as I say, Louis, or it’s the meditation center for the summer no visitation!” Dan roars with such a force that Louis vanishes in seconds. Which fuck no.

A fresh shitload of white-wash fury has Harry kicking into Institution action, knocking his face
into Dan’s, whirling around once the grip on his neck has loosened (with more grace than he’s ever had) to knee him where it counts, not even watching him crumble with wheezy, “Harry, son, stop!”

Like he ever would.

Tearing after the source of his need, the Alpha follows the alluring fragrance that calls for him. And before the Omega makes it anywhere close to wherever his Mum must be, his arms hook underneath his thighs and heft his weight as Louis gasps, “Haz?! What the fuck! Where’s my Dad?”

“Paradise,” he pants, burying his face in Louis’ slender neck, aiming for that sweet spot to sink his canines into. “Puppy paradise.” Uncontrollable, his hips work until his tented cock is rutting his the boy’s tight arse, denim and cloth in the way of the wet hot place he needs to be.

Frantically his fingers fumble with his fly. It has to be now. He has to knot him now before they’re back to take him away.

“Haz, babe,” Louis breathes, the sound so needy his cock is almost too fat to possibly fit inside his little virgin paradise. No, inside first, breed him first, a voice roars behind his ears. “Please, y-you…you’re scarin’ me. Are you…alright?”

“Need to, pup. Need to, need...,” to stop now would be like shedding his own skin. It’s that scent. It’s making him crazy.

“Need to what!” the Omega asks anxiously as the button gives. Close, close, close...

“Need to...to...” he doesn’t know, fuck he does know, “I gotta have you,” he groans low in his throat, starting for his fucking zipper that’s jammed. “Let me in. Let me have you. You’re mind, y’know. I have to have you. I’ll take the best care of you, pup. I’ll never stop. Just say yes.”

Something quick pierces his neck without warning and Harry just...blanks out the moment foreign liquid rushes, entering his bloodstream surely.

He’s going to die. They’re back. They’re back.

Panic for his Paradise beats in his blood, but before the insanity breaks his brain for the last time everything fades out. He wants to tell Louis to run, but the boy is screaming murder, “Papa! What’s going on? Is he okay? Oh, God, did you kill him?”

What is going on?

What happened?

That’s right: the journal. He read Louis’ journal. The vase broke–Jay is going to have their heads, or hunt him down in Hell and demand his soul.

Afterwards? Static. So much static.

What the bloody Hell is going on?

An unwarranted hurt noise forms somewhere in his chest, an indication of heart hurt possibly.

A heavy hand strokes his soaked hair, “It’s alright, son, you’re alright. You’re gonna be just fine,” that must be Dan, though he sounds a bit rucked up.
“Louis, love, can you please take the scent suppressant from your Mother and spray it all over yourself? Do this for Harry, he’s in a rut. He needs you to do this for him to make the pain go away.” I do?

“W-What’s a rut?” A rut? He wasn’t schedule for a rut, not for another month. There’s been a mistake. That’s wrong. And anyway didn’t this boy listen in biology?

“Louis. Do as I say without question now.”

There isn’t a response, just clicks. Suddenly the drive dissipates and his heartbeat slows with whatever it is dragging him down down down. No, don’t go… He thinks, wanting to panic, don’t leave me… Please, don’t leave me to the darkness…

It does. Like most good things.

Without, he has no reason to be, and lets himself to freefall.

Afterwards they never did truly talk about it, because Louis had started in with the selfless, “I’m so sorry. Are you okay?” and Harry just couldn’t say yes so he never answered, acting revolted (“It was just a rut, I did shit I wouldn’t have. It didn’t mean anything, get over it already”) by him so Louis would leave him to rut into the mattress like a dog until the final dregs of his most intense rut finally left his system. Triggered, not due. Though he never told one soul of it.

Because then it would mean something. Back then, before snorting, shooting, smoking came along to make it all better, denial had been his go to.

“I don’t know how my arse got into the conversation—,”

“Obviously because you flaunt the bloody thing,” Lottie snickers.

“There are children present, children,” Anne warns in Mummy-Mode.

“Yeah, Lottie! There are children present,” Louis sneers friskily.

When the Alpha blinks back into reality it’s to realise everyone’s taken their seats; the children are all in the middle between the ‘adults’ with the subtraction of the twins who are probably asleep by now. Louis is seated to the left of Dan on the opposite end of the table as is Harry beside Des, Jay on Dan’s right and Anne on Des’. Lottie is seated beside Anne and Gemma beside Jay and so on with the pups on either side, chattering amongst themselves.

Most of the time Harry spends in silence with his stare glued to his greens, stuffing his mouth to avoid opening the bloody thing. He answers generically to whatever is launched his way by the grownups and fondly to whatever the pups ask of him. He’s attacked by peas, and is tempted to fork some back when the twins and giggle and praise each other (Dan is in on it, he is sure).

Once the children are sent to wait for dessert in the great room Louis stands, tapping his wine glass. “So I have an announcement to make.”

“This can’t be good,” Fliss comments dryly.

He catches Louis’ dark glare before the Omega looks to his Father who smiles warmly, “We’re listening, son.”

“I’ve agreed to be courted,” is what comes out of the boy’s mouth in such a giddy burst. Pain hits Harry like he’s been doused in gasoline and matched up, like his skin is being taken off in strips. Especially when all (aside from Dan’s furious, I’m-Gonna-Kill-You stare) hopeful eyes land on
“What! Who?” Lottie is the first to dare ask, slightly shocked.

None of the Styles’ say a single word as Harry closes his eyes, despising himself when Louis answers airily, “Aiden Grimshaw.” Swallowing the flare of pain, the Alpha holds it in his gut, using it as a reminder that he is a fucked-up freak, and freaks deserve to get hurt.

“Oh,” Anne breathes like the airs been vacuumed out of her. “Why, that’s wonderful, love!” It’s as fake as can be.

As the table erupts in cheers and tries for toasts Harry stands, hoping in vain that he goes unnoticed. He silences their celebration, and murmurs blankly, “He’s a keeper, Lou. Congrats. I uh have somewhere to be, sorry. Here’s my keys,” he places them jerkily on the table, “I’ll uh have one of the drivers get me out of here. Have a nice night everyone.” He only pauses to mutter, “Mum. Goodnight,” out of respect and kiss his Mother’s hair.

Otherwise the Alpha doesn’t dare look at any of them, or wait on a reaction (doubts there’d be one), just makes his swift exit. He’s outside waiting on the driver to retrieve the family car when someone steps in beside him. “Here. You need this more than I do, love,” his sister speaks up, holding out an unlit cigarette.

With trembling fingers Harry takes it, and lets her light it up, inhaling so the toxins replace the oxygen in his lungs. “I’m not the Alpha that he needs, y’know.”

“Well he doesn’t love that Aiden fellow, babe,” Gemma tells him using that big-sister tone.

He smiles blandly. “He’ll have to. These things happen for a reason, Gems, and nobody can change shit.” It isn’t fun to lose him is what Harry wants to shout, but just takes another drag.

Once the driver rolls up he lets the fag out like the fire in his heart. As he’s getting in Gemma speaks up suddenly, “You’re wrong.”

He pauses. “You’re wrong, Haz. You can change. You can change it.”

But God damn it nobody can ever tell him how to.

&&

Way too early in the morning, Louis sits cross-legged on the window seat with yet another Council scripture propped on his knees, pretending not to notice Harry standing in just his pants in the doorway (seems he’s through hiding his body). This goes on until Harry yawns pointedly.

Peering through his lashes Louis comments quietly, “You’re up mighty early.”

“So are you,” his voice is husky with the lack of use.

Louis gives this to him just because, “Well the early bird gets the worm,” before training his gaze on the words he has to have memorized by next Monday. In mere months Louis will have earned his place in society as heir to his Father’s seat in Council, and he’ll be damned if he lets distractions like Harry Styles keep him from his commencement.

Heavy footsteps tell of Harry’s approach, and low-and-behold the Alpha snatches his coffee mug and takes a sip before sputtering, “Shit that’s bitter.”

Louis flips another page he hasn’t even read just to look like he’s succeeding somehow. “Like my
arse.”

Hitching one dark brow Harry muses, “I always wondered how that arse must taste. Glad I didn’t try.” Hearing this, a lick of pain goes off in his chest, and Louis bites back between clenched teeth, “Yeah well who says I’d ever let you?”

“I certainly didn’t,” the Alpha mutters before nudging his knee, “Scoot.”

Sighing in extreme exasperation Louis sits up from his slouch so Harry can settle beside him. “What’s that?”

“Nothin’ you’d know of.”

“Ah, politics. Boring. I can brief you on everything in that Scripture.”

“Please,” Louis snorts, not believing him.

“I can.” He sounds scarily serious. Louis closes the book and looks at him expectantly, calling his bluff. He is more than disturbed when the Alpha delivers without missing one beat, running through all Louis has read thus far and shit he hasn’t even gotten to yet. It goes on for three minutes.

With a smug smile Harry leans forward to tap his chin. “Close your mouth, love, gonna catch flies.”

Louis gulps, then sputters in slight shock, “H-How? Haz, how’d you know all that?” It just doesn’t make sense. He hasn’t even gone through Politics yet. That is the one and only course Harry is missing.

“Free time I reckon.”

“That…That’s not free time, Harry. That’s…”

“It’s nothin’, paradise. I know all those Scriptures.”


Curiously the Alpha tilts his head, then murmurs softly, “A well-known favourite detailing the equality and rights of A/B/O. It was dedicated to Alpha supremacy up until the late 50’s when my Grandad amongst the Brothers amended the Scriptures to fit the régime of Council. C’mon, my mum didn’t raise no fool. You already knows this, don’t you?” Yes, but you shouldn’t.

“Haz…You only need Politics to ratify your heirship. What are you waiting for?”

Averting his gaze, Harry shrugs. “I just…I can’t do it, Lou. I ain’t mentally fit for that life. I will never amount to my Father or his. I ain’t Supreme. I’ve proven so many times. Once upon I might’ve been, but I lost that light a long time ago, paradise. But you,” he twists to face him properly, giving him that look, with those mossy eyes so tired yet so confident. “You’ll make it, paradise. You have the world goin’ for you, rooting for you. You’re goin’ places, and I’ll always be with you. Just look over your shoulder, love.”

Louis opens his mouth to give it to him, but the Alpha smiles lopsidedly and stands, “Good luck with that. Need any help let me know but I’m headed out.”

“Where to?” the boy asks with his heart strangled in his chest. “Snorting up again?”
“Actually, paradise, I have a date,” Harry says simply.

Rage makes the Omega lose his voice just long enough that Harry leaves the room. With teary eyes Louis hurls his book at the wall and holds his head in his sticky hands, hyperventilating.

*Why are they still doing this?*

A while passes until Louis learns to breathe again, rebuilding his will just as Aiden’s call comes. He agrees to something, he doesn’t know what.

On his way out of the room the Omega almost misses the teddy bear seated beside the door with the card that reads, ‘*I’m sorry, I love you.*’ Rebellious as can be against a *teddy bear* Louis walks past it without any fucks to give.

&&

“Have I ever been in love?” Aiden muses, walking him up to his front door with the sun steadily setting behind them. “Once.”

Louis gives him an encouraging look though the Alpha swallows audibly, then shrugs. “I only knew her a few weeks before…She was killed in Institution. Only fifteen.” He glances at Louis’ face and smiles a sad, shifting smile. “I know…but tragedy doesn’t discriminate, y’know. Everyone’s subject to the same whims of fate. No matter what your skin colour or how much money you have, whether you’re Alpha or Omega, or an atheist or a true believer…Everyone’s loved by someone, somewhere.”

“I’m sorry.”

“We all are. I’d wonder why particulars were drafted. Why it wasn’t *me*, y’know. This generation is going to enlighten the whole, and the Institution will be shut down. When it is time for Supreme Des to stand down, whoever takes his place…if *Harry* takes his place it will be brought to an end… I believe your Alpha will see it through. We no longer need sufferers…we need soldiers.”

Louis is struck by emotion, and it’s one that brings tears to his eyes. “You have my support.”

“I know,” Aiden breathes as they stop before the entrance, reaching forward to stroke the hair out of his eyes. “I know, love. I know I am not where your heart belongs. That’s okay. You will always find a friend in me, and I you. For now…” A sneaky smile Louis’ worn most his life transforms his features, “We can pretend for the fun of it. I have a cokehead to fuck with.”

Louis stretches on his tiptoes to plant a soft kiss of apology to his lips, then buries his face in Aiden’s shoulder when the Alpha embraces him. “Thank you, Aiden. You…You’re the best. You will definitely touch someone’s heart in the right ways someday, but mine…is a damaged good.”

“Yeah, I will not accept sloppy seconds,” the Alpha claims haughtily, kissing his temple to convey his tease.

“Don’t you ever. You’re better than that,” Louis says firmly before grinning toothily when Aiden flicks his ear, “Shut up. You ain’t exactly the one I’d go to for relationship advice, Tommo.”

“Couldn’t say why, my perfect pretend boyfriend,” the Omega grumbles, fishing out his keys.

“I better not get my arse beat for this again,” the Alpha starts backwards with his hands stuffed in his pockets.

“Get out of here, Grimshaw!”
“Going! See ya bright and early, Tommo!”

Blowing the Alpha kisses Louis wants until Aiden’s in his car to make quick work of the locks, wave goodbye, and enter the cold icebox that is his house.

Here, like always, a wave of loneliness comes contempt over him, and he closes his eyes. Utterly alone Louis starts towards his bedroom to plug the depression.

Ever since he left his Mother it’s so much harder to know how to make his own life here, how to make his own home. And ever since he left his Father it’s been so much harder to know how to live his own life where when all he needs is home.

As the boy goes his adjusted eyes land on the teddy bear leaned against the door jam. Sinking beside it Louis puts an arm over his face and begins to weep uncontrollably. He spirals into all the pain he’s tolerated in his heart, all the burden on him and in him. When all that remains is tear tracks and hiccups the front door opens and Louis holds very, very still in hopes that the Alpha will miss him and just head up the stairs. Of course not.

“Paradise?”

Louis only hiccups in response. Starting in his direction the Alpha turns on the lights, which make his eyes sting like he’d been crying sand.

Crouching beside him Harry’s blown pupils focus on him, “You been crying, love?”

“I n-never cry, you know that.” He glares at him through swollen eyes. “Ever.”

Wordless with those unforgiving eyes never leaving his, Harry reaches out, then holds out the teddy bear and a single daffodil. “It means new beginnings,” the Alpha whispers with traces of something sad and sorry in his voice. Helpless to him the Omega takes what Harry is offering, stands on shakily legs and flees to his room.

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Watching the boy leave like this, a numb blanket settles on Harry’s shoulders before sweeping up and down his body—it does nothing to quiet his mind, but his bones and muscles do ease out. After five eternal minutes of grueling contemplation his Alpha succeeds in getting him across the hall and into Louis’ room without even knocking first.

“W-What the Hell do you think you’re doing!” the boy squeaks, scrambling out of bed with such an adorable, wide-eyed expression of shock. “I didn’t let you in! Be gone, demon of the night!”

“I ain’t a vampire, paradise,” the Alpha chuckles quietly, going over to the record player on his dresser and fiddling with it, “We’re goin’ to dance. To all these dusty old records you’re hoarding.”

“Who says I wanna?” Louis asks petulantly.

Rising to his feet, Harry looks at him with an intensity he feels everywhere all at once, and uses his most swaying voice, “Please, paradise.”

See, life had beaten the shit out of him, and instead of folding, each strike and blow had forged him harder and stronger and tougher until his inevitable break. Now nothing lingers of the boy he’d once been, but that’s growing up. Not only does your body change; your head does, too. Sometimes for the worst.
Staring at his boy now (who is swimming in his shirt, staring with those stormy ocean emotion eyes, chewing on his bottom lip and shuffling his little feet) the loss of innocence seems a crime. “Why?”

“You fancy dancin’, yeah?”

“Not with you,” the boy mumbles with an edge to his voice—not tonight. Not tonight—he’s hurting and he’s defensive and he might mean that but damn it Harry will not give up so easy. If there is one thing worth fighting for it’s his paradise. And if he’s going to stand tall it’ll be for him.

“Well, darlin’,” Harry murmurs in an American southern drawl. “I would fancy a dance with you.”

As the static mutes, the record at last starts up, and Harry goes to him and holds out his hand with his most charming smile, “May I have this dance, darlin’?”

God, the Omega is so damn pretty too, all sleepy with rosy cheeks and stormy eyes. When his dainty palm settles in Harry’s, he doesn’t give him a chance to pull away or change his mind. In response to the sharp current that comes with the contact, his fingers curl firmly.

Johnny Cash doesn’t wait for them to collect themselves; so neither does Harry, drawing Louis close and swaying them in time with the building beat.

“I find it very, very easy to be true. I find myself alone when each day is through,” he leans down to breathe into the shell of his ear as he takes them around the room in slightly unsure circles (see he’s not much good at dancing or cheesy romance so this isn’t his best act). “Yes, I’ll admit that I’m a fool for you, because you’re mine. I walk the line.” As he hums along the tension between them melts—it’s so easy to forget the circumstances of their lives like this in the dim light of Louis’ safe haven room.

“As sure as night is dark and day is light, I keep you on my mind both day and night. And happiness I’ve known proves that it’s right because you’re mine, I walk the line.”

The boy’s gentle breaths hitch in his ear when he noses at his temple, inhales so that his heart slows and calms itself and this is right. This…them is right.

“You’ve got a way to keep me on your side. You give me cause for love that I can’t hide. For you I know I’d even try to turn the tide, because you’re mine, I walk the line.”

More sweet, placid swaying as Louis’ palm, damp like he’s nervous, squeezes his with more strength than Harry thought he possessed.

“I keep a close watch on this heart of mine, I keep my eyes wide open all the time,” his mouth is hot on the curve of Louis’ pixy ear in attempts to bring the words to life, to give them the meaning Louis needs. “I keep the ends out for the tie that binds, because you’re mine. I walk the line.”

As the tune closes Harry crushes him close until their heartbeats seem to fuse and beat the same. As they stand there in the middle of the room Louis breathes, “Duet. Let’s do the one with June Carter. So I can kick your sorry arse.”

“You’re on. This’ll be fun,” Harry allows but can’t seem to take his arms back. “Just give me a minute to hold you. I haven’t…held you in a while.”

“I shouldn’t,” Louis sighs tiredly, the words another few jagged daggers to the chest; no clean wound either. “I really shouldn’t. This isn’t healthy.”
“But you will,” the Alpha retorts unsteadily, burying his nose in Louis’ feathery hair and just breathing him into his lungs, spreading wildflowers in his chest all the while. Unfortunately the minute doesn’t last nearly long enough before Louis shoves at his shoulders, “Don’t be a pussy. Start the song already.”

At the challenge Harry forces himself to do so; starts the record and watches as Louis teases his hair in the vanity mirror, a proper June Carter impersonation as Harry paces until the beat starts up in unison, “We got mated in a fever, hotter than a pepper sprout, we’ve been talkin’ bout Jackson ever since the fire went out.”

Louis beams and continues to play like he’s ignoring him as Harry sings, “I’m goin’ to Jackson, I’m gonna mess around. Yeah, I’m goin’ to Jackson, look out Jackson town.”

Louis turns to him in seconds, storms up to him with the bitchiest face possible (so damn cute). “Well, go on down to Jackson; go ahead and wreck your health,” his little hands shove at his shoulders. “Go play your hands you big talkin’ man, make a big fool of yourself. Yeah, go to Jackson; go comb,” he yanks at the stray curls in his face, “your hair!”

“Honey, I’m gonna snowball Jackson,” Harry says easily, stroking his cheek with fingertips though the Omega smacks his hand away.

“See-ee if I care!” And waves a dismissive hand.

“When I breeze into that city people gonna stoop and bow.” Harry bows, grinning cheekily.

“Hah!” Louis laughs sharply, starting away.

“All them Omegas gonna make me, teach ‘em what they don’t know how. I’m goin’ to Jackson, you turn-a-lose-a my coat. ‘Cos I’m goin’ to Jackson!” He follows him around the room, watching how he sways his hips like he knows what that does to his body. The temperature spikes in seconds all around.

“Goodbye, that’s all he wrote!” Louis squeaks, laughing breezily. “But they’ll laugh at you in Jackson, and I’ll be dancin’ on a Pong Keg,” the boy wiggles his bum playfully. Christ, that’s mine. Luscious and perky and− “They’ll lead you ‘round like a scolded hound,” and he barks pertly for effect which makes Harry snort, “With your little tail tucked between your legs. Yeah, go to Jackson, you big-talkin’-man,” he tugs at the collar of his shirt playfully. “And I’ll be waitin’ in Jackson, behind my Japan Fan.”

His arms hook underneath the boy’s thighs in these moments so those legs connect them and they’re nose-to-nose with Louis’ hands in his hair. “Well now, we got mated in a fever, hotter than a pepper Sprout. We’ve been talkin’ ‘bout Jackson ever since the fire went, I’m goin’ to Jackson, and that’s a fact,” it’s perfect how their voices mingle, “Yeah, we’re goin’ to Jackson, ain’t never coming back.”

Louis hums softly to the beat, nosing at his nose, his eyes luminous with affection.

“Well, we got mated in a fever, hotter than any out there. We’ve been talkin’ about escape ever since this fire went out,” the Alpha finishes in a heavy breath as Louis inhales sharply, yanking at his hair in retaliation though it only makes his cock twitch, steadily taking interest.

It’s so quiet, their hushed breaths the only sound as Louis blinks owlishly, then mumbles, “Down.”

“Why were you cryin’ earlier?”
“You were with some slut today,” the boy almost pouts, then realizes he does as does as his expression hardens, and he shoves at Harry’s shoulders. “Let me go, damn it.”

“Stop it. You were with Aiden today,” the Alpha bites back; and the jealousy must rage in his eyes because Louis ceases his struggle in seconds, stroking his jaw with sad eyes.

“But you were with her.” Like he’s trying to get impossibly closer, his miniature legs constrict around his waist, heels digging into his back. “You were with that slut.”

“What is the difference between my being with someone and your being with someone?” he demands, irritated with this boy’s mind-fucks.

“You’re…just not supposed to be with someone else,” the Omega whispers, burying his face in Harry’s neck. The little, uneven breaths are so warm on his skin.

“You’re not supposed to be with Aiden,” he whispers gruffly, toying with the fine hairs at the nape of his neck.

“S n-not the same,” Louis mumbles sullenly enough that the Alpha smiles bitterly.

“I didn’t dance with her,” Harry murmurs, spinning them just to. “Didn’t spin her ’round and ’round in circles like this.”

Louis laughs stuffily, “That doesn’t mean shit.”

“I have two left feet, paradise. I wouldn’t ever show her what I show you. I’d do anything with you anywhere. I’d probably sing *Your Song* if you asked nicely.” (He really fucking hates that song.)

“D-D-Do it,” Louis demands, then at Harry’s expectant look, “Please.”

So Harry does; “…if I was sculptor, ha, but then again no, or a man who makes potions in a travelin’ show…I know it’s not much but it’s the best I can do, my gift is my song, and this one’s for you. And you can tell everybody this is your song, it might seem quite simple but…now that it’s done, I hope you don’t mind that I put down in words how wonderful life is while you’re in the world.”

Louis giggles, “Not your song.”

“I know. But the suns been quite kind while I wrote this song…it’s for people like you that keep it turned on. So excuse me, but these things I do, see I’ve forgotten if they’re green or they’re blue, anyway the thing is what I really need, those are the sweetest eyes I’ve ever seen.”

“If you don’t like it so much why do you know the lyrics so well?”

“Shhh,” Harry quiets him, “’S our secret.”

“We’re so musical tonight,” Louis whispers shyly. “I love it.” I love you.

“I’ve been sober four days now,” Harry blurs stupidly. “I know it doesn’t mean much but I just… I wanted you to know. I don’t know that I can do it.”

“I don’t know that I believe you,” the Omega mumbles. He made it like this, *made himself deceitful.*

An unsteady laugh crawls up his throat. “I know, I don’t blame you.” But I’m not lying.
Backed up a bit, the Omega looks at him with those sad, all-too-knowing eyes, and asks unevenly, “Can you make it a week?”

“I don’t know,” he says honestly.

A little hand curls at his jaw as the Omega whispers, “Make it a week. You do that, I’ll call off my date with Aiden on Sunday and we can go Niall’s bonfire instead.” Fuck, a cold sweat breaks over his skin because that’s three more days. Oh God there’s no way…yet–

“Like a…Me and You?” A date?

“Me You and Henny,” Louis whispers, with round pleading eyes. “Me Hennessey and You. If not ‘m taking Aiden. Me Him and Henny.” Christ, drunk Louis is bad Louis, bad and a tad slutty Louis.

“Oh okay. I’ll try. I’ll…I’ll try, paradise.”

It’s going to be the longest three days of my life.

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“I’m buzzing!” Louis chirps, settling shades low on his nose to peer up at him, pulling an adorable face. “You need some sun, Mr. You’re startin’ to remind me of a Vampire. You know I’d be a proper Vampire. I could be so badass. In some world I’m meant to be a Vampire, and suck your blood and–,”

“I think you’re more a werewolf,” Harry teases, unable to help himself. “All scruffy and eager.”

Louis sniffs haughtily, tipping the shades up to his eyes are hidden and shoving their bag at the Alpha, who catches it with a cheeky grin. “Shut up, I just shaved for this event. So eat ass.”

When the Alpha doesn’t answer, stifling his answering smile, the Omega lowers the shades on his nose to pin him with another, soft look. That does it. He’s grinning like an idiot, shrugging the duffel onto one shoulder. Some measures in the distance, the villa is swarming with people, and the ocean roars along with him, all riptides and swells of water.

“C’mon then, Vampy,” Harry murmurs quietly, “You’re the life of the party, yeah? Show me what you’re all about these days.”

Before the boy repositions the shades the blues of his eyes shimmer with so much sweet emotion that it’s almost easy to ignore that he’s not had a fix in a week, that his entire body is in panic mode, that it’s an agonizing wait.

“Well I will need a buzz to get me there,” Louis chirps quietly, brushing his hand hesitantly. He shouldn’t do it, shouldn’t take his hand and act like his Alpha…because Louis is taken, Louis has someone. But damn it he’s not honorable, and he doesn’t care because Louis was his first and he just…

As his hand envelopes the Omega’s small, dainty one, it doesn’t feel wrong–he doesn’t want to worry about the damage done tonight. Tonight is his night–his night to be the cause behind Louis’ every smile, and his giggles and his snarky attitude.

In his chest his heart jackhammers, accelerating and crashing into his chest with every second they stand here, observing the boy with stupid wanderlust and trust and excitement. “Don’t think about Aiden tonight,” is the possessive shit comes from his mouth.
“Don’t think about anyone but me tonight,” Louis quips. “No waffles, or sluts or Grimshaw’s or anything. Just me.”

“I can do that,” the Alpha murmurs quietly, squeezing his hand. “I can so do that.”

“Then let’s thow Ni into the ocean and watch him drown,” Louis crows, adorably fist pumping and grinning evilly.

“You’re twisted, y’know that?” Harry questions quietly as he yanks on his arm so he’s stumbling behind him.

“But you’d do it if I asked, wouldn’t you?” the Omega asks pertly, looking over his shoulder with an artful arch to his brow. Probably, sorry, Ni. “Mhm,” the boy hums knowingly. “Who’s the twisted one, really?”

“Still you,” Harry mutters lamely, then elaborates, “I would toss him, but I wouldn’t stick around to watch the poor lad drown.”

By now they’re in the sand, and the Alpha regrets wearing trainers because they’re bound to be ruined by the end of the night. Then again so is he because bliss is hidden in the pocket of his bag and bliss has been waiting for him all week. If he can just get away from Louis for ten minutes, lock–

“What?” Louis slows down.

Smoothing his expression Harry fists his hands to hide how his fingers tremor, “What?”

“What?” the Omega asks again carefully, and behind his shades those eyes must be scrutinizing him. “You look…guilty? It’s just Ni. We can live without him surely.”

With a rueful smile Harry argues, “But poor Niall thinks we’re his friends.”

“Correction we are his pals. Everyone knows pals don’t matter all that much,” Louis waves a dismissive hand.

“That’s your logic,” he murmurs, but starts to trudge through the sand some more. “Sides, he’s probably expecting some Bonnie and Clyde shit from us anyway.”

With a delighted peal of laughter Louis hops up and down, effectively sidetracked. “We are like Bonnie and Clyde. I’m the mastermind Bonnie and you’re the idiot Clyde that does my bidding.”

“You’re manlier, you be Clyde.”

“Hah! But you’re more Alpha which means you’re the idiot that thinks like an animal, and doesn’t think logically.”

“Let’s remember your logic,” he air-quotes.

“Aiden fucked me on the wall yesterday,” the boy remarks nonchalantly.

Worse than the blazing sun fury is set to his insides as Harry clenches his jaw to stifle the sound sprouting in his chest. It must be evident on his face because Louis continues, “It was real hot and sweaty, too. And his mouth was all over–,” Without reason Harry snatches his hand back and turns on his heels.

“Wait!” Louis cries, confusion leaching into his tone. “Where are you goin’?”
“First,” Harry snarls, scattering sand, “’m grabbing my gun from the boot. Second ‘m hunting him down and ‘m sure once his blood is all over my face I’ll be doin’ some time.”

“See!” the boy giggles, running to catch up. “Look at you! You are such an Alpha idiot!”

“Funny,” Harry sneers, yanking his arm away from Louis’ tugging.

“It is funny! You’re just too Alpha idiot to see the humor!” he says breathlessly.

“Y’know, maybe I need some time. Won’t be able to snort up, yeah? That’s what you want so bad, innit? To tear me down and watch me crumble?” At the thought Harry laughs bitterly, shaking him off again. “You play too many games. You fuck with my already fucked-up head.”

The boy steps in his path, and Harry stops before he runs him down, watching as he removes the shades, tosses them to the sand peels out of his shirt. “What the fuck–?”

Before Harry can react, to drink in the sight of his, Louis flashes a little come-and-get-me grin and bolts in the opposite direction towards the shoreline. Quick, effortless in his rush.

As out of control as he’s feeling Harry doesn’t even notice that he’s tearing after him until his vision files down on his figure. And then he’s catching him around the waist, slipping up so they tumble to the sand with Louis’ sweet, animated laughter.

“Alpha idiot,” the boy breathes from underneath him, all sandy and beautiful with sun-kissed skin flawless and smooth. He reaches up, stroking his hair from his face with that stupid, dreamy smile. “You don’t think you’d have scented him on me if I let him in me?”

The mere prospect cloud his vision in crimson so Harry bites back, “Scent suppressants. You’re manipulative enough to use them.”

“I am,” Louis allows, “but I still didn’t let him in.”

A shudder wrecks through him as he braces on his elbows in the sand that pitches his skin painfully. “You kissed him,” is the fuming breath that spears him.

“I kissed you, too. I didn’t let you in.”

“I don’t know what you do. You spend ninety percent of your time with him.”

“You’re just trying to make yourself not look like an Alpha idiot right now,” Louis says slowly, the tips of his fingers tracing the circles underneath his eyes. “’S not working.”

“You’re lonely, I dunno how you want to fill that void,” Harry grumbles.

At this the boy blinks owlishly, bites his bottom lip, and thinks this over. “I am,” he admits softly. “I wish I could let you hold me so I don’t feel so lonely anymore…but.”

“But,” he prompts through clenched teeth.

“You’re a mess.”

“I’m not incapable of comforting you.”

“Yeah, H, you are.”

Before the Alpha can retort something just as stupid as everything else, an Irish squawk cuts him off, “Aye! No fuckin’ on my beach, fuckers!”
“That was the last thing I would do with him, Niall,” Harry sneers, staring at Louis, who arches an eyebrow and turns his face in Niall’s direction. “Hey, Ni! Wassup?” All the while his hands slide softly down his taunt shoulders, feeling on his biceps and squirming only a bit, but enough that his belly his flush to his hips. A sharp breath catches in his throat, and his eyes shut as he wills his cock to stay uninterested.

“Tryin’ to make sure two fuckers don’t fuck on me beach,” the Irish boy murmurs flippantly.

“Didn’t you hear? Harry has an erectile dysfunction,” Louis jeers, but he also doesn’t stop his little movements, and with his scent caught in the ocean breeze, roaring in his nose, the Alpha can’t help how hard his cock is, bulging in his trousers.

“I ’ear a lot ah shit, Lou,” Niall is unimpressed. “I also hear you’re into Omegas. Yet you’re currently suckin’ Alpha dick.”

Jealously sears at him, and Harry lowers his hips in retaliation. Louis must feel it because his nails bite at the skin of his biceps before he responds, slightly out of breath, “No dick…yet.”

“Well by the looks of it there will be some tonight.”

“Piss off,” the Alpha mutters, watching Louis’ face for any traces of discomfort. There’s only a dewy light to his eyes as he looks at Niall, “Er…Ni…I need to talk to Harold about his erectile dysfunction. Because it seems his penis is workin’ just fine.”

“Yeah I can see that,” amusement tinges his voice. “Whatever. Make it snappy. This is a party not a porno. I’ve given you two plenty times to make one. Now is not one of them.” As the Irish lad talks he’s strolling away, grumbling under his breath. Unable to help it, Alpha buries his face in Louis’ throat, sand and all, mumbling stupidly, “Paradise, baby.”

“Harry,” Louis breathes dejectedly. “I…” God, he hates how all he can do these days is make him sad.

“I’m sorry,” he says desperately. “Let me make it bett’ah.” He’s so twisted, like the way his hips gyrate, the way Louis lets out this beautiful noise, could make this better. “Haz, you’re–,”

“I just…I need you, paradise. I need you.”

“’S not happenin’,” the boy whispers with an ache to his voice that crawls along his prickling skin.

“Please,” he wants to stop begging like a dog, but he can’t, “Please…I…Please.”

“No. You’re being pathetic, H, just stop.” Recoiling from the sting of those sharp words, Harry rolls onto his back and screws his eyes shut.

“I’m sorry,” Louis mutters shakily. “I didn’t mean it like it came out. I just…suck at the sympathy shit.”

“No. You’re just cruel.”

“Yeah, you too. I’ll just go get the duffle and put it in the villa, yeah?”

“No,” Harry says in an abrupt rush, upright in seconds with the sun searing his eyes as he tries to look at him. “No, I’ll get it. You can’t…carry all that.”
Louis shoots him an annoyed look. “Yes, I can.”

“I don’t want you to have to.” It’s honest, Harry really doesn’t. Because his little bit of bliss is hidden in there, and if Louis happens to stumble upon it (he can be quite nosy) he will not hesitate to discard all of what he has to get him through tonight.

“Is this Alpha idiot Harry again?”

It’s Harry turn to make a face. “This is my being a gentleman.” Ha-Ha.

Louis gives him the same heartrending look he’s given him one too many times, and his skin crawls: there’s no doubt in the awareness that creeps into his sad stare. “Okay.”

Okay?

As his heart guns at his ribs and his palms slicken up, anticipation hungers in his bones. He doesn’t even question him, rising to an unbalanced stance and forcing his limbs to stay at a low, leisure pace though he really just wants to tear across this sandy place to where his duffle is left in plain sight.

Just two lines, he promises, just two. That’s not quite so ba–

A blur of body rockets past him, quick and determined. Which fuck, of course not. Why make it easy on him?

Always graceful on his feet, a proper player, it doesn’t surprise the Alpha when Louis dives onto his knees and paws at his duffle.

Panic creeps up on him, but the logic remains: the pocket isn’t visible, and he had chosen that bag just for its disclosure.

“You won’t find anything,” Harry tries not to lie. It’s true, he won’t find it. Not when he’s like this: desperate and grappling. On his knees, shoving their clothing onto the sand, Louis is silent, then looks at him with an utterly betrayed expression. “Where is it?” Like I’d tell you.

Alarm bells sound in his head when Louis shouts with an out-of-control edge, “God damn it, answer me!” Nowhere near that of an Alpha, but urgently commanding in an anxious way.

“I’m not hiding anything.”

“So this is how you planned it all out, huh!” he laughs, the sound shattered glass that shatters him. “Stay sober a week to make stupid Louis believe I’m getting better. But the moment he turns his stupid back I’m gonna snort up like nothing matters!”

At that Harry flinches, but can’t answer because Louis stands, scrubs at his red-rimmed eyes and speaks with more strength, “I think you forget I always win.” With a spiteful gleam to his eyes the Omega turns over the duffle so all the content thud to the sand–shampoo, body wash, jewelry, clothes. As his muscles twitch Harry says impassively, “This ain’t a game.” Anxiety is spiraling dangerously through him even so.

“You won’t ruin my night. We are on a MeandYou, and God damn it you are not relapsing today.” With his delicate shoulders squared the Omega starts towards the shoreline.

“What are you doin’?” Act calm, act calm.

Louis doesn’t react. “What I ‘ave to.”
“I like that bag.”

“You like what’s in the bag.”

“You aren’t allowed to throw the bloody bag, Louis.”

Louis glances at him and though Harry tries not to flinch, the furious fire in his eyes turns the situation from minor to major crisis. “Yeah? How d’you plan on stopping me, Styles? Gonna use the voice? You Robert now? Not obsessed with me though, your fix. Do it. Use the voice! Show me exactly who you are now!”

Humiliation slits the shield against the monster who taunts: do it, show him what a pathetic addict you’ve become. Show him nothing matters more than our little bit of bliss. SHOW HIM. “That’s not fair! I’d never…” strip you of your dignity too.

“How fair?” Louis snarls frigidly. “What’s not fair, Harry, is that I have to live with this too! I’ve been living with it for years and I am through. I’ve sacrificed everything, everything I’ve ever hoped for, to help you! You don’t even want the help, but I’m just so stupid. I can’t stop! It’s not fair that I care more about you then you’ll ever care about me. What’s not fair is that my best fucking mate, my first love, my only, doesn’t fucking give a shit, and a drug is my fucking replacement!” Oh, God.

“Please, don’t,” he begs frantically, ankle deep in the water by now. He cannot comprehend Louis’ words at this point, consumed by his body’s panic: the red alert shrieking monstrously, no longer comforted by the idea of receiving what he needs.

“And still… it’s all you care about,” Louis whispers so broken that Harry wills his body to numb the anguish, to just use Louis instead. But the Omega simply cannot suffice, Louis will only be in danger, bound to be hurt and–

“Well let’s see how it is when I am all you have!” He continues into the icy water that feels so nice on his fired-up skin. Helpless, Harry follows, waves slapping him even as his blurry vision stays on how Louis wrestles them, holding the duffle high in his hands.

“I’ll stop! Just paradise please—,” Let me know it’s there at least.

“What’s one more fucking day with—?” A contempt wave swallows them whole for a moment, and it’s over.

As his nails rake over his skin Harry breaches the surface with Louis gasping some measures ahead of him. He doesn’t want to watch this disaster play out, doesn’t want to be this person, but he can’t stop searching, can’t trust himself.

It’s floating, wilted and sad, away. It doesn’t sink like the decent side of him thought it might, it stays on the surface. As if the drug refuses to leave unless Harry goes down with it. God, he almost wants to.

Without realizing he’s submerged in water, thrashing wildly towards it, tearing the bag open and rambling, “nononono,” while undoing the thickly saturated zipper. The three baggies have gotten wet, moisture dissolves the powder into milky substance which okay okay, he can cook it, crack is better than nothing… He can, he can…

“Were…you lyin’ to me? When you said you made it a week without?” A small, hurt voice asks.

He wants to lash out, to snarl and sneer and spit words that will hurt him as much as he’s hurt Harry by trying to help him. As if. What’s one more lie anyway? What the fuck is one more
hurtful lie? Let him feel the burn. “Yes.” I don’t even care to look worthy right now, you reduced me to the desperate cokehead I am.

And he doesn’t look back to see Louis’ crushed expression, doesn’t flinch from the sharp, dry sob. “I s-should’ve never believed you.”

As the Alpha stares at the milky packets in his hands, his eyes burn from how hungry his stare is. The whole foundation is cracked by now, Louis has broken it. Without listening to him continue Harry fists the first one, forces his arm back and hurl it away. As it goes the lack of drugs sitting on his lungs causes him to inhale on a gasp, nearly hyperventilating as he tosses the next. Except he can’t do it…Not the last one.

With a ragged noise Harry turns around to shove his hand out. Whispers around it’s hisses, you need us you need us, “I can’t do it. I-I’m sorry. Please just get it away from me. It…hurts.”

Water splashes and ripples as a dainty hand curls around his, the baggie cozy between their palms. “I’m so sorry,” it’s a faint breath as those fingers curl around the baggie, and slowly takes it from his palm. He doesn’t want to watch, couldn’t stand to. If his body doesn’t know…

“Aye, how ‘bout we do somethin’ else with this?”

Hope lights up in his chest, followed by fury because no Louis will never be this way. He won’t allow it.

“No, idiot, I don’t want to snort–,”

“You can’t now,” he croaks pitifully. “It’s wet. It’ll have to be…”

“I don’t need to hear your expertise, baby,” Louis breathes, and his sopping hair tickles his sensitive skin, makes it itch in the worst ways. As his hand reaches up, the Omega hushes him (though he hasn’t spoken) and smooths his hair back, “Come. So we don’t hurt your precious sea creatures. Let’s bury it.”

Somehow the touch doesn’t hurt, doesn’t scald him, in fact it’s almost like he can breathe a bit better. God, he’s so easily hooked on any inkling of understanding Louis shows him. Unable to find his voice for fear that it’s been ripped from his throat, the monster trying to keep him from agreeing, Harry nods.

It’s almost hard to let Louis draw him out of the water, but he does so, burying his face in the slope of his neck and holding him around the waist so his back is to his chest and Louis’ head is on his shoulder. “We’re goin’ to get plastered tonight,” the boy whispers gently. “And we’re goin’ to pretend we are right where we wanna be in life. Nice thought, yeah?”

This boy just can’t shoot him down because he’s already knocked him dead. And his mind is taking backroads, away from the main drug way, thinking that sounds so damn appealing.

“It’d sure be cool if we did that,” he agrees hoarsely as they emerge, drenched.

Louis shivers, then a mere breath. “How would you make your life what you want it to be, Haz?”

I’d love you more than I’ve loved anything. I’d think if I loved you this much, you wouldn’t be gone. “I’d take you home from school every night, sit you on the counter and cook for you. I’d pick all the wildflowers I could find and bring them home to you even though you don’t fancy flowers all that much. I’d drive so we could chase the sunset, like you always have wanted to do. I’d stop being stubborn and selfish. I’d think about you more and me less. I’d joke and make you laugh more. I’d hold you when you cry because I’d have your trust.”
“Mmm,” Louis hums, and it’s so content that he wants to sob because he wants that more than he wants any fucking escape. “But what about for you? How would you like to be?” I know you’re warning me that if I don’t change you’re leaving, but I just…I’m trying not to believe it.

Emotion swells in his throat and it takes three dry swallows before he can tell, “Well, for starters, I’d work to get my shit together. I imagine it’s goin’ to have to be me who man’s up. All on my own. I don’t know, but I imagine one day you’re going to call me, years later, and you’ll tell you’re happy and you found someone. I’ll have to be happy for you because you deserve the very best. And I think…I think I’ll have found someone too.” Louis tenses up, but continues wistfully, “It’ll be like a new life, a new me, and it’ll take a lot of tears and sweat and time down on my knees but I hope…I hope I’ll have found someone in the mirror, just looking back at me, out of the blue. It’ll take me losin’ you, but I swear on any ounce of Harry left in me, you’ll always have my heart. I just…I’ll look for my place under the sun, and I’ll find myself. I will be…okay. You will be okay.”

There’s a tiny sniffle. “We’ll be under different suns, worlds apart maybe, but I’ll never not see your eyes right before I fall asleep, I’ll never stop hoping maybe you find the same someone that will be my reflection, and I’ll always hope to have a special place in your heart. I know I don’t deserve that…but I hope maybe one day I will.”

“B-B-But I wanna help.” Louis turns without warning so his mouth is tight against Harry’s collarbone, and he’s trembling but Harry doesn’t think it’s from the cold. “Don’t let me go. Please…” I’ve already made a mess of me. I’m not who I want to be, that’s why I don’t know why you bother.

Obeying Louis’ every wish and desire is one of Harry’s guiltiest pleasures. “You’re my wildest dream come true,” he breathes, nosing at his drenched hair and smiling despite it all. “Remember when I told you it was to make it through the Institution seven times? Well been there done that. You know what? I don’t think I’d have even made it without you. You’re all that kept me goin’ ‘cause I was coming home to paradise. Paradise with soft blue eyes and the best love ever.” When Louis only snivels some more, “Y’know what? I think I’m gonna get your name tattooed on the spare space on my arm because you’re the one thing I’d rather die than lose. At least that way I’ll always have you here on my body.”

“’Az,” Louis shakes his head, fistimg his sopping shirt. “You can’t be sweet to me when you’ve b-b-been stabbing me in the back.” Pain is growing like a vine, strangling his heart as Louis cries soundlessly. All the memories of what used to be, what can still be, cuts him a like a thorn. “Y-You could’ve just stayed home with me! Y-You had all these chances to love me right!” When you say you love me, no, paradise, I love you more. “And n-nothing’s changed–,”

“Can you still love me another day?”

“I…What.”

Taking the dime bag from his damp palm, Harry tosses it (and doesn’t even care), gets on his knees and shoves his hair back. He ignores how his body hasn’t quit, how his jeans stick to his skin, how he is wishing he was home with him. In record time Louis has scrubbed away any evidence of tears, and all that is left is his paper white cheeks, tear streaks, a moist mouth and glassy eyes staring down at him fearfully. “Can you love me another day, paradise?”

“If you’re lucky,” Louis mumbles, hiding his face behind his hands. “Either way I don’t like you more.”

Resting his head on the expanse of his belly Harry whispers, “You’re so beautiful. Don’t ever
His bubbling giggle is felt all the way down to the tips of his fingers. “I’ve waited a long time for you to say that and feel it. Don’t want me to change even when I’m a little shit?”

“Especially don’t then.” I wish I could make it as easy to love me.

With only a sigh the Omega unhooks his arms. Harry just sits there with his head bowed low because he knows what’s coming when the boy settles before him, reaching over for his watered down bit of bliss. “You’re doin’ most of the work. Start digging, Clyde.”

Working his jaw, he does so, letting his nails dirty with sand as he creates a deep ugly hole, terrified that he’s going to be digging in the sane for it the rest of the night.

“Alright that’s enough.” Though he would rather focus on this Louis’ hand lands on his forearm and he halts instantly, peering up at him for direction. “’S okay, baby. Gimme your hand.”

“I can’t…”

“Yes,” the boy chides. “You can. I wasn’t asking. That’s an order.”

Biting the inside of his cheek hard enough to taste blood, Harry hands the shaking thing over. When the packet lands in it, he wants to recoil but Louis makes a no noise, closing his stiff fingers around the baggie and holding his hand. “Just follow me for once, okay? Let me take control. Right now, H, I’m your General.” Okay. Okay.

It shouldn’t be this hard to let go, but God it is, and Louis must be exerting some effort to force his arm forward. Their hands hover over the pit, and his fingers are pried apart to reveal his deteriorated powder. “I think you should name your first heir Sue,” Louis persists randomly, “I’ll get a laugh out ah that one. And you live to keep me laughing, yeah?”

“I’m not doin’ that,” he says slowly, holding Louis’ eyes, freefalling in them, like spiraling down from the sky.

“Okay, fine. Well…how about Theodore?”


His breath catches—fuck now he feels like a bloody heretic because his heart feels burnt but not buried this time. “Nice ring to it I’d say.” Suddenly his hand is limp in his lap, and Louis is smoothing the sand over the hole, patting it happily. “See. Easy. All done. Now, the party ain’t loud enough so I think it’s time to get to it.”

“Alright,” his rasps, deciding not to talk about what just happened because his mind can’t handle going there. Instead, Harry thinks about what a pup would look like with Louis; like every other Alpha he hopes he looks just like his Omega…but wants evidence that the babe is his, his Louis, his pup, and he wants to see his eyes staring back at him, innocent and pure like both theirs had once been. There’s just a fifty-fifty shot with both their genes particularly strong and pureblooded. He just…the hopes. Every other attribute can belong to Louis, but the eyes…he’ll never look back on these days if he could just see his eyes on another living creature, one he helped create, and he’ll remember what it means to be a someone. “Alright. I’m ready to have you tonight.”

Rising to an elegant stance Louis sighs wistfully, “I think that’s a homeless fellow scavenging through our stuff. Wonder how he got in.”
“I guess stark it is.”

“We should’ve just went clubbing,” the Omega mutters, obviously annoyed. “I fancy that bett’ah. All strangers, no strings attached, the likes.” Of course Harry knows of his preference as he’s gone plenty times before.

“Scared to be seen with me?” he wonders.

“Shut up. You’re so ridiculous.”

“Are you, paradise?” he presses because now it’ll nag at him.

“Give me your hand,” Louis demands with a steely light to his stare.

“You have an Alpha. Speaking of where is the twat?”

“Aiden’s away on family affairs. And, yes Harry, I do have an Alpha alright and I want his fucking hand.” His nerves drum with anticipation as his hand encapsulates the Omega’s tiny one. “Mine,” he says seriously, then tact’s on nervously, “For tonight.”

“What happens at Niall’s stays at Niall’s, capeesh?”

Harry nods solemnly. “Can I just…wrap my arm around you instead?” I don’t want you to lose your Alpha because I’m territorial. At least that’s somewhat platonic.

As his arm snakes around Louis’ shoulders Harry doesn’t feel a thing but mine. It’s a feeling. The this-is-mine sensation, a warm glow that is somewhat like the endorphin rush he’s depended on to live. Not quite, but in the same playing field.

Their pace is slow as to delay the inevitable separation that still seems to come all too soon when they step onto the swarming sundeck. Tension grasps his shoulders because all at once from every which way prying eyes latch onto him.

God, they could at least act like this isn’t a thing.

Harry has been holed up in the house far away from Council attendants for an entire year. He knows the rumors: Harry Styles MIA, Harry Styles OD, Harry Styles run away with non-royal, Harry Styles admitted to Bedlam, etcetera etcetera.

“What the fook is everyone lookin’ at?” Louis snarls, pinning everyone with a reproachful glower.

Not even a second after the stares stray the whispers start up, “Are they like back together?”

“So he ain’t dead, I see.”

“No, Robert, you twat.”

Robert.

As his eyes hunt down the face to that name and voice Harry locates the source and stalks towards the nasty bastard that dared– A hand grips him hard. “Haz, stop. It’s not him. Don’t fuel their fire. Let’s go.”

With murder in his gaze Harry swallows and mutters, “Any Robert deserves to die. He can be collateral.”

“Alpha idiot,” Louis singsongs, knocking him slightly.
“Well well well! If it ain’t Styles! Showing his face in daylight!” A familiar voice crows, directing his attention to none other than Nick Grimshaw, fashionably dressed and grinning like God’s come down to Earth.

Unable to help it Harry grins back–Louis tries to step aside so the other Alpha (who he saw only a week or so ago) can embrace him, but no. He holds Louis firm to his side and greets friendly as possible with all his agitation, “How’s it, Grimmy?” Besides, this is their night, and everyone else can piss off.

“Yeah, Grimmy,” Louis chirps smugly. “How’s the crabs?”


“Piss off. I just saw you like yesterday.”

Gaze trained on him, Grimmy murmurs carefully, “Nice to see you out and about, Hazza. All thanks to Louis I’m sure.”

“I owe everything to my little mastermind,” he agrees shamelessly.

Thanks to that remark everything seems to smooth over until Grimmy is off on the hunt for fresh prey. Louis calls, “Whore!” which Harry can’t help but laugh at when Grimmy tosses back lightly, “Jealous whore!” It hasn’t been a secret that their relationships been tense, but from what he’s seen they aren’t on bad terms. In fact they seem lighter than anything else at this point.

“Leeeyuum!” Louis cries happily, shoveling through the sweat scented bodies straight to Liam who isn’t looking in their direction. At ease, the Omega lets go of his hand to toss himself at the other Alpha who staggers and curses, “Lou, why! Why must you–?”

“Li, look! Look who’s here!” He does, turning with Louis all but hanging on his back, to find Harry watching them blankly. His jaw slackens, chocolate eyes wide and ready to fall out of their sockets.

“Harry? Mate, wow,” he says all emotionally. Uncomfortable Harry swallows, then tries to wave but is yanked forward into an embrace. It’s so tight his body aches, and he has to force himself not to shove Liam away and bare his canines. Louis giggles on Liam’s other side and kisses his nose quick, stunning him as he falls back to his feet. “Awe, Li! Don’t cry!”

This is why Harry’s avoided this so long; he doesn’t like the idea that people are missing him…because he ain’t himself anymore, and he hates to cheat them. Returning the hug awkwardly, the Alpha waits. Fortunately Liam soon notices his discomfort and tears away. “How ya holding up, bud?”

“I’ve seen better days,” he mumbles quietly, not sure why he’s bothering with honesty when he’s so blatantly a liar. Rubbing at the back of his neck Harry stares at his shoes so those kind eyes don’t sever his skull. “I…uh, ‘m trying.”

“I know, H. No need to justify to me.” It sounds honest, and sad. So Liam. Christ, all of a sudden he feels like the tragedy he tried to be miles from.

With stinging eyes Harry almost passes out in relief when Louis settles at his side and huddles underneath his arm. “We’ll catch you later, okay, Li? We need to grab ourselves a nice glass of Henny. You goin’ swimming tonight?”

When Liam confirms the Omega chirps excitedly, “Alrighty! See ya then!”
As they hurry away Liam calls, “Hey, Haz!” When he dares to look back, he’s smiling sheepishly as a beautiful girl joins him. “Welcome back!” *I don’t know that I am…*

Without offering words Harry just smiles weakly and shrugs before Louis tows him away. “Gee! So emotional! Like why?”

Unbidden his smile strengthens and he pulls him closer. “I know, why can’t we all just be robots? I quite like that idea.”

Louis pokes him in the face where his dimple must be in view. “They just missed you, arsehole.” *I’m not me anymore.*

“Oh, hallelujah! The pap are swarming the beach! Don’t know how they got in but security is out there now! I just thought you two were still dickin’ around,” Niall hops in front of them, relieved. “Speakin’ of! Nice to see you in the *daylight!* I were beginnin’ to think you like a vampire or summat. Where’ve you been.” At least the Irish boy doesn’t look the least bit concerned or sympathetic. It’s a refreshing change even when Niall cocks his hip.

“Around?” Harry shrugs.

“Just tell me one thing! Answer me this!” the Irish boy demands. Both ignore Louis’ protests. “Shoot.”

“Are you going to fucking tell this loser you’re in love with him already and work your shit out? ’Cause let me tell you I am dying of the waiting-game. It’s so annoying to find all the telegraphs about you two with other twats. *Just please for the sake of my sanity give me life!***

Louis hisses defensively, “Ni! That’s none–.”

“I want to tell you a lie. But I’m pretty dried up on them right now, and I’m tired of all this speculation so I’ll come out with it. I’ll just tell you what I know. I haven’t been with anyone in over a year for many reasons. One: I’m stuck on someone else as we all know. Two: I have this paranoia that I’m being watched every second of the day. I didn’t die…not physically at least. For anyone who’s still wondering I didn’t drop out, I took break. Mostly because I am in mental ruins, addicted to cocaine and I–,” A hand covers his mouth. “At the time you need to lie!” Louis hisses, so furious it makes him want to burst into laughter, to crowd the silence that’s taken over the cramped, heaving room.

“I, for one, need a drink,” Niall coughs with an overwhelmed expression: like Louis hadn’t told him all this. “Who’s in?”

“Me! Me, fuck, I am so in!” Louis seconds eagerly, and Niall smiles tightly before dragging Louis who drags him into another room. Niall snarls to everyone in the vicinity, “Out of my kitchen, fuckers!” The place is emptied in under two minutes so Louis sits on the island stool before the bar and puts his face in his hands, moaning. “Why? Why would you do that?”

“’S not like they didn’t already know,” Harry attempts comfort, brushing his bunched shoulders. “’S okay, paradise, I don’t care what they say or think.”

“Well ya shouldn’t,” Niall backs him up, crouching behind the bar. “’Cause they’re going to fuck the tale up anyway. ‘Sides no phones allowed here. Nobody taped that.”

He is grateful to him though Louis sighs, “I just…H, they didn’t deserve to know all that…”

“I’m being honest…” *Isn’t that what you wanted?* “Isn’t that…Don’t you want that?”
Louis peeks through his fingers. “I want you to be honest with me. With the people who matter enough to know the truth and you. Not those tools.”

“Oh,” he winces. “I misunderstood.”

With a sheepish smile, Harry ignores Niall’s snort. “I’m sorry, paradise. I thought…”

Louis smiles, pained. “You thought that might make me happy?”

Stupidly, Harry nods, running his nails against his wrist because cocaine ants are leaving itchy bites. “It’s a nice thought, er gesture, baby, but next time just me, yeah?”

“Baby?” Niall snorts again, poking to a stance with three bottled cradled to his chest. “Am I missing something?”

“Louis has an Alpha,” Harry argues lamely.

“You didn’t tell him?” Niall looks at Louis with an odd expression Harry can’t make out. Louis mirrors that except looking more like a deer caught in the headlights.

With his brows furrowed, the Alpha stiffens as Louis mutters, “I don’t think there’s anything to tell, Ni…”

“Harry, cokehead, whatever it is you go by these days, Louis and Aiden had a bit of a row the other night.”

“What’s he talkin’ about, Lou?”

Louis answers seconds too late, “It’s…nothing?”

“Louis…” the Irish Omega warns pointedly—why Niall is ratting Louis out to Harry hasn’t a clue.

“Jesus, it was a little row! Everyone has bumps in their relationships!” Louis finally gives. It’s weird, whatever is going on between the two Omegas.

“Not pot holes!” Niall singsongs wickedly. “Why don’t you tell him what it was about?”

“Yeah, paradise, why don’t you,” he prompts tightly.

Louis doesn’t even seem to know, chewing nervously on his bottom lip before blurring, “Like any sane Alpha he’s not too keen on the idea of our living situation is all. I kindly told him for now it’s not up for negotiation. Simple.”

“And what was his kind response?” He’s thrown by how Louis lowers his eyes submissively.

“It was just a row, alright. I don’t want to talk about it.” But the low, upset tone to his voice, how he refuses to look up, says more than just a row.

Ugly emotion balloons in his throat, and he blinks rapidly to alleviate his eyes sudden strain.

“Well now that I’ve made things proper awkward,” Niall giggles. “How about some doubles, eh? To start us off.”

“Please,” Louis mumbles, and Harry wants to shield him from all the horrors of the world. Including himself.
Just as soon as they’ve downed them Zayn sashays into the room, headed straight for the bar. “Again I am left out. Don’t I matter at all?”

Niall laughs around a swing of beer. “As if!”

“I feel the love.”

“Really?” Niall asks skeptically. “All I’m getting is sexual tension and unrequited love.”

Beside him Louis glares and sasses them both, “Well at least I ain’t alone.”

“Aren’t you?” Zayn smirks, taking his own beer to settle on the counter across from them.

“Now, now, pups,” Niall interrupts, pacifying the two. “Can’t we all get along?”

“Not with all the pheromones going around.” Zayn fans himself.

He is barely able to keep up with the three, slightly overwhelmed and more than uncomfortable, looking between the three (he’s unable to even join in). It’s isolation at its finest. It’s the way he’s learnt to be. He figures it’s true: monsters aren’t born, they’re definitely created.

“You’re babysitting yer drink!” He almost doesn’t realise Niall is speaking to him, not over him.

“Someone has to play adult tonight.”

“That’s your problem,” Zayn chimes in. “Loosen up, mate! You’re so stiff all the time! It’s sad to see.”

“Z!” Louis tries to come to his defense.

“No…He’s right,” Harry nods, bringing his drink up to his mouth and chugging like they’ve been doing one beer at a time.

“Atta boy!” Niall claps him on the back—he tries really hard not to jump out of his skin.

“Such shit influences,” the Omega sighs, though he’s smiling with his lips wrapped around the lip of his beer.

“Harry is the ancient one ‘ere!”

“I’m twenty one,” he scoffs, heating up in a much different way. It’s been a while since his last liquor intoxication. It’s different in a way Harry remembers not enjoying. Still, he doesn’t though the other’s seem to.

“Don’t listen to ‘em, Hazza,” Louis giggles around wet lips, stroking his arm. “You’re still ripe!”

“You still can’t handle your liquor,” Harry chuckles around a wide grin. And…surprisingly Zayn and Niall burst into delighted peals of laughter as Niall crows, “I told you! I so said that like a week ago, Haz!”

“He did, he did!” Zayn agrees around laughter, tilting his beer at him (whatever that means).

Louis pouts, crossing his arms though it’s obvious he’s not truly offended by the crinkles around his pretty ocean eyes.

“Another round!” Niall exclaims which has Louis climbing on the counter in fitful cheers.
He smiles in thanks when Niall slides his over to him and tips it out to Louis before they down the alcohol that burns on the way down.

From there he just…goes by example this once, just to make Louis happy: to let him have his bliss if only Harry can give it to him tonight.

&&

“‘S s-so c-cold!” Louis giggles adorably as Harry shakes his sopping hair out of his face.

“You asked for this,” the Alpha mutters around a sloppy smirk as they get waist deep in the water.

In the pale moonlight droplets trickle down Louis’ slender neck. “Warm me up,” the boy breathes, batting his thick, spiky lashes.

“How?” he whispers, slurring slightly–the world is still spinning aside from the shivering creature swaying with the waves.

“Like thiiiiss!” he stretches the word cutely, paddling over to him and lurching upwards to wrap his slim arms around Harry’s shoulders and hook his legs around his waist, giggling when Harry stumbles a bit in the water, then rubbing their noses. “K-Knew it! I knew you’d be warm! You’re always so warm, ‘Azzy.”

“Dunno watcha mean, ‘m bloody freezing,” he laughs erratically, avoiding his sapphire stare.

“You should get high on me,” Louis offers, slurring enough that Harry thinks the water hasn’t shocked either of them sober yet. Except the word high makes his stomach churn and clench up. “Oh,” Louis gasps, expression crumbling in the most terrifying ways. “Oh, no. I’m sorr’eh, ‘Az. I didn’t me–,”

“I wish I could get high on you,” he interrupts softly, thumbing at his moist bottom lip because he can’t not touch when it’s all pouty and cherry red from wine. “I’d be addicted after the first hit.”

Louis sighs gently, and his eyes gleam mischievously. “Why don’t ya try it?”

“I should,” he breathes huskily. “But–,”

Without warning something shoves him by the shoulders, and as he scrambles to stay upright Louis falls free, gasping.

When he’s in the water Harry doesn’t fight his collapse, submerged underneath the water the same. A little body thrashes and settles over his in the cold, unforgiving water as his arms snake around his slim, soft waist. For this still, sound moment, its right, the only warmth in the sea has found him, and he won’t let the tide take it back. Except, not even seconds swim by before they break the surface.

Around the swooshing in his ears, Harry can hear Louis is laughing madly, splashing around with someone.

As he catches his breath, blinking wildly, a dark instinct leaving him reeling, and he just…Out of the water in seconds, Harry scrapes at his crawling skin, feeling that something wants to tear free of his too-tight skin. And he has to get away from this, from him.

“Heeey!” Louis squawks, plastered to his bare back (he’d forced him out of his shirt somehow). “Where ya gooooin’?”
As walking like this is difficult, with a body worse than the tide dragging him backwards, Harry pauses. Stiffly whispers, “I need to…go, paradise. Go away. Far…away.”

“You need to stay, baby. Stay right ‘ere. With meh.” His breath warms Harry’s skin. “’Az I will do anythin’ to stay with you…to keep you wi’ me.”

A monster fires up in his chest. “Anything?’

“Anyythiiing,” Louis giggles.

Without looking at him, Harry whispers desperately, “Share my little bit of bliss wi’ me”

Against his back Louis inhales sharply, nails biting into his skin as his hands clutching his biceps.

“I…I dunno…I…”

“You won’t ever understand why I fight so hard to hold onto it,” the addict says silkily.

Neither are breathing; the wind is caressing his damp skin, teasing the curls veiling his view of the outside world.

A damp, trembling hand slides down his arm to take his hand. “Show me…” a wrecked breath that glorifies the monster in his heart. “Show me.”
“Shh,” the addict quiets his frenetic breaths as his thumb bears down on his left wrists wildly drumming pulse point. “I’ll take care of you.” In no better condition Louis’ heart tries menacingly to climb up his tight throat the further their trip advances. As his vision swirls with inebriation Louis hears his own voice, “I know. You ‘ave to…”

As to conceal the teary varnish to his eyes, Louis tucks his face in the slope of Harry’s neck–eerily enough there is no scent other than sea-salt. No minty lavender, no evergreen or dark Alpha. Just sea salt. Dimly the Omega questions if this is because this isn’t his Harry, this is his addiction. *Don’t do it, don’t let him do this to us* a minute voice shrieks somewhere in his head, or perhaps his heart. He can’t tell with all the distress screaming in his belly: it can’t compete with alcohol’s love-lash through his system.

“You don’t gotta do this, paradise,” the thick rasp sounds so much like his Harry, but the disapproval is his addiction, and neither startles his at this point.

In fact it warms him to his very core; he will take any Harry he can have because any Harry will take care of him, *this* Harry is here to help him understand, to finally *let him in to every beautiful crevasse of his essence*. Even twisted, the boy has no doubt, it’s the most beautiful disaster.

As the mirth bubbles and fizzes within him the boy lifts his face and peers up at him. Under his innocent stare, the addict’s expression shifts: his mouth quirks up in an affectionate smile and the mossy colour of his stare shines it’s loveliest in their current darkness. “After this nothin’ will keep us apart,” the Omega breathes softly, reaching up to stroke the attractive line of his jaw.

“Are you scared, paradise?”

“No…” like nothing else it’s sincere. He will bite this bullet, and he will not fall victim to this. Naïve in his intoxication Louis refuses to change his mind, trusting wholly in gut emotion. “I trust me, and I trust you.”

A sadly troubled look clouds his handsome features but it’s replaced with another sweet smile that soothes any anxiety. “Nothin’ can touch us in bliss, Lou. No *followers*, no Robert, and no reality. You will feel brand new, and know they could never touch you to begin with.”

Just the mere mention melts him. “Only you. You touch me, Haz. You’re the only one who eva’h ‘as.”

“And I will never stop,” the Alpha whispers seriously, the territorial blaze to his stare leaving no room for Louis’ doubt. “In every way possible, you’ll be mine.”

As his lashes flutter, his heart mirrors this, albeit much more alarming. Only the boy doesn’t acknowledge anything but Harry’s words, and mumbles expectantly, “Pinky promise?”

A pinky curls around his smaller one. A permanent “*pinky promise.*”

From there the ride goes on in fast forward, silence shared as Louis continues to throw back the
bottle of jack, pours some into Harry’s mouth many times (soaking his shirt as his coordination is shot)a before he takes the bottle from his slackened hand easily. “Right, baby, enough.”

“More more more!” the bottle moves from side-to-side. Fascinated by this, Louis makes grabby hands for it.

“Wait, I’m gonna give you bett’ah,” he purrs, nosing at his cheek. Louis is reminded of the strict boundary he’s about to trample on and annihilate—he is moments from deceiving his every belief, his every difficult, tiring battle.

But damn it with good reason to.

“’Kay.”

“Good boy,” Harry praises, carrying him closer and closer until he’s curled up in his lap, nervous giggles tumbling from his liquor-ridden tongue. A large hand strokes his messy damp hair, and under the reassuring touch Louis quiets and waits impatiently, bathed in anxiety.

An anxiety that seems to coat his skin, though he can’t back out as the vehicle comes to an abrupt halt.

Impassive, blank, impatient: “Your pay will be transferred tomorrow, Evans. Thanks.” Not warm or kind like his Harry is with him. It’s sick how special this makes him feel.

In a spiraled frenzy, the Omega is lured from the car, the world in full tilt as the Alpha takes him round the waist, planting soft kisses into his hair as they stumble up the drive drunkenly.

Without his notice they’ve reached the entrance where Harry inserts the code (more than once) and works to unlock the door. Once it’s done with he’s taken inside by the hand, to exterminate any more barriers.

An invisible heady current works through Harry’s body, swift and potent. With an ominous sound the Alpha’s arms hitch him up so he’s draped over his shoulder.

“’Tis sweeeet,” Louis slurs as he’s taken upstairs with his mind in twirls in the floorboard peculiarly close. “M so ‘appy, ‘Azza! You make me so happy!”

A heavy hand squeezes the back of his left thigh. A gasp is torn from him as his lashes flutter, frayed sparks of heat scream yes yes yes, trying to coil in his belly, to…to… “Bout to make you much ‘appier, paradise.”

“Do it!” the Omega roots him on when Harry opens what must be his bedroom door. Abruptly it’s freezing, in ways only Harry’s bedroom has ever been. Louis shivers at the chill, but carries out, “Show me ah good time!”

For a moment the world falls apart in chasms as he’s dumped onto the bed, startled into alarmed short breaths until he’s able to move his heavy limbs, to sit up. The scene returns, stitches settle into place before his bleary eyes. Crouched in the corner Harry’s jacked yet another floorboard from its rightful place, and makes rapid work of yanking his fresh stash free.

One more intimidation, enormous and stuffed with smaller packets of white powder, is revealed—Louis thinks this one is quite pregnant. A dazed breath is yanked from his lungs, and the Alpha must catch the noise as his head snaps up. The expression that’s warped his pale face is worse: ravenous desperation.

“Don’t be scared,” he pleads gently. “You will only ‘ave a little.”
Louis nods slowly, swallowing around the thick rancid taste of dismay in his dry mouth. A soft, prideful look crosses his face before he’s back in motion to grab (what looks like) six or so dime bags from the rest, and carefully tuck the big bag back into its hidden spot. With the job well done the Alpha rises to a stance–now, in the pale moonlit room Harry looks so...threatening, tall and broad and intense and so sexual. Louis squeezes his thighs together, chews on his bottom lip, and watches him hone his skills.

“C’mere, paradise,” he beckons throatily, hunched over. God, the muscles of his shoulders must be rippled, and--

A wicked smile on his mouth, Harry looks over fleetingly, extending his hand, “I want you to come here, Lou.” A demand. A shiver runs down his spine, though Louis hums, and obeys, braced on the furniture to make it to his feet. As he evens his breaths, the boy holds out his hand, and let’s a calloused one envelope it.

“‘S okay, love. Look, ‘s only a bit of bliss.” He’s shown over to the desk where a short, thin line is luminous against the metal surface. But...it doesn’t look like bliss. It looks like the leftovers smeared on Harry’s nose from all the times he’d done this, it looks like all the cruel verbal blades the Alpha spewed while it festered in his system, it looks like distance and pain and--

“Please,” the Alpha breathes, mouth pressed to the curve of his ear. “We ‘ave to be together like this. You have to understand.”

Overwhelmed, the Omega sways, but it caught in Harry’s unassailable hold as he persists, “I want to make you feel like never before. You will know bliss. Trust me.” He’s knows the right thing to do: walk away, leave. Still...he’s not going to.

“I…I do,” Louis mumbles honestly while his nose runs the length of Harry’s collarbone. “‘S that I don’t trust.”

A moment of silence swarms between them, but then it’s pressed into his lax hand: some firmly rolled cash. “This is the way to understandin’ me.” Louis curls his fingers around the roll-up.

“Atta boy.” With an affectionate smile, the Alpha explains the method, and the Omega does as he is instructed, pinches one nostril closed and carries the roll to the next to hover over the line. “Go on, love. Inhale it, and know bliss.”

A small, scared breath falls past his parted lips, but Louis listens to his Alpha, relies on him to make this right, and starts at the bottom to inhale the line deeply.

Louis jerks away, whimpering as tears spread in his eyes. One hand clamps over his aflame nose like it will ease the combustion that’s been willingly enticed. As the fire spreads to scorch his cartilage and sinus, the boy is nearly unaware he’s taken into strong, safe arms. Hands run through his hair, “Shh. Shh, I’ve got you. I’ll pass, paradise. It’ll pass.”

Like even his body obeys his Alpha there is no pain at all, like it’d been an illusion. Startled, Louis wrenches backwards and--

In his vision the universe has begun to glow. As the room spins, it’s taken on the loveliest concavity Louis has ever seen, hovering over his head, but unable to really touch him. More than anything in the world Louis wants to spin with the room, spin and swirl and be something lovelier.

“Oh,” the boy says breathily around the incessant strike of his heart, surveying until his round eyes stop to marvel at the soft light of the moon. “‘Az, wanna touch the moon,” he says in awe.

“Touch it,” the Alpha sounds so warm and definite, and Louis just knows he can do it, even
without Harry’s support. As the boy makes it to the barred window, clouds are underneath his feet, lifting him so high nothing could possibly bring him down.

Weightless, he thinks he might have become the cloud on the way; the boy reaches out to the sky and lets his lids whisper shut. A rush of molten blood has him throbbing like an electric current, and in his hands is a soft cratered circle of luminosity.

Hands settle hot and heavy on his hips, and the breath leaves his parted mouth on a breathy sound. The moon slips through his fingers but it doesn’t matter as dizziness crashes into him, but he is so insubstantial there truly isn’t a thing to drag him down.

“Touch me,” Louis sighs dreamily as his head lolls, though his heart races, delicious musical notes behind his ears. “You wanna touch me, ‘Azza. You’ve always wanted to touch me. In erreyway.” There is no doubt in his mind that this Alpha has wanted him.

Small, but hard flares of fireworks build in his belly as Harry confirms, “Always. You’re so beautiful. You feel like bliss to me.”

A rush, a thrill, a dizzying torrent to sweep him away. Ablaze with intense pent-up desire, with wishes that are so in reach nothing could ever be wrong with this, with them, Louis purrs, “Take me to bed,” in a voice he’s never dared to use, soft and sweet and horribly Omega. As he noses at his throat, the boy pulls his bottom lip between his canines, “Alpha.”

Not right, not right stop this. A nameless voice nags, but Louis giggles at its inanity, and crushes it without hesitance.

As an arm snakes around his waist, the Omega doesn’t catch any movement, but then he’s in the air so long, soaring and laughing in slow motion. Sprawled out on the bed, Louis laughs in delight, “OhmiGod! Haz, I flew! I was flying. Did you say that?”

“Saw it, paradise. I saw it,” a drawl that caresses his skin with all its heat.

As the Alpha prowls towards him, the boy trembles; once he’s braced over him, seemingly huge, compared to Louis’ frame, there is no air.

A hand eases his thighs apart, and a body fits between them as Louis mewls again. “Yeah, I can smell it,” Harry hums huskily. “Smell how you’re feelin’, paradise. How wet you are. ‘S that for me?”

Desperate, Louis lifts his arms, and circles the Alpha’s neck, hands foraging in his untamed curls, fisting the thick tresses as he lurches upwards. “Yes,” he whispers shamelessly, in search of Harry’s mouth, “Yes, Alpha, for you.” The moment their mouths meet Louis’ chronic loneliness fills so much he’d rather off himself than to ever lose this connection.
A current has consumed him—electrified their bodies, emanating from the lovely creature beneath him. A world has abandoned its rotation, and soon their hearts will beat the same. Soon...

Louis is soft, Louis is tiny, and Louis is the most stunning creature this world has been blessed with. And his mouth, silky and plush, tastes like heaven on his taste buds. His fists threaten to rip tuffs of Harry’s curls out, but the shockwaves the pain fires through his bloodstream builds a throaty, encouraging sound in his throat as his tongue makes its home in Louis’s warm delicious mouth.

The Omega’s sea-breeze vanilla scent is so much more potent as Harry sucks on his bottom lip, thrives on his breathy mewls. When his canines scrape his sensitive flesh, little thighs bracket his waist, limbs hooked, anchoring them.

“Paradise,” he breathes roughly as his mouth runs down his jawline, taking his skin between his lips as Louis pants and arches his throat to allow the access he craves. “Can I touch you? Jus’ a bit?”

“Y-You can do anythin’ you want to me,” the boy mumbles carelessly. “Get me naked. Touch me.”

“Fuck,” the Alpha growls low in throat as his mouth works with more focus, marks his skin, tastes the salt, and all the delicious scent that entices his every bonded male instinct. “You taste like mine,” his voice doesn’t lose its timbre as his hands ache to learn the hollows, the curves and valleys to his glorious silhouette…but first he has to join him in the utmost bliss. Except when he tries to lift his head, those little hands scrunch in his hair as to hold him where he is. “No. Please, don’t stop.”

A rasp escapes his blazed out throat as Harry runs his canines down his slender throat, and pins him to the mattress with his body. Wild instinct causes him to retreat enough that he can unhook him and show him onto his belly. Settled over him, the Alpha takes his hair in one hand to show his ear to his shoulder and bare his neck. “Mine.”

A muffled keen is so needy that he can’t stop his hips from pressing flush to his perky ass in his too-tight blue shorts, the bulge of his cock pounding with the feral roar to claim in his blood. “Mine,” he echoes unevenly, as Louis tries to rut into the mattress, prattling breathily, “Yes, Alpha, make me yours, please ‘s all I want, I understand now, please.”

As his pointed canines run down his slender throat, Louis stills and unwinds with jumbled words. As his teeth close around his sweet spot, Louis moans, and the Alpha breathes rough through his nose, torn as his hips move, impulsively the need to mate, to do what his body is meant to do, please an Omega, hunts him down, eats away at him. Animalistic sounds build in his chest as Louis rocks his luscious ass, mewling and begging for it.

Before he does it, the Alpha tears away, “Wait for me. ‘M comin’, paradise,” his voice is sharp as the ache in his throat, instinct warred with the monsters screams for blissblissbliss. “I wanna be with you first.”

“Wha–no, please, don’t…” Louis mumbles frantically, but Harry takes his mouth before, stuns them both as Louis’s tongue strokes his softly, sweetly, but his thrusts into his mouth demands submission until the boy complies, pliant and panting on the mattress.

Twitchy, the Alpha stumbles to a sloshed stance, doesn’t meet the floor (by some miracle), determined to reach the peak of all mental mountains. On autopilot, the method is shown through,
two dime bags, lines spread; four to take him where he needs to be.

Each snort fires up his brain until he’s electrified, lit up like the sun, *a ball of fire*. Once his body soaks up the dopamine, the Alpha shakes his hair from his face, and smirks like he’s the luckiest man in the world. And for this second, he really fuckin’ is.

“More,” a tiny voice pouts as hands sneak up from behind him, over his shoulders to splay on his chest. A sharp breath catches in his throat. “More.”

A dark entity fists his furious heart; without the demons latched onto his brain Harry knows to say no, to deny him, because Louis has already reached incredible heights… “Please, Alpha. Please, please, pleeesssse!”

Without conscious permission the last dime bag comes apart under his ugly fingers: powder piles on the desk, and in nanoseconds he’s used the card to form three hideous lines, short and fat to make it quicker on him. There is no sympathy, the demons claw and destroy his sanity and— “’M ‘ere to stay with you, baby. I’ll never leave.”

Like its hilarious the monster cackles madly in his head, and paralyzed, Harry watches through tunnel-vision as Louis takes the money and leans over the monsters lure. What happens next tears him apart, but then the boy is vertical, stumbles, hops and tosses his head back with the brightest smile like it’s the best thing to have ever happened to him.


“Come! Come, dance wi’ me!” Louis laughs sweetly, oblivious to the travesty that’s occurred between them. Harry lets everything but this high, this glorious rush, go. *Go far away to another place, another planet, another mind.* All that remains is euphoria, in this moment they are one, they are *everything he has*. Louis is his whole world, not some temporary paradise.

“*Makin’ my way downtown, walkin’ is fast, faces pass, ‘n ‘m homebouuund,*” the boy singsongs with a reedy pitch until Harry laughs gruffly, and holds him around the waist to keep him upright and away from the floor where his stumbles were leading him. “*Dududududum,*” the Alpha joins in, and Louis pants into his neck until he’s fallen backwards onto the bed, Louis sprawled out over him.

“‘Cause I need you, ‘n now I wonda…if I could fall into the sky, d’you think time would pass meh by, ‘cause you know that I’d walk ah thousand miles if I could just see youuuuu!” A little digit pokes at his chest, and every striking smile burns bright in his dark eyes, an intense shine to his dilated stare.

“Ya know,” the boy says breathlessly, crawls up his body jerkily, then breathes into his mouth, “You’re my first and ‘nly love. I’ll always love you, Harry Styles.” It’s so assertive, and it’s times like these that he wants to breakaway, to fall apart and *weep with all the love he has never let him have.*

A tsunami rips over him, and oh God he’s fucked up, he’s ruined it, them. And when Louis crashes, so will they, *crash, burn, and become infinite specks of nonentity.* “’M so fuckin’ in love with you. I will only ever love you, paradise. I still need you. Don’t leave me.”

Somehow the two end up on their sides, and his mouth dominates the smaller boys, tonguing him like he might *own him*, because the thought creeps through him; *he’ll never be able to love him right after this.*

Able to breakaway from this now, the Alpha selfishly does.
Submerged by the fierce stream Harry brushes their mouths gently. What feels like hours continue underneath the water pressure their mouths remains attached, soft and loving, clinging to the falsities of life.

Louis is all Harry knows–Louis is pleasure, endless bouts of bliss.

Except pleasure is easily distorted, bent, twisted and ruined. Like him.

“’M sorry… ‘M…s-sorry…Get away from me!” the boy shrill, out of breath, in such a panic that Harry scrambles upright, head in flurries of dawdling emotion. All before the sentence has finished.

“Wha…”

As the Omega struggles to sit up his glassy eyes roll into the back of his head as he slurs, nearby unfathomable, “Ge’ out, don’t wan’ you to see this…”’M…can’t…” Louis slumps forward, tremors rock through him, teeth chattering like he’s freezing though his skin is heated and slick with sweat.

“Louis,” Harry says anxiously, airways tense. “That’s not funny! Stop it!”

He doesn’t. Out of control, Harry shoves at his frail shoulder fearfully. Limply, Louis moves under his hand. A puddle of vomit pours out of his mouth, and as the Alpha recoils, terror assaults him. “Paradise.”

Unresponsive his body shakes hard, and so does Harry, shouting, “Louis. God damn it, Louis, don’t do this to me! Don’t leave me.”

Rolling him over onto his belly, terrified that he might drown in his own vomit, he then grapples for his phone. “No no no no no no, baby…Baby, please, please, wake up.”

Except this does nothing: the Omega’s frame stills lifelessly. With the monster’s cackles behind his ears, his…his…He dials emergency, and listens for his breathing. It’s shallow, short, fading…

At the first response, “He’s not breathing! I…I’ve…Paradise, wake up!”

Sobs crawl up his throat violently as he recites their address mindlessly, unable to do anything else but repeat, “paradise, don’t go, I need you, everyone needs you, ’m sorry ’m sorry ’m sorry ’m…” he cradles his soiled figure to his chest, face buried in his neck even as Louis’ head lolls inertly.

In his panic Harry prays to any God that will listen.

Please. Please, God, don’t do this…Don’t do this to him. Don’t take him, not this boy. Not Louis. He doesn’t deserve this, not him. Let me drop dead, take me. Send me to Hell, torture me, take the very breath from my chest, the very beat of my sick heart, just leave him. Don’t take him. Save him. I’ll never dare look at him again. I’ll never dare hurt him again. I will love him right. Leave him he hasn’t had his happiness yet.

Just like Desmond Styles said all those years ago.

Except Dad never thought it’d be all his sons fault.

&&

A nameless chemical odor bites at his damaged sinuses–sterilized illness, remnants of death, splattered hope. White overpowers the foundation, meant to console he reckons; because white
should represent *righteousness* and hope.

A fatal error in the groundwork of existence—white is not a colour of purity. As he stares blankly at the white tile, surrounded by white walls, white ceilings threaten to crush him under their force, its obvious purity exists in no colour, non-colour, whatever. White does not purify. It steals the life from all the other tincture, the emotion that accompanies those colours.

Coke is white, *white*; a monster that has devastated his mind to this point.

This hellish hospital is white, *white*. A place for victims of their own personal monsters to try to break free. To never return to themselves, or the monsters in their heads and hearts and bones and…and…

Any light is considered *white*. If Louis’ seen this light then the desolate ruins burnt behind his heavy lids is as unavoidable as his own internal death.

Purity exists nowhere but in Louis’s ocean-coloured eyes. And if the last time he saw them was flat with the monster skulking in their innocent depths then—

A scream lodges in his throat…but he’s screamed enough tonight. With any luck his voice box will collapse under the constant abuse. It’ll be permanent so he will never again be allowed to open his filthy, sick mouth. This is the worst hell; this wait, unable to know that his sweet…boy is…

An animal crouches over the lifeless body sprawled in the bed, protects the innocent creature he’s torn down, he’s…he’s…

“Sedate him. We have no other choice if…” an unfamiliar voice orders, and almost immediately he’s hauled by the shadows to the floorboards, unable to see around the torture jabbed behind his eyes, slashing at his optic nerve; horrified screams peal from his throat as he thrashes wildly, “Paradise! Para…Paradise!”

Another sharp unforgiving object pierces his too-tight skin, and he can’t seem to remember what it is that’s wired him like this, that’s shoved him right off the precarious cliff to madness.

_Freefalling, the addict tears at his hair as cruel shadows close in over him from all directions; they hiss, ‘monster monster monster’._

_A thousand cinderblocks are hooked in his skin, drawing him towards the darkness, and what he has done barbwires through his insides; the followers have never been the one’s Louis should have been afraid of. This whole time it’s been him. Him._

“LOUIS!” he shrieks like the demon he is; voices crowd him with no intentions of leaving, forevemore.

“Flatline!” a male calls.

“…paddles…1…3…Clear!”

“Monster, monster!” Punishing hammers to his skull, “Should have been you. It should have been you, monster!”

“There we go! Got a heartbeat! Let’s stabilize ‘im before we lose him.”

“My lord! My lord, are you okay?” A faraway voice wavers as Harry blinks rapidly, returning to his sorry reality. White tile swims before his vision; he’s somehow ended up on his knees with his
hands over his ears. In Hell, the Alpha turns his head slowly to pin the nurse, dressed in more white, with the monster in his skittish stare. She’s pale, like him, but not ruined, there’s a life to her wide eyes. The bloodthirsty shit in his head almost wants to steal that life from her like everyone’s stolen from him over and over again.

Cheat—fate has cheated him. But really, Harry’s cheated himself—funny that at one point he’d clutched his pride close on an untouchable mantelpiece, now there is nothing; pride has not survived his sins.

Not one person deserves to burn more than Harry Styles.

Sickened with the demon he has become, the addict faces the tile once more and says, nearly inaudible, “I need to see him.”

“I apologise, my lord, b-but that’s not possible. Master Tomlinson is…” he blurts out the finish; it’s the same response he’s received the hundred times he’s demanded in these vast ten hours; he very well could have this place closed down. Once Louis is released…if…if…

A hoarse noise catches, pathetic and cringe-worthy, in his throat. God damn it should have been him. Not his beautiful innocent Omega. Not…Louis.

“Is he…okay?”

“My lord…I cannot…”

A desperate wildfire flares within him, and he almost wants to tear through the halls and—, “Where is he? Where is that bastard?” a familiar voice, an enraged Alpha. In his chest, his heart threatens to fail (ha, what a fucked up joke), but cruel hands fist his coat, and yanks him up to shove him onto his back so he’s forced to reveal his evil.

Dan’s flat stare is alight with the same fury in his voice as the Alpha crowds him until they’re nose-to-nose, “You sick fuck!”

“Is he okay?” It’s a broken breath that comes from some nameless place within.

“You don’t have the right to know.” Blame hardens the hatred in his stare. I know…

“Kill me. Do whatever you w-want! Just…tell me he’s okay!” A frantic unstable shout this time.

“He’s not okay!” Dan’s fierce roar is blasted at him. “He is not dead, but God damn it, he is not okay! I don’t know that he ever will be and it’s your fault!” A fist slams into his face, but he is so numb with minute relief that he doesn’t even feel it. He wishes he was awash with agony. “I knew it! I knew you’d end up killing him! You piece of shit! Jesus, how did this happen? Where did you go so wrong?” Tears trip down the older Alphas face. He wants to scream, I did it! It was me! It’s in my head! It’s ruined me! I will endure eternal suffering.

An unimaginable anguish caves in on his chest, just as he deserves. More fists to the face until his features are scrunched in pain that could never compare to the wreckage within. And the kicks? He doesn’t feel those, even as he loses his every breath, as his body screams in protest, simply sobs and rocks himself because he has nobody to comfort him. This is what he has accomplished—alienated himself, made himself the enemy. Failed attempts at saving everyone else from his inevitable collapse because he has hurt everyone and ruined it all.

Through the pain the addict notices his parents, who stand measures away and watch the catastrophic scene. All Louis’ love could never save Harry from the Devil living inside.
"Dad," he cries wetly, pathetically, into the tile, one weighty arm seeking out the last person he’s tried to be a proper somebody for. “D-D-ad, I need help! I…need help! I c-c-can’t keep doin’…this. I n-n-eed help!” I’m so sorry, I only wanted to make you proud to call me your son. I’ve failed you. I’ve failed Louis.

Another shattered bit dissolves in his toxic, chemical ridden brain when Desmond Styles looks away with an ashamed expression.

No matter the Mother’s rush forward, and Dan is pried away from him with snarls and hurt shouts.

“That’s enough, Dan! He’s just a child!” Jay.

“And he almost killed mine!”

“And if your hospitalized child finds out what you have done your child will never forgive you!” There goes another broken bit; Louis won’t be upset, Louis will be content to have him hurt the same.

Broken sounds are torn from his chest as Harry holds his mental state together by weak stitches. The monster cackles some more, satisfied with all its destruction. “Just let him kill me already!” he screams viciously above the derisive noise; sanity fading by the second. “K-Kill me! J-Just do it! I don’t deserve…I need to…” the babbling won’t quit, and God end his misery already. It’s time enough.

“Hush, love, hush! It will be okay!” Female bodies, Motherly scents, draw him up where he trembles and scores at his slimy skin even as they try to detain the punishment. Anne and Jay coo and try to make him feel like he’s not so very worthless but what bullshit. Without any care the monster in his head roars happily, overjoyed.

Without reason, trapped, desperate to escape his own skin, Harry rises jerkily, and tears for the nearest exit. Help. Harry needs help. Dad won’t help. Louis can’t help. Nobody, nothing can help this addiction. Nothing will get rid of it.

But his white, his…his…help.

“Harry!”

“Baby, stop!”

“Come back!”

“Let him go, Anne. That is not our son. He’s a lost cause.” Desmond Styles.

Such a lost cause. He’s right.

These bones in the wasteland are the leftovers of addicts the monster has worded to death. Could have been his paradise.

No, it’s not Louis who is doomed to this fate; it’s Harry’s skull that’s front and center, the newest approaching casualty. But certainly not the last.

&

Alone, curled up in Louis’ bed, the Alpha sobs into his fist, knuckles bitten raw with what it’s taken him to stay put.

To some scale the perfume that clouds the atmosphere has muted the monster enough; offered him a brief reprisal, one he will never deserve, but clutches like a lifeline.
Within these hours breathing remains a difficult task; a pain crawls on all fours over his chest, compressing his lungs. Perhaps the monster still festers in his system; perhaps the stress that’s joined it, perhaps his body’s abuse, causes an overdose of his own twisted sort.

An overdose is the very least of the dreads the world expects of him. In these silent moments, Harry foresees what will surely happen once his eyes refuse to open again.

All the lives his monster has left dirty imprints upon will be set free; Mum won’t have to look into his skittish eyes, won’t cry into Fathers’ shoulder ever again, and his Father won’t have to explain to his Council Brothers what’s become of his addict ignominy, Gemma will be relieved that her parents are free of his immense baggage. Dan will leap with joy, Jay, well, Jay might have a second of sadness, but it’ll be easily disregarded once she sees what good it’ll do for her son.

And Louis…Paradise will heal. Paradise will come out of this disaster a thousand times stronger. Paradise will be able to breathe without loneliness lurking in his lungs. Once the tragedy has left his system Paradise will take the happiness he’s dreamt of so many years. Maybe…Maybe the Omega will think of him from time to time, will shed a sad smile or single tear for the catastrophe of Harry Styles.

But…he doesn’t want maybe’s.

And he doesn’t want any of that; at the thought of those reactions he chokes on another dismal sound.

He doesn’t want the people he cares for most to rejoice once he’s left this world once and for all. God, he doesn’t want time-to-time sad smiles, he doesn’t want to be the reason for the miserable silence in the room when his name is mentioned, and God damn it, he doesn’t want to be taken from this world because the monster on his back, the devils in his head, are too much to bear.

Because that is not true; Christ, there is one certainty and it’s that Harry is not weak; over the years he’s made sure of it, he’s lived through years of cruelty, he’s restrained his followers, he’s balanced himself on the fucking ledge between sanity and insanity and he’s not fuckin’ toppling over that cliff without a proper chance.

Armor, blood, and sweat.

He’s met with madness too many times before; he’s crawled, beaten and bloody, to his own rescue, he’s saved himself so many times over and over; he’s clawed his nails bloody to free his body from coffins, and he can claw his nails bloody to free his mind of its confines too.

The damage that’s been done is irreversible, but damn it, the shattered bits of him are reparable and he’s tired of believing the shit in his head that says otherwise. Not when Louis, the only one who matters more than life itself, claimed otherwise with such fervor it seems absurd that he once thought him wrong.

All this time Louis has believed in him, even when he shouldn’t have, and Louis has done the impossible time and time again with him. If the Omega could do that, innocent Louis who hadn’t needed to be shown Institutional brutality to be stronger than any Alphas out there, then fuck, Harry has to as well.

No boundaries, no lengths.

Complicated, with blood and sweat and tears and everything he’s already fucking been through one time or another, ahead of him… Christ, it will not be for nothing this time around.

It won’t be wasted efforts; it won’t leave him with scars, with demons and monsters and shit that’s
all too real in his twisted head. Not this time.

This time it might return to him what’s been lost: himself.

-0-

“C’mon, pup. You scared or summat? Need ah floaty?” the older boy chuckles, easily staying above the surface of the dark, murky waters (he doesn’t remember the water looking so… gross, if he’s honest).

Louis swallows around the fear ballooned in his throat, and lifts his chin. “Of course not, wanker.” Really, Louis is terrified of what lies beneath the surface (because it seems worse than just water) where Harry confidently swims. See, Louis is thirteen, and when Harry was this age he could swim quite finely. Louis is thirteen, and he has to prove that he’s cool, too. Somehow, doing this, will prove that they are meant.

“Then what’s the hold up?” he asks pointedly before ducking beneath the surface. Icy terror caves in on him in these seconds alone, but then the older boy emerges once more; this time he’s further out, away from the deck, and Louis wants to ask him to come closer because he really doesn’t want to drown, but is far prideful a thirteen year old boy.

With those pretty eyes studying him curiously, Louis’ already perilously low self-esteem crushes his reason. Just like that, he tosses himself from the deck and straight towards the water. Once the icy flood overcomes him, his terror intensifies, and he remembers quite abruptly that he still cannot swim–that his feet cannot touch the ground. That Harry is not around. That this is really more than just water.

The pressure builds in his chest as the boy thrashes uselessly against the water, panicking the more he tries to break the surface, unable to see or think or–Harry Harry Harry. Save me, save me, save me.

Just like that…it happens.

A sudden lovely warmth replaces the waters icy chill; any terror melts away once Louis opens his eyes to find Harry floating in front of him; no longer a fifteen year old boy but a twenty one year old Alpha. An affectionate smile cannot be obscured by the water; his hair softly fans out, and Louis surrenders to the tide, reaching for him. He wants to touch him, to touch all the radiance that is an aura around him. To be with him, like this, warm and meant, drifting towards happiness.

“Paradise,” an urgent call that Louis disregards, because his Harry is beckoning him, arm extended, fingertips within reach, beaming with eyes that gleam with all the words he’s ever wanted to hear, ‘come on, come with me, come with me, let’s go home’. Oh how Louis yearns to.

“I will. I love you.”

But the same that frames his mouth becomes almost bittersweet, rapidly losing its luminosity, and Louis shakes his head frantically, confused and distressed once more, as the water tries to separate them. “No.”

The water is…is… As he reaches for him, to clasp his patient hand, so close to contact that the loveliest sensation, absolute serenity, caresses his skin. So close…so close…Almost…but not quite.

“Please, don’t leave me,” Louis cries into the water as Harry snatches his hand back, starts to disappear with the underwater waves. “Let me come with you!”
“Later,” the waves breathe in a voice Louis hasn’t heard before. All that’s left of Harry in the dark, murky waters is a dimming illumination. He wants to scream at the loss. “Someday later. Your time has not yet come.”

“Please! Don’t go.” Against him, the water torrents down his throat to his rapidly working lungs. He is awash in anguish, screaming with all the oxygen his flooded lungs have left, thrashing violently, begging for him to come back and take him too. But his lit up Harry has abandoned him; all there is to accompany the pain is equally as tormented calls, “Don’t lea…Paradise… Need…you.”

That’s wrong…

Louis needs him. Louis has always need him, and even now, when he’s unable to save himself the Alpha has left him.

Left him to this misery, to this endless loss, to the water forcing him deeper into the darkness, to the loud crushing calls, “Louis! Plea…”

For the first time ever Louis doesn’t think he will win.

&&

Fate has done him in this time. Louis is a heavy black cloud with nothing to see, nor feel—an emptiness of sensory information. Just the immense heaviness of all the depressive rain trapped within his body; so heavy the Omega cannot move.

Nor can his scrambled brain determine how to open his damn eyes—it’s almost like they’ve been sutured shut.

At least his ears remember how to operate under this stress; there is noise. An overload of it: the derisive buzz of machinery, excruciating clink clink clink’s of active feet nearby, hushed conversation (the words too difficult to make out at this point).

Petrified, Louis lies very still, though it’s not like he can do much else with how stagnant his body’s become. Safe within unconsciousness’ restrictions, the boy strains to listen and make sense of it all. Nope, no idea.

Where the bloody hell am I and why?

Abruptly, the Omega feels some painful beam pierce his closed eyes—pink accompanies it. Unable to stand the unknown, Louis tries and tries to open the heavy barrier that prevents vision, answers. Success—Louis is in a bright white place.

Someone hovers over him, calls out to him tenderly. Once more.

Confused, tired and exhausted though it seems he’s been asleep, Louis tries to remember how to form words. Suddenly, he clears his sore throat, and thinks he’s about to shout. All he manages is a tiny, scared whisper, “H-Haz? Where’s Haz?”

“Mr. Tomlinson, this is Dr. Rebecca Burton.”

Doctor…Louis recoils from the very word. What does this mean? Why is he here? “Can you tell me why you’re here, sweetheart?”

Panic creep up his scrubbed raw throat as Louis shakes his heavy, dizzied head a bit. A little voice in his head says of course you know.
There are two Dr. Burtons above him, both stare with such sympathy that Louis knows. Knows exactly why he is here—yet in the seconds before she tells him, the boy prays like never before: *please let it have been a nightmare, let it be something else, anything else...*

“Mr. Tomlinson,” she confirms softly above the rapid machines *beep beep beep beep* (Louis wishes it would just shut up), “You suffered a heart attack due to an overdose.”

A distressed noise materializes in the empty space as the reality rushes to the forefront of his frazzled mind.

The liquor; the sweet, eager promises, the desperation, the kerosene betrayal…” *so in love with you. I will only ever love you, paradise…”*

As the blood in his veins runs cold, solidifying, Louis shoves his face in the crinkled sheets to hide the blade-like tears that sticky his humiliated-heated face.

“I understand this is a lot to take in right now. So I shall leave you to be with your family. In the meantime I advise that you do not stress your heart, Mr. Tomlinson. You’re not out of the woods quite yet. My team and I shall be checking in by the hour. Welcome back, my lord.”

As she walks away, others approach where he’s pathetically tried to hide in the pillows.


But he’s *not.* Physically? Maybe. He’d take every bone in his body crushed over this emotional havoc. All the agony, the tortured cries, the terror, unable to move, muscles paralyzed as his heart crashed into his ribs, then the blackout, the swim with his white-light Harry…

*Death?*

“Oh…God…” Louis cries raggedly; tears stream down his blanched face to voice the hideous despair of betrayal. All this time…*wasted* on an addict with one care: *his fix.* All his efforts to show him better, to love him right, *bullshit.*

Because oh God Louis loved him, *still loves him.*

All a warped illusion. So long ago Harry Styles was ripped in a direction Louis could never follow, *they never stood a chance.* They’ve been lost in translation.

Sickness rattles his bones, darkens his core. Venerably, the boy tries to breathe evenly, but the heart monitors gone feral. Which doesn’t matter—despair has taken form within him, soulless and repulsive, claiming his lungs like the water in that illusion.

All his screams come out mute so Louis closes’ his mouth, locks his jaw, and suffers in silence. He isn’t, and never has been, innocent in all this; he’s know this, refused to accept it, and this is the least he deserves.

In his chest the empty fissure is depthless, worse than any loneliness—maybe it wasn’t a heart attack, more like a cokeheads claw had plunged right through him to snatch his heart.

He is so ugly to have loved an addict more than he loves *himself.*

An addict who will surely delight in Louis’ surrender, because he is *tired,* his *brain is ash from the merciless fire they set to it.*

Any optimism towards the future the little boy in him hadn’t stopped aiming for is shattered.
“Papa,” Louis cries when his body has become accustomed to what has taken home upon his empty chest, unable to face the only man who has ever loved him right. “Papa, I need...I need t-t-to stop this. I n-n-need to end it. I’m s-s-sorry I didn’t listen. I w-w-will now. I k-know what I have to do n-now.”

Somehow he ends up in his Father’s arms like when he was only a pup, sobbing into his shoulder over Harry Styles’ endless heartbreak. This time Dan doesn’t assure him the Alpha will come around; this time it’s devastatingly silent.

And if there were any shards of hope caught in his soul, the silence sweeps them away once and for all.

&&

Sinister shouts startle sleep—in a disoriented rush Louis jerks upright, and the clip attached to his index is yanked free all the same. A strident beeeeeeep rises above the uproar, and ricochets painfully on the walls of the hospital room.

Without cause, the entrance bursts open, and Louis recoils, terrified in the darkness lit only by the surrounding monitors. “Paradise,” a voice his Omega knows all too well rises above all else as the shadow stumbles to a wavering stance.

Louis blinks slowly, doesn’t have to see to know who it is; only one person calls him that.

More bodies pile in; one bulky frame slams the addict into the wall. “Get away from him!”

Paralyzed, he watches through stingy eyes as Harry wrestles his Father, snarls and animalistic noise mark the struggle until the fluorescent lights overhead spear his eyes.

“Enough!” Des roars, tearing the two apart, which earns relieved wheezes from their audience. “You are frightening the poor boy! He is in no condition to deal with this bullshit!” He has never heard Des Styles swear, and seems neither have the others as both cease any movement. “Neither of you deserve to see him, behaving like rabid animals! You are not a pup, Dan. I know it is difficult but have some control! Harry, you have no right to be here. You are not—,”

“Stop,” Louis interrupts shakily because Harry doesn’t need to hear Des tell him he is unwanted. The vindictive side of him wants to say so himself. “Please, j-just stop.”

When it’s soundless, aside from the heart monitor, all three Alphas look at him–Des so sorry it makes his tummy turn, Dan so expectant it’s a raw score to all his wounds, and…and Harry, Harry looks ruined. As ruined as Louis feels, visibly burning in his minds everlasting hell.

“I…I wish to be alone.” Deep breath. “With Harry.”

“What?” Dan is first to erupt. “Absolutely not! I forbid it!”

Louis blinks, unfazed. “I’m an adult, Papa. I need to handle this on my own. Please, leave us.”

When the older Alpha appears to have no intentions of doing so his Mother moves forward, wraps her hand around his arm and whispers in that no nonsense voice, “He’s right, Dan. Let him do this.” His Father’s harsh breath is taken as surrender as his Mum tows him to the exit. “Do the right thing, bud,” are his last words before he’s out. Des is next, pausing to look back him with those accepting eyes, “There will be no bad blood between us, son. I understand.” With one last heartrending look for his son Dan smiles weakly, “Whenever you need us we are directly outside.”
This is it…

What must happen is approaching so quickly and all Louis can do is nod as tears threaten his vision. Once the door is shut with an ominous click, the boy swallows three times to alleviate the ache in his throat, takes a moment to reattach the clamp to his finger so there aren’t any more interruptions and the noise isn’t so unbearable, then looks down at his damp, now knotted hands.

“Paradise,” another anxious breath, nearly inaudible between them.

“Shut up,” Louis says, proud that his voice doesn’t quiver. “I don’t want to hear you.”

All that pursues is culpable silence—the tears are impossible to stem as they ooze past the corners of his eyes. “You hurt me,” he tells him though he doesn’t know saying so will hurt him. Doesn’t know that his hurt ever truly has. “Y-You broke me!”

With these ruined eyes the Alpha has cursed him to Louis looks up, finding him braced on the wall; sickly pale with the dark shadows underneath his haunted stare profound and there to stay. “I…I terminated my share of the lease to the house,” is what follows his moment outburst.

A sharp breath echoes through the room as Harry stares at him, seemingly staggered. “I’m leaving you. And this time, Harry, I’m not comin’ back.”

“Ple–,”

Louis shakes his head, then, between clenched teeth, “Don’t you dare ask me to stay! Not after… Not after what you’ve done to me! I will never forgive you! Jesus…I will never…let you break me again.”

A hoarse sound feeds his decision. “You never cared about me. I tried to fool myself into believing otherwise, I d-d-did, Harry. Because it’s all I’ve ever dreamt of since I was old enough to dream! Of us, in love, happy and endless. D-Did you know, H? I loved you since I was a pup! And I never stopped!” his voice escalates to a demented shrill as his arms come around his belly protectively. “Yeah, you must’ve, ‘cause you’ve been taking advantage of my love for so long. I was stupid! And you are an addict! You’re a selfish, sick person. S-So I’m granting your wish. I’m finally leaving you a-alone! Isn’t that what you wanted, Harry? Isn’t it?”

“No…Louis, I–,” his voice holds all the echoes of his madness.

“Shut up!” he cries viciously as his heart crashes into his ribcage. “I don’t give a fuck about you or your sorry excuses anymore! All these lies and false promises! You liar! You must get off on lying to benefit yourself. I deserve better, so fuck you! Fuck. You.”

“Why? Why couldn’t you love me more?” the boy asks on a crippled breath. “How dare you try to ruin me. How dare I try to let you! I can’t even blame you, y’know. I cause…because I’ve known what you’ve become. You’ve warned me. I knew. I was selfish to try and hold onto you. Well, jokes on me, there was never anything to hold onto. Was there, H? Just this…this toxic co-dependency. I really thought I couldn’t live without you! But I can, because you can live without anything but your fix! Right, Harry?” Where there isn’t an answer Louis asks again, “Right?”

“I-I-I can fix this, I s-s-wear I just–,”

“Need time?” Louis chuckles bitterly, screwing his traitor eyes shut and making it a point not to fall apart any more than he already has. “Wouldn’t be the first time I heard that one. You know…I didn’t ask to be alone with you to solely make you feel like a piece of hopeless shit. Really, I didn’t. I’m doing this to end it. End this friendship love infestation we’ve been pretending worked
for us.” I misplace things, sorry that I lost you.

“Please…stop…” it’s almost like he’s in tears, but when Louis looks up, he’s clutching his cokehead in his hands, like that’s what bothers him most right now. Typical.

“Nope,” Louis says on a little laugh. “I trusted you. That was all we had left! That fucking trust! You ruined it like you ruin everything. And I ruined it too; reckon we have shit in common these days? I want to say you’ll be dead to me, but I’d be lying. And that’s the one thing we don’t have in common. So here it is: you are going to haunt me for the rest of my life. I am goin’ to wake up screaming because I’ll think my heart is seconds from stopping. I am going to scream because I’ll think yours already has. I’ll remember everything we’ve shared, and everything we never will. I will have hunger pains for that feeling you showed me, that high, but it’ll only disgust me because all I will hear is the shit you’ve spat at me for years, all I will see is you, wasting away and weak, all I will know is that it ruined you worse than any traumatic event you went through! And I can’t stand you for maiming me like this! I almost hate you.”

As the Alpha falls to his knees, the thud disturbs him, though it’s worthless with Harry suspended in dismal sobs; he’s such a proper actor, really knows how to act like he’s dying the same way Louis did just hours ago. Luckily for him, his hearts already in tattered bits, lost, so it’s not nearly such a feat.

“I want you to leave now,” he says softly as he scrubs at his strained eyes.

“P-Please,” the addict breathes around busted sounds. “D-D-Don’t d-d-d-do this to me, paradise. Not you, too. I-I-I can’t d-d-d-do it without you!”

“I deserve better,” Louis whispers, dismayed by how broken he really sounds. “You already chose what’s more important. God, Harry, if you care about me even a bit just leave me alone!”

“You mean m-more! You’ve always meant more, Louis!” His heart no longer believes it.

“You realized too late,” the Omega whispers, scalding tears distorting his sight. “I’m so tired of…Nobody was right, Harry. You are not a lost cause. I truly believe this. I always will. But I don’t know that you can ever bring yourself to do what is necessary. It’s a pity, really. There is no place for me with you, Harry. This is not how I will live. I’m not sorry for finally thinking about me! I won’t let you hurt me anymore, I won’t let you...continue to do this to me. You were right about one thing, though, burnt out flames are really not meant to be re-ignited. My heart, barely beating and dead just hours ago, is my own! I don’t love you, because you aren’t…you aren’t who I fell for. You probably never will be again. Really, take care of yourself. Don’t look for me, ‘cause if there is one last pinky promise I’m willing to make it’s that I do not want to be found. Not by you.”

“Louis…Louis…no…Louis, I need you! D-Don’t do this to me! I-m g-g-ona change! I’m g-g-onna make it bettah! My skin just don’t fit right now! They’re try-tryin’ to get out! But if you just…I need you. I…” his voice carries the eerie, groundless logic of insanity.

Louis swallows a sob to breathe, musters his resolve, “It ended long ago, so please just...let me go. Goodbye, Harry.” He screams violently with all his hurt and horror before Harry can think to stop him. With wild, horrified eyes the Alpha recoils, scuttling like an animal abused too many times, to the other side of the room, curling up in the corner. As people swarm the room Harry rocks back and forth, babbling around his tears.

“What did he do?” Dan demands, and Louis shakes his head at his clueless Father. “It was me. Don’t hurt him anymore, Papa. Don’t...Just get him away from me.”
As the mad Alpha’s Father storms into the room close behind, the massacre in his stare fades when he takes in the ending scene, catches sight of his only son in the corner, talking mindlessly. “Oh, son…What have you done?” his voice is aghast with an agony only a Father could feel.

“I’m so sorry,” Louis snivels into the sheets, to Des because he’s always been a second Father to him, was meant to be his Dad too once upon a time. “I had to…I had to…”

A crushed expression overcomes his features, but his voice is still, “You take care of yourself always, kiddo. You never hesitate to do what’s best for you. You’re a son to me as well as that one is. And he…It will be alright. I’ll…I’ll remove him.”

As the Omega just barely contains his imminent meltdown Des starts cautiously towards the seemingly small man who shakes uncontrollably. Those beautiful mossy coloured eyes look directly at him, straight into his bleeding soul. “Paradise, do-don’t leave me! P-Please, you’re all I have left. D-Don’t let them take me away! Don’t let it w-w-win! Don’t…”

Louis whimpered and scrambles to stop Des, to stop hurting him, but his Father holds him fast and tucks him close. “It’s okay. Let it happen. It’s for the best.” It doesn’t feel okay, it isn’t okay. It will never be…okay.

He thrashes against his own Father to beg Des, “Take care of him. Don’t let him continue like this! D-D-on’t hurt him anymore! He’s hurt enough! Please. Help him be better!” Because I wasn’t enough to make a difference. Loving him is too hard, I’m sorry.

Des looks back with distracted eyes. “Louis, I will do my best to make sure my son comes back. But he has to help himself, and we all know it by now.”

Louis just crumbles, terrified that Harry won’t ever be able to do that, no matter the loss. As to stay in bed and not curl around the Alpha, comfort him, Louis curls into a tiny ball, clamps his hands over his ears, and cries loudly over the sounds of Harry.

“This is the way, this is what’s best,” Louis chants inwardly, and with that awareness it’s almost like he doesn’t hear the tormented cries and the sounds of Harry’s resistance and the broken “paradise please,” mantra.

Almost. Louis hears it all; and wonders, nauseous and sweaty, how many times a heart can break before it’s irreparable.

(He wishes Harry really had just ripped the bloody organ from his chest and taken it with him).

&&

The vacant bathroom is sheltered by filth—a place no sane person wants to be caught dead occupying. Luckily, Harry is fucking filthy too; so much so that it coats his insides, particles that clot his blood and mutates him into whatever he is now.

The faulty fluorescent lights overhead flicker in and his out like his clarity.

Alone, alone, alone.

Gone, so very…gone.

Louis is gone. Well fucking fine because Harry wants to be gone with him. End his own pathetic pain as Louis did with every verbal blade; because Harry is—was—his pain. But no more.

Aside from his Alpha’s fury, he is…relieved. In twisted relief because no matter the pain that
comes with resistance of mind, it will never amount to the anguish he will endure when he walks through the door of their house to find its jarringly vacant, like this dingy bathroom. Meant to jumpstart his journey to better he’s sure.

With another pained noise Harry bends forward, finds his position, and allows his body what it craves so desperately. As he continues the lines, the euphoria that settles in his veins doesn’t do it this time. It’s not enough.

Its five lines down until his last snort.

As he lowers his deadweight to the grimy tile once more Harry smiles.

Smiles like he’s won something, because he must’ve: nothing could possibly be wrong when what drifts in his blood says all is right in the world. When he gets home to his paradise, it will be an unimaginable rush of endorphins to make any and all of his pain better, to join the dopamine charge.

He feels like dancing. He feels human.

All around him Harry can see it; see a bundle of blankets in that warm safe-bed, and all the blessed privacy of those princess canopies. He can see tempest coloured eyes, round and naïve, peeking from a little slit in the push, scented blankets.

All around him Harry can hear it; apologies, promises, declarations of love. The rustle of the sheets as he drapes over his compact body, and finds comfort in the steady drum of his hummingbird heart, and his even soft, sleepy breaths.

All around him Harry can taste it; salty tears, and a delicious mouth to say the words he needs to hear. Wine because that’s Louis’ favored. Breezy strawberries on his silky skin to soothe the fire in his nose.

All around him Harry can feel it; his endless love. A soft silky silhouette underneath his hands and mouth and tongue. One to worship and praise with touch, to breath confessions into.

And he needs it so badly to be reality; needs to return him to paradise.

All he can think to do in this moment is hurry home home home.

There is such a gravity to the sudden demand railing through his coked up brain, one he does not quite understand, but obeys.

In an abrupt frenzy, the Alpha disposes of the evidence, wipes the residue from his nose, and tears through the building to the lot where his lone car remains.

It’s no surprise that it’s been keyed, words etched into the black paint, along with the scratch that’s been there ages. It’s a momentary realization that hardly matters because he’s screeching out of the sketchy complex like it’s a high-speed chase. It is in a way just that.

There is something in his head, not like the other voices, not his Alpha or the monster (both have been silenced) just something raising hell to take him home.

In minutes the drive is over (which ain’t possible but Harry lets his mind believe what it must to stay away from the panic zone).

Hastily, Harry staggers into the dimly lit house.
Nothing has been altered, really. The entry room is just the same–boxes everywhere, a dearth of personality. Except its arctic, like the ventilation issue has been resolved and someone’s set the temperature to below negatives.

Louis does not enjoy the cold so that doesn’t make much sense. Nothing adds up.

“Paradise,” he calls, all the while tossing his keys onto a nearby box as an eerie sense of dread becomes a boulder upon his chest. It’s empty; there is nothing here but inanimate objects and his body.

Where…are they? Confusion strikes him. There are no shadows attempting to close in on him. The followers are…not here (yet?).

“See? Nobody. Nothing. They don’t exist if you don’t let ‘em, Hazza.” Louis’ words rocket through his head as Harry swallows, and decides it’s too soon to think so because they could return any second now. Perhaps they got lost on the way.

Figuring Louis must be in his room, as it’s the only explanation (Louis tends to take all the warmth with him) he creeps down the halls, unable to stand any loud, sudden noise because paranoia unlike any other is heavy on his shoulders, breathing down his neck.

Not the paranoia that he is being followed. The paranoia that is he alone.

He raps on Louis’ door quietly. “Lou? Why’s it so quiet, love?”

There isn’t an answer. As his heart constricts Harry throws the barrier open. It’s…empty. It’s as it’s always been: messy, with clothes scattered on the floorboards, objects in disarray. Worse, it’s cold.

It’s cold.

What his mind has blocked and withheld from him fires through his addled brain. As the blood drains from his face the scenes flash behind his eyes; the overdose, Louis, lifeless and silence in a puddle of his own vomit, foaming at the mouth, the hospital, Dan and Des, Louis…alive and cruel and…and…

Louis has left him. Harry ruined them.

“Isn’t this what you always wanted, mate?” a baleful voice laughs madly. “Just you and I.”

Louis isn’t…coming back. This isn’t their home; it’s his because Louis has…given up on him. He has nothing.

“You have me, mate. Ah, we’ll have so much fun wi’out the little devil, now, won’t we?”

“No,” he disagrees sharply to nobody at all. “No. No. He promised. He…He…said forever.”

Apparently Harry isn’t the only one able to break promises.

“Forever exists, that’s us. You’re not ruined, Haz. You’re broken. We’re going to fix that. Me and You. I’m here to stay.”

“Paradise,” Harry breathes, and stumbles into the room. Cold. It’s never been so frozen over. That’s because it was Louis’ and like he has abandoned them, he’s abandoned his room, his stuff. Tremors conquer his muscles, and his damp palms grope the canopy until he’s sought out the blankets, curled up in their caresses, breathing the scent caught in the material.
So lovely it crushes his lungs, leaves him to sob like the pathetic creature he’s been reduced to. Slave to a drug. A drug that’s stolen everything he’s ever had. Mutated him into a monster bound by the chains of insanity.

Nausea fists his stomach, and he gags, choking on frantic words, “I need help. I need him. I need him!”

“You jus’ need another line, mate,” the monster hisses, pleased with all he’s done.

“I need help,” he shouts into the blankets, resisting the urge to shove some torture device up his nose and force the shit feeding on his brain out. “I don’t need you! I don’t.”

“You need me. You’re nothing without. A madman!”

Vengeance flares in his chest as Harry scrambles to a stance, and blindly makes it to his bedroom, mentally blocking the furious shrieks out to rip the floorboard up and out with his hands (he’s sure his nails break), snatches the stash, and carries the shit into the bathroom. It’s heavy, damn heavy, but that’s all in his fucking head, like he can’t handle a few stone; that’s the monster tryin’ to stop him.

No. He needs…to do this first.

In a blind rage Harry tears the baggies open and it’s damned snowy everywhere, particles in the air, teasing his nose as he pours and pours and pours; a mounds forming in the toilet, milky malevolence. As the veins pop in his arms and his neck, the Alpha does stop until spilling the lasts into the tub and running the water. Plastic dime bags are scattered all about the tile.

Through shudders and pants, on his knees, Harry fumbles for the flusher, and listens to the toilet thunder and gurgle around the monster’s incensed shrieks. All the white pressure…exterminated. For now.

“What have you done?” it’s horrified, alarmed. It makes him laugh gruffly.

As he rests his dizzied head on his arms, his blurry vision stares blankly at the doorway where a little washed out outline leans on the frame. “Don’t listen to it.” the only voice he enjoys listening to coos softly. “Don’t give up. I’m still here. I still think forever exists, just prove it to me.”

“I dunno how…” he huffs weakly as the damn tears burn his chilled face. “I dunno how, paradise.”

“Help yourself. Don’t say you don’t know how…you’re doin’ it right now and you can do it again and again and again until you’re better.”

As his mouth pulls up into a feeble smile, a guttural sound, somewhere between a laugh and a sob, strangles him. With a troubled look, his minds Louis takes a forewarning step away, and Harry lunges for him, “No. No, please, don’t leave me again!”

“I won’t! I’m always here! But right now this is all in your head. You’re losing it. I’m not real. You are. Somewhere out there I’m real, but before I’m real for you, you need to help yourself get better.”

Not real? He’s right… “Yes, ‘cause you put me here.”

Oh, he’s lost it this time–how many times will he have to haul his sorry arse back to sanity?

Exhausted, Harry mumbles, resting his head on the tile now, though his eyes won’t stray form the
sideways delusion in the doorway. Lovely, Louis is all dull and dejected with his hands on his hips, looking down his nose at him. Definitely like Louis. “I can’t do it anymore. I can’t, paradise. Not without you. I don’t want us to be enemies. You’re all I had, Lou. I’ve slipped too far from the person I was meant to be. ‘M sorry.”

Blessedly the hallucination drifts over to him, kneels and extends a shy hand. “C’mon, get up.”

“Baby, why’d you have to leave me?” he asks desperately. “I can’t even b-breathe! I’m lost without you. I know you’re not comin’ home, but I just…This can’t be happening to me…”

Still he holds onto all he has left of him, and takes the hand he’s being offered. It’s icy, feels like the air, but it’s there, he can see it, and he stands on unsteady feet, holding his weight through sheer will.

Attached to him Harry lets Louis take him below, and curls into his plush, sound bed. “Sleep. This hurt will heal with you, yeah?”

Terrified, Harry shakes his head, jerking upright. “You’ll leave.”

Another sad smile as his hand smooths back his floppy, damp waves. “Well I sure hope I will…You can’t be like this forever. Gotta start on that road to recovery, d’you see it, Haz?”

On instinct, Harry follows his stare to the pitch black, but abruptly…it’s not dark; it’s lit up like a firestorm and memories film through, blurry and faraway. In this one the misfortunes of life haven’t touched them still, and Louis hasn’t lost the roundness to his features, all flushed and adorable. Little Louis shrieks as little Harry runs down that hill in the back of his parents’ manor, Louis draped over his back.

As they flicker on and on and on Harry watches eagerly; watches their most precious moments play over and over and over until it’s still, and Louis breathes, “now look at this…”

Captivated, the Alpha doesn’t dare shift his stare, and then it’s not even ten seconds that another foreign scene comes to life.

Any air is stolen from him. This time it almost looks present, but not quite…It’s a row, that much is apparent as Louis is shrieking in his face, with that memorable impassive, sassy expression on his sunny face (the one he wears when he tries to seem like he’s not upset, but he’s really livid).

It’s not what matters—no, Louis…Louis…very obviously carrying. His tummy is round, and it’s probably not very far on but he knows that glow. When he tears his eyes over to himself, there is someone in his eyes. There is a person; a person who’s crystal clear eyes express endless amusement, and such fond. Clear for the first time in…ever.

It’s over too soon. “I’m willing to reckon that’s your pup in my tummy.”

A ragged breath falls free from his tongue. “Get better, Haz. Before it’s too late, and we never have a moment like that. Help yourself, Haz…”

“How?”

More flashes: treatment centers, his Father, a room where someone listens to him, tears and sobs, breakdowns and abstemious time. “D’you see it, Haz?”

Overwhelmed, he nods slowly. “Yes.” He almost looks at him, but closes his eyes instead, and whispers, swallowed whole by such a wide river of relief. “I see the way out.” Time is flying by, moving so fast, I have to make it count, because I won’t be able to get it back once it’s run out.
“And?” Somehow Louis’ voice makes everything else seem so small. This mountain he’s been climbing for years now simply seems a grain of sand. “And I’m gonna take it.” It’s time to be a man, and stop living for yesterday. I have to do this. For us. For me. For you. I’ve been worrying about all the wrong things…but no more, never again.


Without cause, darkness swallows him whole; it’s the best sleep he’s had in ten years.

&&

“Tea is quite reliable,” Louis mumbles defensively, then frowns when the realization settles in: inside feels no warmer than when he started this spiritual tea binge last night. Even fifty cups down the chill that’s conquered his very core remains unaffected, his marrow victim to it, not an ever icy slush. Well, at the very least he’s proper drunk on the herbals by now—perhaps a bit too proud to be the loser who’s accomplished such a task.

“Tea is simply tea, love,” Jay says as she flutters down the hall. Though his Mother’s tone is nonchalant, there’s a concern in her identical stare that scolds him (it’s an out—he doesn’t have the energy to talk much these days, and it seems his very voice worries his family; which must mean it’s best that he doesn’t talk at all).

Really, somewhere within these three months of separation the Omega has sunk to the lowest of any possible lows. Such is his life now: boredom, heartache, and misery.

Even with these additional Council course (online so he doesn’t have to show his face to anyone, especially not…) Louis has too much time on his hands. Too much time to think, to think and think until he’s curled up in the corner of his wardrobe, unable to breathe around the incessant anxiety attacks and meltdowns.

“Impossible. I am drunk on tea therefore tea must be more than tea. Someone has spiked my tea.” Which must make sense (and not sound entirely ridiculous as Louis’ made his own tea every time) to someone else…surely Harry would think the same.

At the unbidden notion Louis’ tea-tummy clenches up, and his vision blurs with the threat of tears, spacey and lost. Oh, no…

There are three rules that help Louis survive his every miserable day: avoid his memory, avoid his name, and avoid all and any thoughts of him. Damn it, the boy has broken them, and does so habitually these days.

As the raw hole in his chest rips apart for the seventh time today, he wants to evaporate in midair; it’s too much. It’s always too much these days. A sharp breath is stolen from his frantic airways, but Louis cannot fall apart in front of anyone; that would ruin his parents’ only night of freedom (he’s ruined their days far too many times already. Worry lurks in their all-too-knowing stares every second of Louis’ every wretched day. And to be honest it only makes him feel that much more pathetic. What he needs is just a few hours without someone breathing down his neck and asking, “you alright?” without the repetitive lie, “yeah, fine,” and the plastered smiles. He just… needs to mourn in privacy, to sob until his voice is raw and cannot form anymore sounds.)

Dressed in lovely blood red silk, Jay stops beside where he sits at the kitchen island. When the boy only holds very still (like she hasn’t been aware of his soul-sucking presence thirty minutes now) she cups his face in kind hands so he’s forced to face her.

Louis tries to smile, really he does, but it’s feeble, not felt or believed. Here comes the lie. “'M
really fine, Mum. Grown man, yeah? Go, enjoy your night.” This charity event has been planned for months now; the girls stayed the night with their friends, the pups with the sitters so most the staff is cleared of the manor.

To his rescue, Dan, in a tux that suits him quite well, stumbles into the kitchen, “Love, if we want to be prompt we need to leave now.”

With an excited smile she kisses his forehead. “Get some rest, yeah?”

Louis pulls yet another sorry excuse for a smile, but nods and waves her away. As she hurries to put on her shoes, Dan leans on the counter. “You should invite some of the lads over, or go out, Lou. You haven’t left the house in nearly three months.” Of course they’ve noticed. It’s been far too difficult to pull his sorry bum out of bed and be a human, but at least he’s managed that for them. Any more is too much at this point. “Maybe some other time. I just…I…” I miss him.

Even now everyone acts like they expect him to have fallen out of love the instant Harry fucked up. That’s such a fantasy, especially when Harry Styles owns more of his heart than even he does.

A troubled look clouds his Father’s features. “’M worried. You’re not you lately. I just think it’ll do you some good to remember there’s more outside of him.” Not at all. You don’t understand. Nothing means more to me than him. It’ll only remind me I’ve lost everything.

With a heavy sigh Louis shakes his head. “No, Papa. Honest. I’ll be okay. I just need…time” Just like Harry–funny that he only now understands just how difficult withdrawal is. In these ten years his body has been conditioned to buzz only under the sheer force of Harry’s presence, and his heart to soar to otherwise untouchable heights at his mere touch, his mind fulfilled by his every deep drawl. Without the comfort, the satisfaction, Louis feels like his world is pose-apocalyptic, and he’s scavenging to find decent leftovers. All his pieces are battered and bruised and…

“All set!” Jay appears, teeming with anticipation so animated Louis smiles, almost feels it, but it’s a split second that fades and leaves him wilted as ever, waving them off. “Shoo! Leave me to my blessed tea!”

With farewell “sweet dreams” and “I love you”’s the two all but throw themselves at the getaway; at least they have an escape route.

Alone again the Omega takes some deep, quelling breaths, and makes quick work on the kettle; as he waits Louis wonders how someone can make him so very sad, but still he wants them back more than he wants any happiness the future can otherwise offer. Because he doesn’t know that he can be as happy with anyone else…

“Love sucks,” the boy mutters as he scrubs any moisture from his eyes. “Tea is so much bett’ah anyway. Tea won’t snort up. Tea will love me. And I will love tea.” Sad.

Knives stab him in the sides at his own words; but before he can sulk in the fresh wounds the kettle whistles. Once he’s not jumping out of his skin Louis puts his all into crafting the perfect cuppa.

Once it’s just how he likes it, Louis carries it carefully to the nearest sitting room, and sits criss-cross with his back to the leather sofa. As the steam wafts over his face, he allows himself a tiny smile before the vibrations of his phone wipe it clean off his features.

So hopeful, his heart stumbles horrifically in his chest, but when he fishes it from his pocket all is crushed.

Oh, just Liam. Right—even if the Alpha wanted to contact him, it’s impossible; his number was
changed two weeks after his release from the hospital. After all Harry’s calls and texts and voicemails hadn’t quit tempting his heart, mocking him.

Even as Louis thinks this…he doesn’t let his phone fall back to the plush carpet. Rather his damp palm clutches it with more life than he’s had these endless three months. Without his permission, his trembling fingers dial the digits he’s memorized over the years.

It only rings twice. “‘Ello?” Sleep-addled, raspy and perfect. With his voice in his ear, Louis’ entire body trembles under the pressure of his loneliness.

Louis can only inhale sharply; unable to form words as his throat is tense. I miss you. Please, come home. “Louis? Paradise, ‘s that you?” More alert. Oh, God, the sound of his name paired with that lovely tenor causes useless tears to spill down his cheeks. “I-I miss you.” Do you still care? Do you remember me?

There’s an ominous quiet, then, emotional and frantic like he knows Louis is seconds from ending the call, “Come back. Please, I…”M so lost without you, paradise.”

“I’m so sorry,” he whispers, and disconnects.

Within the hour his number is changed again; his life is changed, and God he wishes this part was over already.

As the regret settles in, the Omega curls up, and hopes like never before that it’s true. That stupid saying he’d always mocked:

If you love something, let it go. If it returns, it’s yours; if it doesn’t, it wasn’t.
If you love someone, set them free. If they come back they’re yours; if they don’t they never were.

&&

Meanwhile, across London, Harry’s breaths are broken. Withdrawal pains. Tonight the monsters furious roars in his head ease his torment. Surely this means it’s a minute victory, if only for tonight.

Tremors wreck through him. In a cold sweat Harry just goes with it.

Unfocused, his vacant stare seems attached to the window across the room, but it’s not. The dull moonlight only taunts him.

To escape his body’s barbwire beating, its demands for what he cannot give it anymore, Harry lets his lids drift closed, obstructs reality, and finds comfort in his memory.

With a roguish grin Harry creeps into the bass shaken room; it’s no surprise that it’s nearly pitch black. For some odd reason Louis prefers the lights out during his little performances–works best for Harry when he does stuff like this.

Impatiently, the seventeen year old waits until his vision adjusts to the drastic change just as another song starts up–some rubbish he can’t name, but recognises as mainstream which does surprise him; usually Louis doesn’t listen to pop, more an alternative listener. These days Louis’ tastes are under constant construction; just yesterday the boy claimed he would never eat meat again, only veggies and carbs. This morning he received a text asking “y is ham so good?”

So based on that Harry decides he’s a lousy vegetarian.

Oh, well.
It hardly matters when Louis begins to move to the music—it’s exuberant at first, entertaining to watch (a laugh even). The lyrics come into play and his motions slow to an erotic rhythm. For all the self-control in the world Harry is still a hormonal teenage Alpha, extremely into this just up to peak Omega.

It’s no secret Louis has a beautiful body; it’s a masterpiece, makes him particularly desire to all those blockhead Alphas that don’t know the true appeal of his massive personality.

No sane Alpha is immune to his looks; this is how Harry determines he is still sane because even knowing Louis is strictly off limits to him, he can’t help but be attracted. He can’t help but notice how fuckable Louis has become.

As to shake such thoughts, Harry prowls forward, places his palms on Louis’ supple hips and whispers with his mouth pressed to the delicious curve of his ear, “Boo.”

Obviously he’s startled him, if his gasp is any indication, but his movements don’t falter even a bit. Put off, Harry growls petulantly, “You’re supposed to scream or feed my desire for terror.”

“Psycho. You don’t scare me,” the boy says in an unimpressed voice, carrying on with his tease. Only now does Harry realise his body is very very bare in a simple white T-Shirt (that looks familiar) that reaches the tops of his creamy thighs. Fuck–even though it jumbles his luscious curves his Alpha growls in approval, pleased to see him in his clothes.

This really shouldn’t be his reaction. A normal best mate wouldn’t even notice the significance in Louis wearing his clothes. A normal best mate wouldn’t care. A normal best mate wouldn’t burn inside at the mere thought.

Damn it this isn’t an ordinary friendship—it’s never been. Because not only does Harry think Louis belongs strictly to him, his Omega to possess and protect and please, but Louis seems to think Harry is his, too. Except they have never crossed those untouchable lines. Louis is not his to keep, for two years at a time Harry doesn’t have him, and Louis is more than able to find an Alpha able to care for him through each extensive separation.

The thought of Louis finding another Alpha to care for him causes his veins to burn with furious venom.

But that’s not fair to the Omega in quest of an Alpha to love, and love him in return. See, Louis isn’t silence about his infatuation with the mere idea of finding a soul-worthy love.

And it’s never killed him more to know he deserves that; he deserves whatever his divine soul desires. Until he finds what he is in search of...Harry doesn’t mind playing pretend. It’ll break his heart later, but he doesn’t think much of a future for himself. Can’t harbor such hopes in the Institution. If only in friendship terms Louis is his.

In need of the reassurance Harry snakes an arm around his waist, hooks his chin on his shoulder, and follows his movements. He’s painfully aware of how close he is to grinding his hard on into his luscious arse—it’s too difficult to keep that from happening with Louis moving like this, like he’s trying to make it happen.

All the discipline he’s been forced to exercise in Institution blessedly saves him this time. It’s the third song down that Harry gives up, and tosses himself at the bed, on his stomach to hide the tent in his trousers. Except now his nose is buried in the sheets, all innocent strawberry fields along the ocean. There really is no winning.

As the music cuts off suddenly there are muted footfalls before a weight settles on his back–Louis
is straddling him. “Mmmph,” he protests—his back isn’t the best (he’s not quite sure how he fucked it up, but he thinks it was that one time he can’t really set aside from the rest), which he’s made clear and Louis very well knows (the little shit).

“You callin’ me fat?” Louis demands, an obvious pout in his voice as Harry smiles slowly.

“You are thickly boned,” he teases, earning himself a pillow over the head. When it’s becoming difficult to breath Harry reaches up to snatch it, but there’s a heavy sigh and the pillow is tossed elsewhere. Grateful for the air, he just breathes until the Omega asks impatiently, “Why are you here? Didn’t I tell you to fuck off?”

“I just can’t stay away,” he says, amused. “You’re irresistible. I’m a moth to your exquisite flame.” He means it as banter, but there’s a depth to the words like none other.

“Sure, Shakespeare,” the boy mumbles. The soft chime to his reedy voice makes his hips twitch.

“I have some news, actually,” Harry claims once the silence becomes unbearable—these days the silence is his enemy, it provides his constant, cruel thoughts the outlet they need to be heard and noted.

“Mmm,” Louis prompts, rolling onto the small, compact mattress beside him. The proximity hums in his blood, and he can’t help but stare as Louis worms into the same position, on his belly with his elbows propped on the mattress and his pretty face in his hands. He’s awe-inspiring. Just looking Harry thinks he can write poetry on the beauty in how he shifts his weight, or a book on the array of expressions one adorable boy can form, or, “’M listening.” Yeah, friends, right.

“Well,” Harry schools his expression, suppresses his smile to frown instead. At first he’d been the world’s shittiest liar. By now he’s learnt to put on quite the show. “I…Shit, Lou, I really can’t see you anymore.”

Though the Omega tries to seem impassive there’s a startled shine to his beautiful bottomless blues. For a moment they bore into his—Louis hasn’t caught onto his deceitful ways. “What?”

“Mary…She…We were in a row the other night. She’s making me choose. I…She says we’re too close. And that if our relationship is goin’ to work—,”

“Excuse me?” Louis interrupts sharply.

“We can’t be friends anymore,” he tells him, adding a touch of remorse to his voice.

“You…You’re choosing her over me?” the boy sputters as he sits up; the furious frenzy to his eyes satisfies him, though, like the dickhead he is, Harry continues, “I’m sorry.”

“Sorry? Screw that! The award for the most unfaithful Alpha in the world goes out to you, Styles. Seriously,” Louis hisses, kittenish fury bleeding out of him. Ouch. “What bullshit! She…She’s such a little slut! You honestly can’t be choosing that over me? I’m supposed to be your best mate! She is nothing compared to me! Just a dirt twat to fuck! I…I…”

Unable to help himself the Alpha bursts into nervous laughter. “Jeez, Lou! Have some trust! I was only joking.”

Louis shrieks, and cuffs him one proper which mutes his moment mirth. “You wanker! That wasn’t funny, Harry! I’m not here for your sick entertainment!” Wrong there, lovely.

As he sits up, he observes him, with his knees to his chest and his soft ocean eyes brimming with waves of tears, bottle lip wobbling.
Any amusement drifts as Harry cups his face, leaning in to breathe softly, “Hey. You know I’d never do that, don’t you? I would choose you every time. Over Britney Spears or Justin Timberlake or any of them. It’d be you every time.” We’ve been too strong for too long...

How the boy diverts his stare makes Harry’s stomach clench up, but before he can persists and make him believe the truth, Louis asks, with a shy smile that doesn’t appear real, “So she didn’t try to make you choose then?”

“Oh, no,” Harry mutters, grinning lopsidedly because honestly, what a joke (really, he laughed right in her face). “She did. ‘M quite heartbroken over our inevitable end. You have to nurse my wounds, paradise.”

“That stupid skank!” the boy erupts without any forewarning. In seconds he’s almost on fire with his anger (his ears should be steaming). On his feet, the Omega trudges into his wardrobe. “Give me her address! I am going to destroy her! Rip her to pieces! Make sure she knows who is more fucking important! Like you could ever do better than me! Fuck her! Fuck every Omega that’s ever been in your bed! When you’re in them, I’m in your fucking head! You could do better! I’m the best. You can’t do better than me!”

Horrified, the words crawl down his throat—like he knows. Like he knows how obsessive Harry is, obsessed with him emotionally, mentally, sexually, in every possible way. Of course he can’t do better, but Louis is not his, so he will have to settle for less. Alarmed, Harry simply sits there, jaw slack.

“Address, damn it, Styles!” When he appears once more he’s dressed proper in black skinnies and a Punk Rock T-shirt.

“Louis, w…”

“She needs to know her place. And who is more important! The most important!” he snaps, placing his fists on his hips and tapping his little foot.

“Paradise, that’s—,”

“I’m more important, yeah?” the boy demands with a pert, expectant expression. Too stunned stupid to speak Harry just sits there. As he stares Louis’ expression falls, but he doesn’t let it go like he usually does once he’s shown so much emotion, “I’m more i-important, aren’t I, Haz?”

“I—,” I love you more than the anything in all the universes. You’re the sole reason I breathe. You keep me sane.

He’s fucked.

Without allowing him to finish the Omega straddles his waist and attacks him, nails raking down his face and neck. It stings in the neediest ways—has he always been so needy for Harry’s approval? “I’m…more…I’m important! I…Haz, please, tell me I’m more important.” Please: one word that leaves Louis’ lips every blue moon.

As to look at him Louis rocks back a bit, and his arm holds him fast around the waist so he doesn’t topple backwards on instinct. His face is so open for him, more so than ever before, cheeks flushed, brows furrowed, desperation stark in his round eyes.

“No.” He says it because playful is what he knows best. It’s how they work. They don’t talk like this, about feelings…for each other. They haven’t since that time in the field when they proclaimed love. “I really don’t like you.”
Really his mind is reeling. Love. Is that what this irksome feeling is? Is this the feeling he thinks about every day? Of course he loves Louis! Louis is his best mate, his…other half. Louis is paradise. Louis is…his entire world. But this love doesn’t feel quite like it should, like it used to. Harry loves Niall and Grimmy and Liam and Zayn, but they are certainly not his entire world. Nor will they ever be. If it comes down to it, though he hopes it never does, he could live sanely without them. He could never live sanely without Louis—he’d surely lose his head then.

In love, that’s the palpable explanation. It terrifies him because he doesn’t see the same look in Louis’ eyes that he’s sure his own have.

What the fuck have I done?

Louis is off limits. They aren’t meant to be more than whatever it is they are. Louis is meant to be his best mate. Sure he’d been a bit smitten for a while but everyone crushes on their best friend at first, don’t they? This is…

Before he looks away heartache is written on his pretty face—the hope in his eyes dulls in the most sickening ways. The boy even tries to laugh, to do what they always do, play stupid, but he’s shoved from his stupid stupor and makes a noise of disapproval.

“No,” he says hoarsely. “Don’t hide. It’s okay…I won’t…” but Louis already dissolves in audible tears. They are daggers to his heart.

Unable to bear the thought of losing this connecting Harry clutches him to his chest, “Of course, paradise. Of course you’re more important. You’re more than important. You’re everything to me. Louis, I love you. I don’t love her.” I’m so in love with you.

Louis hiccups, shaking with the force of his tears. Louis never cries in front of anyone. In fact he gloats to everyone that he never cries. That is such a joke, Harry has found him in tears once or twice. “Y-Y-Yeah?”

“Well, uh, I love you. I think you’re the best thing in my life. Nobody could compare. Nobody, thing. You’re…you. I will never love anything or anyone more.”

When the Omega only tucks his face in the slope of his neck Harry admits, “I didn’t care. I didn’t have to think about it. Nothing to think about. I told Mary it was over the second she even implied I should drop you. Like I would or could ever do that. Like I…I could ever do that to you. The only person who’s ever been there for me no matter the bullshit. No matter how shit a best mate I am. No matter how long I leave for. The only person who’s waiting for me outside the car when I fly in from that hell and holdin’ up silly glittery signs. The only person who didn’t give up when I walked right past you like you weren’t the best thing in my life. Like I could ever make it without you!” To calm the fury this implication stirs, Harry takes a deep breath, then, “You make me feel heaven bound. When I feel like I’m losing it…when I do lose it, you keep me sane. I know…I know it’s not easy on you either. But I don’t any broken dreams, yeah? You do what you have to do to make all yours come true, got it? Do that, and I pinky promise I’m going to be someone worth stickin’ round for, and I’ll make something of myself, and I won’t ever forget the only reason I managed to get there is because of you, paradise.”

With a whispering breath the Omega holds up his pinky.

Harry just as easily binds them.
As the Alpha shoves his face in the blankets the hope that the ocean strawberry scent remains there is torn like his soul. After so many months the scent has also abandoned him—his sensible persona thinks that’s to be expected, but the cynical insane persona wishes sanity would shut the fuck up and let him wallow in his grief.

Dread curdles, sinister and hideous, in the pit of his starved stomach—day by day the remnants of him pale. Until it’s become like he was never here at all, like Louis actually left him years ago and his brain buried the scarring episode in attempts to protect itself from self-destruction.

But his mind couldn’t conjure up Louis’ touch with death—that’s catastrophic. If security is the aim, then it wasn’t a delusion.

Even now to hold one more mental shield at war with the monsters decay Harry avoids that room at all costs; can’t bear the reminder of all he’s lost.

There are three strict rules that help Harry survive his every torturous day: live in his memory, tattoo his very name to your heart, savor all and any thoughts of him. And damn it he has not broken it once, never could, not when it’s all he can do to help himself cope with the fucked up facets of his present day existence.

So, this is it; him at war with his demons. On some treacherous journey to better—all that marks his travel is blood and sweat and tears.

Blood from scrubbing his skin raw, chewing his nails, shoving his hands through windows.

Sweat from the endless mile upon mile runs he’s gone through until his muscles must be in dystrophy, from being in bed, shivers and sheen moisture coating his skin, the sheets and the walls.

Tears: “please let this be over, please let this not be me,” sobs, tormented by the monsters raucous shrieks and his body’s need, agony.

There is no routine to it; some days are better off than others, but there is no means to know which to skip out on and which to offer some effort. So effort is applied to every bloody day.

Still there are those where his brain hotwires; a blind frenzy consumes him, until hours later he awakens to find the house in ruins; his insides replicated to perfection. “You ruined it like you ruin everything!” A constant resonance in his head, one the monster uses to break him down. And sometimes it does break him down, some days the monster wins.

Today was an almost loss for him. The almost days aren’t quite so horrific. No black out. Conscious awareness; actions based on free will. But even for an almost it was fucked—all over the news. Like the worlds bullshit matters to him now—it’d been accidental; he’d connected the television (after three weeks of shit, half-hearted endeavors) and needed to confirm that it worked this time. Of course the news was the first to screen. Screw the world—his world has forsaken him, left him to live like this, secluded and sad. Screw. The. Fucking. World.

More possessions left in ruins due to the damn news. Dishes shattered on the hardwood (he has to urge to tear the fuckin’ shit right out and replace it with carpet—maybe that will make him fucking happy? Maybe he will come home…), the wallpaper tattered, some sections wilted towards the bloody woodworks, mirrors devastated (he’d had to clean the shards from his knuckles; the physical pain was a nice distraction). Precious pictures in tattered bits.

Christ, his pictures, his black-and-white’s, his art, his memories…scattered bits on the floor, weeping from his abuse. As his heart constricts, the Alpha hopes like hell that he can find copies
or restore them or something. He just…he needs them back; if he can fix those, then he can fix himself.

The better times aren’t much better at all, but they are triumphs, surely. At least he’s out of bed and functioning like a proper human being. Well, not so proper, but at least he’s human; he hasn’t mustered the courage to communicate with others–hasn’t heard his voice in over a month (his purchases are delivered); but since months ago he’s bettered his eating habits, though it doesn’t look it, his skin is still too-tight over his bones. He thinks looking healthy will take more time while working through fruits or whatever it is he chooses to eat that day. All the while he idly writes observations on the scenes.

Weekend dawns; sober and in search of paradise; he’d found him in the first floor sitting room, had leaned lazily on the doorframe as the sunlight framed his silhouette. A breeze seen where the curtains (sheer, white) moved, seen in his tea or coffee steam; the window-seat with both little feet up, where he’d sit and read the book propped on his knees, the shift in his weight as he turned the pages, bored but determined.

God, in those still instances he remembers it so well; can see it all there, a sitting room where only Harry lives now, but never goes into.

Often when he’s jabbed his pen straight through the paper, the Alpha wonders if those moments replay for Louis, too. Wonders: when he curls up in his family’s sitting room for his morning read, does he ever put the book down, look and try to find him there, if only his memory.

The scratches on the hardwood floor in that very room, the wine stain on the couch from when they’d gotten drunk and decided they’d still try to move it around. All these captured images.

He remembers how he’d just sit there and read in the sunlight aware that Harry watched him. In those moments he strived to find his rhyme scheme, looked for objects with which to sculpt his image best…

Louis may have left him, but his memory echoes throughout this unfilled place. But he lives alone now. Save for the echoes.

Exhausted, the Alpha wills sleep, but rest refuses to settle, his body’s cruel protests forbid it. Hours upon hours remain in this stoic state of anguish. Deserved–take responsibility for your actions has never seemed so fitting.

“We are here for you. He left. But we are still here to help you…” the voices hiss and howl.

There is no fabrication to be found–it’s true. God, it’s true, this is what Louis has left him to. Claimed him to be the liar, but proved himself to be the same. All his promises of forever, nowhere to be found.

And he’s nowhere to be seen with them. Jesus, was their touch half as sacred as he’d made it seem? Or just another fabrication of a half-dream? Those fuckin’ chemicals, adolescent love?

A fierce noise crawls up his throat–washes him with an ache only help can alleviate. Even as his muscles scream in protest, the Alpha sits up on the bed, teeth clenched.

Except…his phone, which he hasn’t dared to walk without, vibrates within his vindictive hold. Almost like a protest to such thoughts–without a look to the number, the Alpha answers, “’Ello?” It’s his voice–but so harsh with the lack of use. Hope awakens in his chest–there is no response. “Louis?” Desperation chimes in his voice. “Paradise, is that you?”

A hitched breath; then soft, trembling, “I-I-I m-miss you.” The confession, that voice, creates a
sweeping melody within him–glorifying the past and amplifying the pain in frames and glass.

Frantically, as if he could possibly thwart the inevitable, “Come back. Please, I…”’M so lost without you.”

“I’m so sorry,” a final breath before the line dies.

He is not the one who should be sorry; it was never his fault. Wasn’t then, isn’t now.

As to brace himself into resistance, the Alpha takes a deep breath, shivers, and returns to his previous fetal position. I miss you.

Christ…how? How does Louis expect him broadcast his pain? To seek help when it’s never worked before?

Louis tried to show him how to cope with tragedy and pain–but it was too late then.

It can’t be too late now–he has to do it; has to talk, has to confront the past, has to tell how he’s lost everything that he’s had, has to–

“And it ain’t ever comin’ back. He ain’t ever comin’ back. Why suffer more than you have to?”

…tell his whole sad fuckin’ story, tell how he’s hurt, how he’s reacted, how the moments that were once all too real forced his heart to grow mere centimeters, and retract infinite inches. How he never recovered. That it’s difficult to not think about death sometimes–how even he abandoned himself mentally, created a wasteland of his mind. Speak of all of the above.

And he’s not sure if he’s ready to find out the hard way how strong he is. He’s not sure he can handle this walk through fire, but he will try. He will. And he wonders as he seeks sleep, what he will find.

I miss you.

Yeah, I miss me too.

So, with that, Harry thinks he will stay in bed a little while longer. Just a little while.

-o-

As his heart thunders in his ears, Louis jabs at the security panel. Bad idea–this was such a bad idea. An idea spurred by the severe desperation. Louis is desperate for the reassurance that he’s been denied. He needs to know, from the right person, that he’s made the right choice.

This is where his search for understanding has led him.

Never has Louis felt so utterly alone–especially not in the presence of his Father.

Just…Dan cannot understand, is purely incapable of understanding what it is to love an addict.

Love is love. Society does not practice all preached. A wise one once asked him the question that shaped his very beliefs. Even now Louis remembers it with perfect clarity–remembers, without permission, a pup at just thirteen, let the just-presented Alpha take him out in the streets to hand food out to the homeless.

Remembers dusk had been steadily forthcoming when they stumbled upon that alleyway where the assemblage of soiled males took shelter.
And he had almost left with Harry, accepting that it was too sketchy. But one of the soiled men stood tall and exclaimed in a somnolent voice, “Who here still believes in man?”

“I do, Sir!” Louis could not resist the opportunity to be heard–so often he was hushed around his elders, even with Harry (who preferred the silence).

All shocked stares had then found where he stood at the mouth of the alley. “Do you now?” the male asked quietly before he started towards where the two stood.

“Ah, ignore ‘im! He’s jus a pup! Don’t matter none!” another slurred.

“I wish to hear what the lad has to say,” the wise one with the sage eyes and aged features decided as he crouched, level with him now. Louis had done his best to keep from scrunching his nose at the rancid stench that came with his proximity, beside him though, Harry interjected with his superior-than-thou voice, “Sir, I apologise for him. He is–,”

Louis had elbowed him the same moment the wise one interrupted, “Silence! You shouldn’t be allowed near this one!” As an eerie knowledge flared in his stare, Louis shivered. “You won’t make it in this world. You are bound for disaster–sin will blacken your soul. Your hands will not be cleanly enough to touch his heart. But you, greedy little snot, will touch it anyway.”

As the Alpha fell into a stunned silence, Louis’ heart quickened. (Does this male know who he is talking to? Surely not; then he wouldn’t dare speak to Harry like that, not with the knowledge that it’s Supreme Styles’ offspring.)

Dark in its eerie depths that stare focused on him again “And you. I have a lot to say for you. But I would rather know why. Why do you still believe in man?”

Louis lifted his chin; answered before he knew what to even think, “I just don’t believe we’re wicked, Sir. I know that we sin. We destroy, we covet, we hurt and we kill. But I do believe we try. We all try. You and I try. No hands shall remain cleanly. Hearts are meant to withstand touch, meant to cleanse that which touches it. And you, Sir, surely have a lot to repent for. So do not proclaim yourself any more sacred than human temples. I don’t believe any life is simple. We all try the best we can.”

How could Louis lose that indomitable faith?

Simple. Louis had allowed Harry’s beliefs to shake his own fundamental belief-system. But no more. Louis does not believe in the irreparable–no matter the hand you are dealt, it’s a game worthwhile.

Hearts are meant to withstand touch, meant to cleanse that which touches it.

And damn it all there would be no fuckin’ possibility of a re-ignited flame had all the life been snuffed out.

It’s still there–his heart’s been touched over and over and over.

Now it’s to survive the degrees of separation. With a world split down the middle, the Omega is determined to find closure–but that will only come from the Alpha himself. Better is his closure.

Or it will be–first Louis needs to clutch his resolve, needs the comfort. Even as his heart breaks into infinite pieces in Des Styles’ arms Louis hopes that the Alpha will seek the same comfort from his Father.

Des understands, Des knows, and like Louis the older Alpha loves his son.
Just like he knew he would, Louis finds the reassurance needed—thinks he can do this, he will do this.

On his own the path to self-discovery, the boy thinks one more cuppa might just warm him enough.

-o-

From then on Louis plays catch-up—see, in spite of his previous notion, the world actually hadn’t spiraled into an apocalyptic turmoil. Well the outside world hadn’t at least. It is what it is.

The next three months are spent in a hectic scramble to reclaim his life. It’s difficult to be a someone when he just wants to curl up small, drained by the tiniest efforts. Often the boy entertains the idea that he might fall into a coma one night and awaken a decade later to find the raw hole in his chest has been filled with emotions that don’t fall under depression or loneliness.

To avoid the unbearable sensation, the hollow pain, automated responses have been constructed with extreme care. Louis continues to complete the tasks expected of him, secured his reputation, impressed the public with his swift recovery from the “heart attack” and maintains his distance from the dreadful demon that’s claimed Supreme Styles’ sole heir. Louis breathes. Louis smiles. Louis has taken up performing arts. A proper actor.

On the outside Louis appears to have truly recovered.

On the inside Louis is nowhere close to that degree—his chest aches with every breath, like poisonous vines have sprouted in his airways and traveled to coil around his lungs; it’s to the point that he has to rush to the bathroom, sink to his knees and fold up to keep from crumbling under the massive pressure that’s settled; to the point that he doesn’t stick around after supper, seeks sanctuary in his bedroom where he winds up small and hopes to God there is some way to hack away at the weeds, to the point where he jerks awake to bloodcurdling screams and realises it’s him, the noise is not without cost, causes the pain to intensify to the point of short, panicked gasps.

Fabrications have claimed his lips—smiles are bare of emotion. Meant to seem sincere; but with nothing behind them. By now the expression has been permanently plastered to his face. He doesn’t stop smiling. Because he has an audience to entertain, and one slip up could prove fatal. So Louis is all smiles. But no laughter, never that; he can’t chop up the air to laugh. Still, it's not difficult to hide that little bit when everyone else is laughing at him in the first place.

To talk is the worst part. Because what he manages seems to always be the wrong response. Louis hates conversation. But he has to use his voice. Before this break he didn't stop talking. That is who he is—talkative around the right people. Silence was beyond him at one point. Mostly, he talks about class and course material. That is what lands him in his current crisis.

If anyone despises Council courses, it’s Louis. Ever since this sudden interest, his friends have been suspicious, disturbed. Well, mostly Niall.

Niall who claims he is too much of a hermit these days and need to live a little. In Niall’s terms this consists of drunken all-nighters, weed, sports, and fun, which Louis never minded before and can’t let them know he minds now.

But he does mind—Niall’s sunshine personality is…overbearing. It serves to remind him that he has no chances of having such trouble-free happiness to mend this raw hole consuming him.

No matter Louis is forced into it—his parent’s delighted to find their son is doing something other than Council shit and sleeping.
Hence how the Omega finds himself in downtown London. With Niall, Josh, and coincidentally their friend Ben who happens to be very single and very interested (someone Zayn, the little shit, bailed with no questions asked).

Sure, the bloke is nice and all but Louis is taken. Louis doesn’t have a heart to be touched by any other—because his heart was touched by the best, and Louis only wants that hurting hand. God, Louis just wants his Harry back.

So to break away from the discomfort (the mated couple are so confident in their “low key” attempts to pair Louis with Ben.) Louis wakes up especially early and decides to “accidently” leave his phone in his condo room.

Autumn is drifting into winter day by day. Intensifying the chill enough that Louis dresses warmer than a normal person would at this time. With a beanie to cover his messy hair, a turtleneck, black skinnies, and trainers—all black. Seems he’s still mourning his loss.

Outside the brisk air nips at his fingertips, and kisses his face; his lips chapped, cheeks pale, nose pink.

Louis hasn’t seen the morning in so long it’s almost a shock to him. The fresh, dewy air kindly greets him, the ache in his throat dulls, and his mouth softens into a smile that’s…heartfelt.

At the sudden realisation Louis inhales sharply; oh God right now it doesn’t hurt, it’s…nice. To breathe without so much pressure, to remember how nice it is to be a someone.

Without reason the Omega looks around to see if anyone else has noticed this monumental shift.

Nope, the city brims with constant activity; joggers, those walking their pets or headed to work, businesses’ opening for the day. Lively life.

So Louis just smiles and fits in with the crowd; a person with his first reconnection to life.

&&

Six months down his path to better Harry comes to crossroads with him. Almost doesn’t catch sight of him because his fifteenth relapse shames him; even so the remorse cannot quell the soar of his first high in two months.

One more battle lost. But fuck does it feel like a victory, the monster tells him it is. This power seems invincible. So much so that he is certain he can beat this; still doesn’t bother to think this is the last time because he’s thought so the last fourteen times. This is no different.

Except this time around is different; an incredible sense of assurance to support his bones, still them, settles over his skin. Skin that he’s found to be an armor to protect his soul from further abuse until his time to protect his essence arrives. Sometimes it’s not enough. Sometimes tremors wreck through him, compels his shields with silky promises of relief from the constant torment; but each time the reprieve vanishes all-too-soon, only to reveal bruises and dark impressions on his soul.

Sometimes it is enough. Sometimes his mind takes him to another place, a divine dreamland. Where malice does not exist; where the pain cannot touch him and the monster cannot be heard. And in those still moments he is who he wants to be.

Those are the moments that prevent him from straying too far from his path—replenish his faltering willpower.
Five A.M. hadn’t been kind to him; five A.M. had left him to the monster, to his vindictive thoughts. On a short fuse the Alpha had convinced himself he just needed out of that fuckin’ house. Seems he’s back to denial because what he needed was his fix.

And it wasn’t complicated; the dealer had smiled so fuckin’ pleased and taken his notable profit without question. “Nice to have you back, Styles.”

“Whatever. I won’t be back.”

“Yeah, sure,” the trill to his sardonic laughter ricochets in his skull.

When it happens he’s headed to his car. Desperate to return to his seclusion the Alpha twitches throughout the wait that seems to never end.

Moments in a brief rainbow shimmer piques his blank stare. On impulse he locates the source. Just like that the world around him ceases to exist. Between them time seems suspended–shadows to his light.

At the crossroads…paradise is across the road…his paradise.

“He’s not yours. He abandoned you. Don’t forget it,” that cruel voice hisses, but under the force of his proximity it’s almost inaudible. This is more than his first hit in months.

In a stark black outfit, Louis stands there, at odds with the colour he’s chosen. A beanie leaves just his feathery fringe visible, and there, around his slender neck, is that diamond necklace, and not far below those bloody tags.

Emotion dizzies him, more than the desolate despair…This doesn’t twist or twine his insides; this doesn’t hurt. Not in a cruel way at least. These emotions are soft tides rippling over him.

A million questions bracket his brain. Does he remember who gave him those? Does he miss his sachet? Does he know he has left impressions on the woodworks of my heart and soul? Does he remember…me?

An ocean drowns him; a beautiful smile wavers. What replaces that smile is some twisted tilt of his mouth–nothing compared those stunning smiles he once gifted Harry with. This one is not genuine. Movement shocks him from his trace–the light has changed.

Mechanical, Harry walks, and Louis does too. The distance seals with every shattered step…except with wide eyes, the boy only offers him a little wave, doesn’t even pause.

It feels like their ends are on repeat…

Oh, God, no–he can’t do it. Can’t not look back. Can’t pass him by like he’s not his everything, like he’s not the only reason he comes apart at the seams so often, like he’s not what saves him every time.

In the middle of traffic his limbs stop; bombs are triggered in his chest.

When his brain reclaims his legs, Harry retraces his steps.

-o-

In a numb desperation Louis doesn’t allow himself to stop–even as his heart bleeds with want, the thick liquid seeping into the aperture in his chest, ripped wide again.
Oh God, oh God…

His mind drinks in the image—he looks different.

So different—all rumpled clothes and pale skin. God, with how the waves frame his face he looks healthier. Not quite where he should be, but there’s a definite change. He has filled out—if he thought his skin didn’t fit when he was malnourished then he must know now that his skin was made to adapt to all his changes.

Even now he’s thin, lanky, but it’s natural. It’s also obvious he’s hit the gym, he’s thicker now—Louis idly hopes he’s started up yoga again.

But that’s not as important—the change is in his features, his eyes are.

God, those stupid beautiful eyes; thin jade rings, his pupils dilated to the point that the haunted darkness was stark, but still…not under his demons’ control.

Distress screams in his belly. There was something wrong with that stare. Oh, God, he must’ve been—no. No, that’s not it. Can’t be.

Through damp eyes Louis catches sight of a little café’s chalkboard—tea is better than coffee, we have both.

Tea sounds just the thing. Yes, Louis could use a–

A hand clamps down on his shoulder; Louis flinches from the touch. Touch is prohibited—he just cannot stand it. But this time he flinches because he is startled, not because fear needles at his skin. Which what?

In the middle of the walkway Louis jerks to an abrupt halt and whirls around to glower at his idiot who dared to–

“Oh,” Louis exhales unevenly. Oh, no.

Not five feet from him stands Harry-Stupid-Heartbreaker-Cokehead-Styles. And fuck Louis wants to be so furious at the glaze to his stare…but he’s distracted by the warm sensation that’s crowded the hole in his chest. It’s still there, and that’s the worst part.

“And Louis,” the Alpha croaks in that rasp of his. At the sound butterflies stretch their wings in his tummy. At the sound his Omega, previously docile in his depression, stirs with so much life. And it’s so hideous…God this will shake him to the very core. Right now Louis cannot afford to have what he’s only just reclaimed within him broken. He just can’t.

As he clears his throat Louis shores up his willpower and starts to stride towards the café.

And oh God the idiot follows, stumbles beside him and keeps up easily with those fucking Bambi limbs of his. Louis does not spare him a look.

“Oh, Louis.” The sound of his name paired with that deep Alpha drawl causes his heart to stutter—damn him. At the reaction some semblance of irritation weighs on his shoulders.

Louis halts, although Harry must not expect it as he stops seconds too late and retracts his massive steps. He looks nervous—he should be.

Louis crosses his arms, like he can trap the warmth his presence elicits. “Louis wants you to leave him alone.” No, Louis does not.
Emotions flicker to life in that dark stare—upset, amusement, and anxiety. Anxiety wins. “I…Can I talk to Louis, please?”

“No. Louis is not receiving visitors. Especially not junkies. Get lost.”

The crushed expression is almost too much, the flinch is. To escape him, the Omega carries on, hopeful that the malice has worked to discourage him.

Inside the café, Louis releases a little breath; and almost curls up right there in line because the hole is drained of any relief, and it hurts, it hurts, it hurts.

Except of course Harry doesn’t know when to quit—“I just want to talk, Louis…Just for five minutes.” No. No that is the worst idea ever.

But the fire has started in his heart once more, brings him out of the dark and—With his practised smile Louis whirs around, intertwines his hands to hide their shakiness, and bites, “Okay. Let’s talk.”

A determined look settles on his stupid face, and his jaw ticks attractively. “Why’re you smiling like that?” is what he blurts. Louis winces, and smiles with more sun to make it believable. Just for him. “It’s…uh…it’s not that it’s not nice…it’s just not…uh your smile. It’s…It’s too stiff. Doesn’t make your eyes all soft and ah yeah.”

God, not even my parents noticed. Love shimmers through him; he has to look away to hide how it must brim in his stare.

This seems to root him on. “And uh you know you don’t have to smile if you don’t feel it…uh not…not with me cause it’s a wasted effort…I know—,”

“Please, just stop,” Louis whispers, despising the note of desperation in his voice. It’s just that he doesn’t need to be reminded that he’s never had to pretend with Harry. He is all too aware even now. Because he was always true to himself with Harry. Because Harry never once judged him. God…this is the boy he fell in stupid love with, an endless fall; the one who has never spoke a word of the secrets Louis’s told him, the one who never failed to make him feel like number one…the reason Louis is happy with who he is. Because this is the one who helped him accept his presentation, who showed up at three A.M. in only fifteen minutes with tons of his favourite ice-creams and stupid romance films to hold him the entire night without shushing him for being too loud throughout it all.

Oh, God, that awkward, but still self-assured boy is still there. But his hand was dealt, and the trial was not an easy one, left too many scars.

“I’m sorry.” Louis knows it’s not the rambling he’s apologizing for. “I just…I wanted to say I am sorry. So sorry. I just…wanted you to know that I’m sorrier than I can put into words.” I won’t believe it until you prove it.

Deeming the conversation at its end Louis simply shrugs and turns to face the counter again. The line hasn’t moved—the holdup is an elderly lady in delighted conversation with the cashier despite all the dirty looks this earns her. Louis is pleased that she seems not to care.

He is all too aware that the Alpha hasn’t left—does he really want to break him down? That will doom them both.

“I…um…So how ‘ave you been?”
Louis forces his stare straight and answers curtly, “Fine.”

“Paradise,” the breath is so jagged that Louis’ throat aches for him; well the compassion doesn’t last because his unreasonably large hand brushes the one that is limp at his side. A current thrills through him—the electric jolt that runs up his arm straight to his heart throbs. Louis tenses, and then squeezes his eyes shut as to force himself to snatch his hand back—he can’t, “What.”

“You don’t have to pretend with me….I know you hate me and all… but I just…I’m so miserable without you. ‘M not askin’ you to do anything but…talk to me. Really talk to me.”

“I can’t,” his voice trembles. I miss you so much. “I can’t.”

The contact is stolen—Louis wants to sob at the latest loss. Before he can Louis realises he’s next in line and with a controlled breath, smiles at the cashier and requests his tea just how he likes it. Once it’s brought to him, Louis takes his wallet out but another arm extends to hand out more money than necessary. She accepts it with another smile, a polite “Thank you. Have a nice one”.

Louis seethes, but snatches his steaming cup and turns to storm out.


“No,” Louis snarls, and whirls around to pin him with his wrath aflame in his eyes. “Don’t fucking try to take care of me or whatever bullshit now! I can pay for my own shit! Damn it! Just…Just…! Piss off!” He tosses the scorching cup at him–his chest because he would hate to burn his fuckin’ face.

Shock is evident on his face before he looks down as if to find evidence that Louis really just did that. Well he fucking did. He should’ve ruined his face, really let the world see his evil.

But oh Christ he’s not evil. He is lost. And Louis just can’t lead the way for him anymore.

In a rush the boy tries to flee before Harry has even recovered, terrified of the temper he’s unleashed. With reason too.

A hand wraps around his upper arm and yanks him to a standstill. Louis clenches his teeth, braces for the anger–, “I deserved that.”

“God damn it!” the Omega hisses, and struggles against his all-too-kind hold. “What is wrong with you? Why can’t you just get the fuckin’ message and leave me alone?”

“I can’t even distract my heart from missing you.

“BECAUSE I NEED YOU!” the Alpha roars so fiercely Louis recoils—he’s never heard Harry…sound so viciously upset. And it’s his fault. His fault the burning agony has found his wild stare once again. He’s so toxic to him. He is. “Don’t you get it? You were all I had! YOU PROMISED ME FOREVER! God damn it, you promised!”

Defensive, Louis thrashes from his clasp as the world watches them—two too in love, terribly broken people. It’s in vain—leaves them both with rough, broken breaths. Humiliation heats his cheeks. “I w-w-was never what you needed before! I was never all you fucking had! I’m still not. You broke all your fucking promises to me, Harry! What about those? What about I WILL NEVER DO IT AGAIN? What about I WILL BE BETTER? What about I will take care of you? What about I will always come home to you? Look at you now! You’re fucking high as we speak! You’re such a fucking hypocrite!” I still believe in forever, but you aren’t allowed to know it. “When you pick your fooking balls up off the floor and help yourself then you can talk about broken promises! You broke them all! Every single one! And you broke me!”

As Louis stems the venomous tears swimming in his eyes, Harry’s hand falls to his side.
He stands there, with his bloodshot stare vacant and his chest heaving to give a spectacular view of his tea stains.

“I…I promise,” the Alpha breathes, with an all-encompassing resolve to the words, “I will be better. With or without you, paradise.”

Louis’s breath hitches in his throat as one tear slips down his flushed cheek. Without another word, look, heartbeat, Harry turns on his heels and blends into the crowd. A somebody.

This time the Alpha does not look back. And this time Louis’s smile is real.

-o-

From then on Harry puts his all into constructing a home. All his time is spent on this project. From dawn til dusk and beyond.

One month is put into this house–everything is done to perfection.

It’s done in baby steps. First to be renovated: the entry. In three days that’s been completed–the glass for the windows are renewed, sheer white curtains accenting them, the material over the window-seats torn out and replaced with teal coloured linen, the fireplace is refurbished, a little antique table beside the entrance, the chandelier dusted and running, the woodworks are polished. The touches added are personal: pictures. Framed and perfect–most are of Louis. In fact seven of the fifteen are just him in black and white: pouty Louis, happy Louis, angry Louis, reckless Louis, all paradise. Five are them with their closest friends and family. The last three are with Louis—Louis with him.

Because he isn’t here does not mean it’s not his home.

From there he works through the halls; all three remain much the same, but he hires a flooring contractor with strict instruction to simply refurbish the wood so it does not creek quite so much (some of the wood is too rotted, which leaves him with no choice but replace those bits). The job is done to perfection throughout the entire house (he tested that himself—even the A.C. system was replaced) and they are paid a great sum to get the fuck out afterwards.

The kitchen is the second most difficult; it’s modernized. Marble countertops and steel cabinets replace the off-white wood, an electric stove and one of those two-door fridges replaced their outdated ancestors, the steel sink over the chipped white plastic one. Little dabbles are added and come to fit finely: all that fine china and silverware from Jay, a wine racket, little plants in the windowsill, cereal takes up at least three of the cabinets (Louis loves cereal) and edibles are replenished.

From there the bathrooms are simple: impersonal pictures, shower curtains, mirrors replaced, tub scrubbed, and stand-up showers added.

All other rooms like the dining room, living room, and sitting rooms are done with typical, expected qualities. Just because of Louis he makes the attic an arcade; just because.

When the Alpha’s imagination dried up through the first six guest quarters, an interior decorator was hired; now each are styled alike, lavender (chosen by him) and white.

His bedroom is the more difficult: because he has to add his character to the place. In the end, Harry adds candles, extends his wardrobe to rid himself of his dresser, while he’s at it he tosses the desk (not like he needs it anymore–hunger clenches in his stomach just looking) and rearranges the bed frame so it faces the door (his followers may not be with him now, but is paranoia is; if
they return, he will know it), adds more pictures, and calls it progress.

One thing he does not dare touch is Louis’s room, refuses to invade, to ruin that too. Knows he will only devastate its frail perfection. The hope that the Omega might come home one day kindles often. The stupid thought “when he comes home he can decide what to do with it,” sits on his chest, unbearable enough with the late night lust that erodes his veins.

God but some nights he is so weak…creeps into that room and steals a dirty shirt or a beanie to help him through the endless torment. Clutches it to his chest and lets that scent loll him into unconsciousness.

Otherwise Harry has kept the room as it was before he left.

Just…in case.

It’s just…he knows that one day eventually he will have to let it all go. But he keeps it…just in case. In case his every hope and dream comes true, but doesn’t quite please him (Louis is a very particular creature). In case he misses what he had. In case he changes his mind. Or…or in case he just wants to come home…

Just…to help him through this, Harry hopes that Louis can love him again; even if that isn’t the case.

Swears on all the stars this universe has to offer that he will love him in any way he wants to be loved, love him how he deserves to be loved.

All these thoughts haunt him, taunt his accomplishments; dulls the pride that wells up to soothe the throb in his chest when he walks through these vacant halls.

Perfect just isn’t enough to make this a home…

Louis is a home all on his own.

Harry wants a home.

But this will have to do…

Even as he thinks this…hunger-pains plague his very core. It’s been since he last seen him…a month. The monster eats away at his sanity; and Harry thinks his mental state is his next hotspot. The next to be mended.

But is too exhausted to work on it now; thinks he can afford a week’s break from all the exertion he’s forced himself through. The end of this path remains out of touching range. At least he can see the end.

It’s just a matter of time before the monster can only be heard in echoes and felt in dull aches.

He just needs more time.

And time he will learn to sail above; time will never change the meaning of one love.

-0-

It’s unexpected.

For once sunshine overcomes their islands constant chill; touches the crevasses of this house, warms it even. But it doesn’t warm Harry.
In fact the Alpha is curled up on the same window-seat the Omega once spent his mornings in another cold-sweat, and skin that itches so much he wants to take sandpaper to it. Desperate to catch the sun’s beams, to remember that this chill isn’t permanent. Christ, sometimes he despises his body; but knows he’s the one that put his body under such stress.

Addiction sucks—but withdrawal might suck worse.

As another shiver wrecks up his spine, Harry avoids shoving his face into the neighboring sofa and instead tosses an arm over his sticky face. A noise forms in his chest, crawls up his throat, and ricochet’s along these four walls he’s isolated himself to.

Desperate to remain under his own control the Alpha had locked himself in this room–hadn’t been thinking straight…tormented by the monsters sharp clamors. There is nobody to come looking for him. He’s all but doomed himself.

Sure he could kick the door down…but most of his energy has been drained from his night with addiction.

“Jesus, take the wheel,” he mutters, then laughs despite how his lungs scream in protest. It’s just that…he amuses himself with his belief that there is such an all divine deity. Like Jesus would help someone like him. He’s sin reincarnated.

But he once heard Jesus forgave Lucifer.

And thinks Jesus can forgive him too.

God…he can’t do this on his own–needs a sign that he can be forgiven. So even though his hands shake uncontrollably the Alpha blindly takes his phone from where he’d tossed it on the floor.

The screen is shattered—no surprise. A lot shatters under his abuse. Louis did.

As moisture sears his eyes Harry dials a number he’s not bothered with far too long. Each drawn out ring bathes him in anxiety, and when he’s about to surrender, an all-too-familiar voice answers, “Supreme Styles.”

Like I didn’t already know who I was dialing.

“D-D-Dad, it’s me…Harry,” his tongue is thick in his mouth, and like his sweat, his terror drips.

“I know who it is,” the voice replies softly. Just when he’s about to disconnect, “Are…A-Are you ready to come home, son? Are you ready to come back?”

The soft, hopeful tone, the words he didn’t think he needed to hear so badly, break him.

And he tries to be strong, but realises tears have helped him on this path, and so he cries.

Cries like never before, and speaks through the heaving breaths without missing a beat, “I’m ready to come home, Dad. I’m ready to come back.”

-o-

Emotional is an understatement–his whole life has become a soap opera.

Stretched out in his childhood bed the Alpha thinks coming home wasn’t the brightest idea. It’s not that he feels unwelcome—it’s that he’s too welcome. He isn’t accustomed to
such...reassurance–had become too comfortable with the solitude.

It’s too much at times.

When his Mum watches him eat from across the dinner table with such relief and joy it’s too much. When the staff gawks at his very sight it’s too much. When his sister decided to extend her visit and spend “quality” time it was too much. When Grimmy nearly busted his door down it was too much. When his Father took him golfing (he didn’t know how much he missed doin’ shit like that) it was too damned much.

And he has a hunch his parents have put him under suicide watch. Well, no, he knows they have, like he knows Louis has left him. There are no visible knives in the kitchen. His Mother helped him unpack the little he’d brought with too much expectancy. The bathrooms are bare of razors, or any sharp objects for that matter. The medicine cabinets have been bolted shut or emptied. A member of the staff so happens to be everywhere he happens to be around the clock.

His bedroom is his lone escape–traps him where he wants to be, in his memory. But even here is not without disturbance–the second he thinks this a short knock is set to his door.

“Son?” he hates the hesitance, the fear, in his father’s voice.

“Come in,” the Alpha allows, feeling so much like the child he hasn’t been since he was twelve.

The entrance comes open–Des is revealed. And he’s never seen the older Alpha look so sheepish, but there he stands, with a nervous air to match. “Whatcha up to, kiddo?” Kiddo–emotion throbs at his temples, but it’s no shocker, his head aches like hell with withdrawal and thoughts and demons. Emotion would stack onto that. “How ‘bout a stroll? I uh…invited someone to join us.”

“When?” he asks curiously as he sits up, plants his feet on the carpet, and preoccupies his hands by toying with his bun (his hair is just below the shoulders by now, he’s been due for a trim).

“You’ll see. C’mon. Dress warm.”

Irritated with Des’ sheltering response Harry almost snaps at him, but his Father scurries out before he can–he’s thankful that the door denies him that lapse in self-restraint.

He’s a fuckin’ recovering cokehead, not a pup. Though he hasn’t proven otherwise–who the fuck couldn’t tell?

Growling under his breath Harry dresses as light as possible; because he’s a spiteful shit these days. Big deal.

Des is smart enough not to comment on his choice but instead nods in silence and sides him. As to avoid the stares (will they ever fuckin’ get over it?) Harry ducks his head, but Des places a reassuring hand on his shoulder. Even though he cringes, the older does not release him, simply squeezes his shoulder once, hard and firm. “Don’t be ashamed. Chin up.”

But he can’t.

Because he isn’t where he wants to be; because he can only just handle the force of his own thoughts, let alone society’s. No, he’s not quite equipped for that burden.

Sure he has thicker skin now, but an even slimier mind; constantly reminded of why he kept on with the coke (the mention drives an intense hunger through his bloodstream even now—the famine tears through him all hours of his days, until he finds himself sniffing the air, like some powder will come with the wind or the ventilation or the people around him). Because it held him
above the sinister shit in his head—higher and higher until he could no longer see the black pit that had conquered his brain.

And now the monster has joined forces with those demons to tear him apart from the inside out.

Christ he’s *tired—so fucking tired.* An endless tired has curled up tight between the hollows of his ribs, an endless tired that’s left no part of him untouched, simply *there.* All the time. Sleep just spurs on his demons, abandons him to his nightmares, his reality. So sleep he doesn’t.

Overwhelmed with the sudden spiral he’s fallen into, Harry tries to distract himself from this insistent catastrophe, to focus on the *present.* But distraction doesn’t seem to work much anymore.

Ashamed, the Alpha stares at his trainers, caught in the uproar; he doesn’t *really see* until his vision becomes black around the edges, and he stumbles, sickness curling its spiteful fist around his stomach. Reflexively, he swallows and swallows until vomit isn’t creeping up his throat. Des takes his shoulder. “Son? H, are you okay?” *No, Dad. I’m never okay anymore.*

As to keep his legs from giving out at the nauseating realisation Harry starts to walk (more like jog) straight down the drive. “Harry! Son, slow down!”

There isn’t a fuckin’ *reason* to keep breathing anymore—to act like he’s not fuckin’ insane when he *is.* Harry and his *body* haven’t been on right terms since he put it through the Institution seven years; when his lungs begin to burn like his willpower is currently a low fire (close to snuffed out); desperate for what he won’t allow it *and* what he needs to allow it: coke, oxygen. The latter wins, of course. With each shallow, toxic breath the pain slowly subsides.

“Harry! Jesus! Are you *alright*?” With every rapid blink Des comes into clearer view. *God damn it, no,* he shouts in his face, but smiles like he *is okay,* his sheepish, apologetic smile, “Yeah. Sorry. Just needed…a mo’.”

Works every time.

“You’re a real pro,” the voice that so often disturbs him sneers. “*Bravo.*”

The troubled look on his father’s aged features shifts into something akin to guilt, but Harry continues quickly, to distract him, “Who are we meeting again?”

Des brightens. “Oh, that’s right. C’mon. Let’s head to the trail.”

“How ‘bout you tell Daddy you actually have plans with Grimmy and remember who you really are?” Ha. Wouldn’t that be nice? He should. He should just—no. No, he shouldn’t.

As he squeezes the bridge of his nose, where pressure seems to have formed, the Alpha shakes his head a bit, mutters under his breath, “No.”

“What was that?”

*Christ, H, get it together.* “I…ah, it’s nothin.”

“We’re everything.”

So wrong—Louis is everything. Just…Louis. Just—

“Awe, mate, don’t cha ‘member? Little lovely Louis lost hope in you. Why waste your time? ‘E
ain’t comin’ back to you. He’s above you.” It’s sand to his hopeful flame.

“Shut up. You…You’re wrong,” the Alpha hisses, attempting to shove them back in his mental closet. Mercifully, his Father doesn’t seem to even notice, exclaims boominngly, “Aye! Thought we ditched, eh? Not so fast, Tomlinson!”

**Tomlinson.** In his chest his heart stalls, but when his head lifts, the blood drains from his face. *Fuck no, he’s not doing this. He isn’t ready.*

No. No, he did not want this. He…He…Panic fists his heart.

As that cool stare lands on him, Harry jerks to an abrupt halt, and shakes his head wildly at Des. “No,” he croaks weakly, ashamed. “No, Dad. I…No.” I can’t do this. I’m not ready.

Oblivious, his Father only directs a warm smile at him, desperation alight in his stare, desperation for him to just do this, be a man. Jesus Christ since he was a boy, he’s done whatever he thought he needed to make Desmond Styles proud of him. Jesus Christ here he goes again.

This isn’t a fire he is prepared to extinguish.

In a numb state Harry steps beside Des, lets his blank stare settle on Dan. As his support crumbles the Alpha can do nothing but watch.

“Hello, Harry. It’s been awhile, son.” It has been—with reason.

“Dan,” is all his tight throat can cope with. “H-Hi.” Where’s Louis?

Impassive the older Alpha clears his throat, then, “Well, Des thought this would be a nice chat. Sorely wrong I know. So I won’t ease into this. I am trusting Des when he says you are better,” you shouldn’t, “I’m trying, Harry, really I am. But the thing is…I have to look out for my son. Louis has found someone.” A fatal fracture to further leave his mind in momentary ruins. “But his heart is elsewhere…He seems to be in love with yo…” to protect itself from further abuse his mind blurs out the finish. Doesn’t care to listen—it’s already over.

Without a word to either Alpha, he turns, hides his ugly, and escapes them.

**Runs.** Runs like he’s mad (he fucking is) into the manor where his Mum gasps from the entry-room with his sister, “Harry?” But he is in his bedroom before she can even think to continue. “Desmond! What’s going on? What did you do?”

Just…he was supposed to be perfect. God damn it…he was supposed to be perfect before seeing Louis’s Father again. Before he was allowed to be less than perfect and less than better and with the chance of running whatever chance of forgiveness he might have been offered.

“It’s ruined. You ruined it. Like you ruin everythin’, mate,” its laugh is deep, too deep, painfully deep.

“I know, I know, I know! But I can’t,” his words are in an illogical scramble before the monster cuts in, “You can, you will.”

It’s true–stark and painful. Just more evidence that he doesn’t exist in Louis’ heart; there was never a paradise meant for him. He could never deserve it.

“Perfection is impossible by now, mate, you’re already too ruined,” it reminds cruelly.

“You’re broken. Better is possible. Your imperfections don’t make you any less,” another voice,
one of reason, screams as he clutches his head in both hands, confused. What is it? Is he fucking broken or ruined or what? Insane. He’s insane.

“Harry?”

“SHUT UP!” he roars at the crowded darkness, the veins of his neck popping. “JUST SHUT THE FUCK ALREADY!”

“Har…” God but perfection must exist for him somehow. Their beginning had been perfection, their memories are perfection. But those times are long gone by now.

He realises the voice came from an actual person…and that person is a worried Father watching his son mentally break…with an expression of such pity.

FUCK, he is so fucking tired of feeling like the sucker, like he can never fucking be enough for anyone but the monster.

“Get away from me,” he sneers frostily.

“Harry,” the older male says in absolute certainty. “Just let him speak before–,”

“Get away from me.”

“Harry Styles that is enough!” his Mum’s horrified cry.

_Ha! It’s never enough._

Shouldering past his sobbing Mother the Alpha snatches his wallet, pockets that and his phone, then lets them let him go back to his little bit of bliss.

It was so perfect at the start…So perfect.

And he only comprehends six snorts down that it was perfect because he hadn’t met the monster, hadn’t met his demons. And even fuckin’ at the start he was simply _broken_, the monster is what ruined him.

Perfection exists with Louis, with Louis and Harry. Only them. Not Louis and addicted demon.

It’s too late now—it’s always too late for him.

That night Harry doesn’t go back to his family’s estate, doesn’t even go _home_. Just lets one of the dealer’s pretty boys take him to bed. When he falls over his just as emaciated frame Harry is higher than the sky, when he can do nothing but sob jaggedly, “paradise, paradise,” in the crook of the prostitute’s throat he is rock bottom low.

When he’s had enough the boy with the thick hair and almost black, drugged eyes, takes six grand rather than six hundred and mutters with a spiteful edge, _The world broke you too soon, hon. A real pity._ Don’t we all know it?

When he passes out it’s to echoes that resemble ruins more.

If he wakes up six thousand pounds less rich he doesn’t comment.

If he joins breakfast but can’t finish before running to the bathroom and purging it all up his parents and Gemma do not comment.

If he ends the night at some party with Grimmy and powder on his nose…there is no one to
comment.

And if he rips himself apart all over again there will be no one to care.

-o-

Another week wasted in bed. With the same sheen sweat over his twitching muscles, the same itch to his skin that marks the demons’ constant appears to tear right through the frail membrane, the same throbbing head that marks the nails being driven through his skull to his brain, the same broken, pitiful sobs.

God, it’s such old news.

In this week he doesn’t use his voice, too terrified to hear the shit in his head materialize in his vocals. Another strenuous battle.

How many more before this war is over?

He just doesn’t know how much more of this he can take.

Because he wins and wins and wins but none of these triumphs help him take the last steps ahead of him.

What he needs is answers. Answers only one person, one Omega, one blessed boy, can grant him.

Somehow he does it; drags his trembling form out of bed for the first time this week and just… locates his latest insignificant stash.

“I need him more,” he tells the darkness, almost numb, drained. In this state the Alpha takes them to the bathroom, flushes all the white down for what he hopes to be the last fucking time.

When the monster reels its malicious head back to release a blade-like roar Harry only can brace on the counterpane and breathe, with more conviction, “I need him. I don’t need you anymore.” There is no response.

Ten minutes anon it hits him—a lightning bolt to the head. It’s as quiet as it’s even been in his mind. Is this wrong? Does this mean I’m a vegetable now? Nothing left?


When he dares to look in the mirror…he sees it, too. A resemblance of an individual, a someone. A broken someone with a sweaty, sickly pale face, pale lips, matted hair, and bruises underneath his eyes.

There is someone in those eyes. Someone he is so close to being.

When he showers for two hours, when he brushes his teeth five times, mouth washes even more so, combs his damp, knotted hair out…he looks closer to that someone.

When he smiles it’s almost…a nice look (has he always had dimples?).

When he emerges from his hellhole for the first time in a week no one comments, but the relief is stark in their careful stares.

When he doesn’t stop smiling no one comments, but the pride is in their careful stares, his Father’s careful stare.
When he doesn’t quit, and joins his family in the sitting room, sits criss-cross beside Gemma and looks through all their old pictures, no one comments, but they care.

God, he smiles and smiles and smiles, and so do they.

And when he sinks to his knees that night Harry just…prays. *God, if you’re still there, thank you for saving him. Thank you for giving him the chances he deserves. Thank you for doing the same for me.*

And for the first time he trusts in someone bigger than him. Trusts in himself, too.

*Thank you. Thank you for having him leave me. I needed to do this on my own. I…understand now.*

&&

Louis doesn’t know when breathing became painless—when the ache had faded enough to allow the fresh air to be tasted, *felt.* But he’s sure it’s somewhere throughout these eight months that have brought him to *better.* In time…Louis learnt so much about himself. Time has brought him this reprieve, this healing.

Louis doesn’t know when the life to the furious inferno in his veins was snuffed out. Doesn’t know when the hole in his chest quit ripping wide open with every thought of what *was taken from him, what he sacrificed.*

Yet…even with all this progress his touches *haven’t* faded.

At the start it’s a constant bother—the constant question trapped in his head: why won’t they just leave? No matter how he scrubs at his heart, adjusts his stitches, not matter how much time or distance or just…Why? Why? Why not?

In search of the answers Louis hunts down all the shit that’s said to heal the soul. Reads the books, meditates, hits the drinks (*far too much tea*), parties until he can say he’s fine and mean it, sobs his throat raw until he thinks *I’m not fine, I’m not fine,* admits that he fucked up a little too, does all this out of the desperation to find the least expected.

(So much so that at first he refuses to even *think it—too resentful, too brokenhearted.* God, he didn’t ever want to hear the truth.)

All that shit meant to heal the soul…utter rubbish.

For a while denial had set in; *it’s okay. It’s fine.*

Yeah, well, complete rubbish there, too. It hadn’t been okay, or fine, *ever.* And one night, when Jay claimed otherwise, Louis *finally fucking said it,* “No, Mum. It’s never been okay. It’s never been *fine.* But I hope it will be.”

There is so much he misses in these months; so there is so much less he doesn’t miss. There is nothing to regret; no hint of remorse to be found in any crevasse of his heart, in any fiber of his soul.

Louis misses and misses and misses. Misses hushed conversations at midnight, because the Alpha wanted quiet and Louis assumed that meant whispers, misses how *free he felt.* Misses loud conversations at midnight, because the Alpha loved noise and Louis *was the noise he wanted,* misses how *they always made perfect sense to each other.* Misses how effortless it once was
between them, misses how their *perfect edges fit* as well as their jagged ones. Misses how sometimes Harry would come home *drunk and alone*, misses how sometimes *they’d get drunk together, neither alone*. Misses how *invincible* they felt, how *invincible* they are—misses being there to *prove so*.

Louis doesn’t miss more often (at first). Doesn’t miss the *followers*, the paranoia, doesn’t miss the whine of the floorboards underneath his weight, doesn’t miss the white residue so often left on his nose, doesn’t miss how much he *hated him more than loved him sometimes*, doesn’t miss feeling *so alone* because he couldn’t *go to his Harry anymore*, and he can’t be there when Harry *needs him*. He doesn’t miss the seclusion, the separation. God, Louis doesn’t miss *watching him lose himself* and doing *nothing but try to be enough*, doesn’t miss that he couldn’t *understand that because he couldn’t help him doesn’t mean he wasn’t enough* for him.

And Louis regrets so much at first, too. All those stupid nights they’d lay on their sides and stare stare stare in awe with their hearts in their eyes and no bloody words in their mouths. All those stupid ‘almost-happened’s, all those stupid times they’d make it work in the wrong ways, just *doin’* what they could and not their best; regrets that they never had the chance to say all those things they needed to, regrets that he never soberly told him, told him how all those years, and all the years to come, were his because oh God Louis loves him, he loves him, he loves him; regrets that he won’t ever stop loving him because now all the broken pieces he’s saved and brought back fit his broken pieces perfectly.

But…the remorse died shortly with his rage, his resentment, his heartbreak.

It wasn’t the books—he couldn’t even stand to grasp what he’d read because he wasn’t truly trying to move on from *the person*, but the scar said person *left him with*. Couldn’t sit in his family’s sitting room without remembering how he’d let Harry *watch him pretend to fuckin’ read* because he wanted to *simple enjoy the feeling, simply comforted by the knowledge that Harry’s stare never strayed, there was more than demons in that stare*. There was a lot in that stare. More than Louis could really see at that point.

It wasn’t the meditation—Louis isn’t *Harry*—could only *keep still* because his mind seemed to always *find him anyway*. All the time he considered wasted, but found to be what he *needed*. To recollect his memories; to remember all those times that came to shape who he became, who he *is*, were with *Harry or because of him*.

How even irriitated by his very *presence*, twelve year old Harry saw *more than an irritating ten year old boy*. Even though he hadn’t *said so* (he also finds Harry has always had an issue using his words), Louis realises it was in his *actions*. Jeez, Louis must have an issue using his *eyes*, because *he didn’t see it*. No matter what the older boy would stop at Louis’s house and walk him to school because Louis claimed he was too “mature” to have rides, and would only walk. The older boy *agreed with his every rambling statement*: “I think everyone is bad for everyone’s health. Like people make other people sick in any way they can. Like mean words or mean actions or meanness to their minds. I mean if I told you I hated you, you’d be sad and then go home and cry and miss me and then I would be bad for your health because I hurted you, right?” Ten, before Harry ever left.

*“Please! Please, just wait until I turn eighteen too. Then let’s get plastered together for the first time, say words we don’t and do mean, and snog. Then let’s wake up and still be best friends.”* Seventeen, when he’d just come home to him at nineteen.

*“You are goin’ to come home right now! I demand you come home! You are going to bond me and mate me and make me happy and love me love me love me proper.”* Thirteen, a miracle phone call, a miracle surprise return from him at fifteen.
Oh, God, there are so many times he told him he loved him; Louis just couldn’t read between the lines. All those confident sweet confirmations—damn you, Styles, why are you so stupidly silent all the time?

But he was always there for Louis, even if he couldn’t be there in person. Over the phone he’d helped him through his first panic attack at fifteen because, “I don’t know how to be who they want me to be, Haz! I can’t be that p-pr-precious Omega! I-I-I don’t know how…” And damn was it hypocritical of Harry to whisper from his hellhole what he did, “You don’t have to be anyone you aren’t, love. You’re an Alpha inside, then fine, act like it. You’re an Omega, don’t act like it. It’s only your decision to make. They will be proud of whoever you end up being. You could be a drug addict or end up a gambler or forever a little adorable brat and they will be so proud of you, love you so much. You be who you are, Louis. You can’t ever fail yourself.” Christ, why couldn’t he see that applied to him, too? And why didn’t Louis tell him? “I-I-I miss you, Haz. I don’t like sleepin’ alone. C-C-Come home.” No, too selfish to always have him. A tired final response, too tired of a seventeen year old, “I’ll always try to come home to you, love.” And fuck him for just leaving the second he was sure Louis was able to breathe, the second he was able to hold his own.

But oh God Louis hadn’t minded back then, loved him for being his temporary crutch. Even when he couldn’t afford to be on the phone, if Louis left him a voicemail sounding anything less than happy, he’d never stop calling back. Didn’t stop until Louis answered at call two hundred and one—that Alpha loved him, and he (selfishly) hopes it hasn’t changed with all these fuck ups.

What hurts him the worst now is that Louis can’t be there for him when he needs him the most. That now, after all these years, Harry-I-Don’t-Need-Help-Ever-Styles falls to pieces and wants him to help, but he just can’t.

Even now Louis can’t help but wish time travel existed. So he could fall into past scenes just the same and experience them over and over until he returned to the present with just the knowledge as to why Harry never asked for what was obviously needed all those opportunities ago.

How could he give Louis everything he ever needed, but deny any reciprocation to such kindness? How could he do that to them? Because damn it what hurts Harry hurts him, but even with his distorted outlook…Louis made his endless love and loyalty to his Alpha so fucking apparent with his every breath. But…Harry might have thought he did the same.

It wasn’t the damned drinks; neither alcohol nor healthy smoothies nor tea—he will never try to feel better by drinking again. Never. Because he hadn’t cried so hard as he did those nights, blinded by those cruel tears, enough to knock over his wineglass, and end up on his knees, sobbing and holding onto the broken shards that reminded him so much of himself, of them. The smoothies were just unpleasant all around—reminded him of when Harry hadn’t been coked up and would drink those smoothies to get his starved stomach by. It tastes like baby food, too. And the tea…after their row only reminds him of his own malice, and how he should’ve talked to him. But he knows now…he did the right thing. He did.

The parties helped the least—reminded him of so many parties spent together. Birthday parties. Halloween parties. Christmas parties—the only time Harry ever seemed to be a little boy, and Louis knows it’s because he could force Louis to match stupid cable-knit kitten sweaters with him (even now he loves those bloody things), and God he hopes it’s also because those were the rare times Louis was allowed to gift him. Those letters he’d written on stupid historically designed paper (because Harry loves aged shit) to him every day he was away. The picture book with all his dumb black-and-whites and all their memories, them. The stupid mugs with their names and silly sayings. The bracelets with their initials. That stupid meal he worked damned hard to make him. And so many more. Louis’ hope is spurred on by the excitement sparked in him when he’d finally
just get to his gift, carefully (like a bloody snail–the Omega had always tried to snatch it and unwrap it himself but Harry would never have it) open it and just stare (always wordless) before looking up with tear-glazed affection and appreciation and just.

So many parties–some quite lame and others quite wicked. Just random nights with random people, drunken or high (Louis never wanted more than weed–God but Harry even told him, “I don’t need to wind down, Lou. I need to fuckin’ live. I need to feel like I can...Just I don’t need to chill.” Louis hadn’t thought he’d quit weed and start up ecstasy and then work his way up to cocaine because ecstasy was, “an amazing rush, sure, but not quite what I’m lookin’ for.” Louis will never think he was looking for cocaine. Never). But...that frat party changed that. Louis finally saw it, saw the addiction taking root, saw him lie straight to his face, “I’ll be back. ‘M goin’ to the bathroom.” Only to catch him five minutes later, taking that stupid bitches (Maxine’s) hand to head upstairs. Louis couldn’t help but follow, a lost puppy, couldn’t help but watch through the opening to the bedroom door as he snorted up. For once Louis didn’t open his mouth, just had some bloke, Asher or Andy or something take him home and asked to be repaid. Louis had been keen on doin’ just that–by telling the entire pre-Council population that Maxine said it was tiny as fuck, like a little ringworm, and had the picture to prove it. It wasn’t difficult to snap a picture of that assholes little prick–just a silky little, “pull it out, and close your eyes, baby.” Done–though the conversation hadn’t exactly blown over with Harry thereafter. Up until recently that was their nastiest row. Louis remembers it; his first glimpse of what caged him.

When the boy lets himself into the room (uninvited; which whatever, he’s above invitations by now), he does not expect to find what he does. One: Harry Styles is obviously asleep. Two: the scent of smoke is thick in the air, permeates his senses more so than the scent of Harry himself.

It’s half past noon, but it’s very dim in the room, and Louis looks to the windows to find them... missing. Well, not really, they’re concealed by armor; the sort of steel plate one would expect to see in those zombie films where the sole survivors have formed high-tech civilizations and steeled any glass to keep the zombies out. As far as Louis knows zombies do not exist. So he cannot understand the reason behind the suspicious suppression.

And he might be curious if he wasn’t utterly confused. It’s odd that Harry has done this; he’s claimed time and time that he loves the morning sunshine–the only time the sun really shows itself on this bloody island. But still what the hell? Who loves to wake up early enough to catch the sun anyway? He’s probably changed his mind–for the better.

Oh well.

Louis shakes himself, and tiptoes over to the bed frame, pleased that he’s managed to be quiet enough to–a calloused hand seizes his wrist and yanks him down. Viciously. At the abrupt handling Louis gasps. It’s a short-livid shock because then those hazy eyes droop with realisation. “Don’t creep up on me,” he mutters, and then rolls over onto his side to fall right back asleep. Wow, tired much?

A bit put out, Louis snivels indignantly before forcing himself under the warm, plush blankets beside him. Little whines are enough to get the Alpha to open his arms for him with a slow, sleepy smile. As the boy winds his chocolate curls in his hands, he presses stubbornly, “Wake up! Wake up, wake up!”

“’M tired,” he rasps, so thickly Alpha–the tone that causes Louis to tingle from head to toe. “Just be quiet for now and sleep, paradise.”

“But–,” he tries to protest anyway.

“Shh.” Louis almost snaps back, but the words are lost because his arm rounds his waist, hitches
his shirt so there is skin-to-skin contact. The sensation startles him. It’s new, a fierce wash of pure
heat throughout his entire body.

“Oh,” he breathes softly, in wonder, as he’s crushed to him, mouth to his jawline. “I…uh…Haz.
I—,” because he is confused, and doesn’t know how to be quiet when he’s–,

“Shh,” the Alpha quiets him once more. “Please, paradise, just be quiet. This is okay, yeah?”
Why do you even have to ask? Oh, God. It’s back—that Omega love he shoved and shoved at until
it’d been lost to his unconscious mind; always there, but unnoticed.

Louis exhales shakily, but nods, too caught up in how Harry’s jaw ticks against his mouth now.
“Just be quiet…And lemme just…find comfort in you.”

And it’s so back…It’s all so back. Like it never went away. Oh, no.

As his heart skips skips skips too many beats in his chest Louis whispers, hopes it’s inaudible to
them both, “Yes…Alpha.” Wishful thinkin’.

A silent moment stills between them as Louis swallows around how much saliva has pooled in his
mouth. “Say that again. Louder for me.”

One last time…I’ll just do it one last time, the boy convinces, though it’s a lie. Complete bullshit.
Because the emotion that flashes neon in his mind tells him so.

Breaths short, shallow with this intense current, this hot rush, Louis doesn’t hear himself give into
the fire, but, “Yes, Alpha.”

There’s a hoarse sound that Louis doesn’t know what to make of, too scared to ask why it causes
his tummy to pool with heat. After this, he will let these feelings go. Just…one last time. “Again.”
I promise after this…I’ll stop; I’ll accept that friendship is all we will ever have.

“Yes, Alpha,” oh no why is his voice all soft and purr-like? Why is his body reacting like this? All
ready to be touched.

Stealing any sense from him Harry’s arm constricts, and his mouth is hot on the curve of Louis’
ear, uneven breaths so hot that Louis’s entire body hums with the charge. And he’s…he’s so
ready to be taken. In his pants he’s so swollen, his cock is so swollen and achy, and oh, God, the
weird sensation of slick, more so than what he produced his first heat, makes him bite his lip to
keep from whimpering. It’s so much…He can’t be…He just can’t, because Harry will hate him.
Harry will never want to be around him or touch him because he can’t control his stupid
emotions or his stupid Omega body or–, “Hush,” a husky command, an Alpha tone that melts
him from the inside out. “It’s…” his voice loses its tenor, “You’re okay. You’re okay with me…
Tell me you’re okay. Tell me ‘m not…tell me ‘m not hurtin’ you. I’m not bein’…Comfort me,
paradise.”

Louis is soupy; Louis is lost to it. Oh, God, Harry never asks for comfort. And Louis has so much
pent up just for him. All in love Omega and–, “What if you don’t fancy my comfort?” he asks
breathlessly.

“I will,” Harry claims unsteadily. “I fancy everything about you.” Oh, Haz…

“I love you,” the Omega breathes silkily, kisses his jaw softly. It’s not like he’s never done that…
except he’s never done that. Never dared. “I love you so much. I hate it when you leave me, when
you go away. But I won’t ever stop you. Just promise you will always come home.” Another soft
kiss to his jawline, because Louis likes the smooth, strong feel underneath his mouth. Loves it.
“I promise,” a sharp breath as the Alpha shudders a bit, only enough to make Louis’ lashes flutter. “I promise I will always come home to you.” To you.

Just like that his heart soars, and his head swims with all the sensory input. The scent: smoky cologne and Alpha. The lack of sight because his lashes refuse to lift, too lost in it all. The taste of his skin on his mouth; hot hot hot. The feel: the hypersensitive charge on his skin everywhere Harry’s touching him. Oh, God, oh God, yes. Louis plants a kiss, wetter because his mouth is parted. “Yeah? Only me?”

“Only you.” So very Alpha–confident, definite.

“Who’s comforting who here?” his voice is breathy.

“Don’t stop, pup.” I never want to.

Louis noses at his jawline, more than aware that his hand’s sneaking up his side. Shivers wreck down his spine; yesyesyes. “You’re more than my best friend,” he mumbles, just talking because it’s too much; his hand is so rough, so large, and how it runs over his skin makes him throb everywhere. “I just love you, Alpha. Jus’ love you.”

“Fuck,” a drawn out, husky sound that encourages this, him, “Don’t wanna be ‘round no one else. I don’t. ‘Azza, I don’t. Please, don’t make me.”

“I won’t,” it’s a fierce growl–Louis feels it everywhere, and whimpers weirdly (all pitchy and needy; a sound he’s not made before). “Christ, I won’t, baby. Mine. All mine.”

Frantically, the boy yanks at tuffs of his hair, like he doesn’t have his attention already, and whimpers anxiously around the white-wash heat, “Haz. Haz I feel…I feel weird.” I feel so good. Don’t stop.

“I know. I know, baby. ‘M sorry. Just…give me this. I won’t do nothin’ else. Promise.” There is so much wrong with those words…but his hand makes its way between them, fingertips brushing his little peaked nipples. “Uh,” another weird sound spills from his loose tongue as what must be pleasure flares, runs straight to his throbbing, drippy cock, and his swollen, needy hole.

“Keep talkin’, baby. Don’t stop.”

Through little shuddery breaths Louis stumbles on his mindless words, “You make me happy. You make me so happy when you’re bein’ nice to me. Make me happy when you’re not so nice. You always make me so happy. You—,” his thumb brushes his nipple with more force, and Louis mewls derisorily loud, “Oh, God, I love you.”

A dark husky growl that makes him arch like the needy little creature he’s been reduced to. “You love this. Nobody’s ever touched you like this, huh, pup? You’re so sensitive.”

“No,” Louis whimpers, doesn’t care that he sounds like an absolute loser. Just he never wanted anyone’s touch but his own. “Tried…but I didn’t…let them.”

In an abrupt rush the boy is flat on his back, and there’s a heavy body looming, Harry’s face buried in his neck, breath so hot Louis shivers, all white hot sensation as his fingers ache from how desperately he’s clutching him.

“Why? Why not, baby? Why am I allowed to touch you like this?”

Really Louis doesn’t know, but his mouth just, “’Cause you’re my Alpha.”
This earns him a growl so animalistic, so forceful, Louis trembles with it, trembles and trembles as his head spins. And he can do nothing but feel, but let it happen. Let his mouth travel down his throat softly until it’s tight to that special place everyone talks about. And then sharp canines are light around him as Harry tongues at the skin that’s connected with his every nerve.

Unbidden Louis keens high in his throat, flooded with what must be ecstasy. Nothing exists outside of it. “Alpha. Alpha, please. I dunno…I need…I…”

Just like that his mouth starts in, sucks in delicious ways until Louis pants, all that heat coiled tightightight in his belly; his trousers must be sopping, he’s never been so wet. “Goin’ to stop, now, okay, para–,”

“No,” Louis gasps, fisting his hair so desperately his face is buried where he needs it to be; his legs spread on their own accord and bind around his waist, trying to arch so there is no distance. “No. ‘Az, please, don’t stop.”

“I can’t. I don’t…This is wrong. I don’t wanna take your first experience with this feelin’. That…I don’t deserve…that. You…deserve better.”

Louis doesn’t hear him, just that Alpha timbre, says whatever it is to keep him. “No. No. I already ‘ad my first experience wi’ someone. It’s…Please.”

“You…what?” the Alpha snarls, braced on his hands now to stare down at him; Louis opens his eyes, all dewy and pleasure-ridden to stare into his pretty jade ones; pupils blown, an intimidating fury lurks in their depths…But there’s more, something worse. Something…bad.

Something that shoves him from his trance as he blinks rapidly, hopes it’s his imagination. It’s not. As his flush burns Louis realises he lied. He never lies to Harry. But, damn it, Harry lied to him. So now they are even. As to make him burn a bit, to make him accept that this friendship is so much more, Louis repeats, “I’ve been with someone.”

Canines flash, white and menacing as Harry snarls, “When? Who? What did they do? Are you okay? Do I need to–?” at the sharp blade, the true threat, that are his words, Louis stumbles hastily, “Um! It was A-Andrew! U-U-Um, ‘emember that party? Well ‘m sure you do ‘cause I didn’t go home wi’ you. And well I just…I kinda lied when I said Li came to get him. R-Really Andrew offered me a r-r-ride. And I’m sure you know um Maxine,” the name is a venomous hiss—that bitch, “wasn’t with him. I-I-It was me.”

The fury in his stare pins Louis to the mattress. But his tone has become impassive, calculating, “You took that picture?”

More than a bit terrified, Louis answers as short as possible, “Yeah.”

“Why?”

“Because he was just…an arse,” as he says this his own residual upset lashes at him. “I needed to get back at–,”

Without warning the Alpha hefts himself up to a stance, and staggers drunkenly, braced on the bed frame. Louis only notices now that he’s not dressed—only in pants. And he tries not to notice this, but the bulge is just so noticeable, huge and–, “I’m goin’ to fuckin’ murder him. I am going to kill him for touching you. You aren’t his to touch–,”

The territorial note to his voice makes Louis warm, too warm, on fire. “I-I-It was wanted, though. I wanted it.” Stop lying, a little irritating voice blares, you won’t ever want someone else like this.
“I don’t give a fuck,” Harry snarls with such malice Louis flinches. He’s never sounded so… sadistic. “You’re fucking mi–,” Seems their little moment is over because Harry catches himself. Then, “I’m just going to fuckin’ kill him. I have to. I HAVE TO. I can’t let it go.”

Louis shivers at the Alpha in his voice, torn between his Omega and his conscious mind. The inward animal that purrs, ‘yes, Alpha, I’m yours’, and the boy who knows this isn’t like him, this is…wrong. “No. You don’t. I don’t belong to anyone. A-A-And as long as nobody finds out, which I’m sure they won’t if Andrew knows what’s good for ‘im…it’s n-n-nothing–,” It was never anything to begin with.

“It’s something to me,” Harry bites back, with an eerie edge to his voice. “You…You are supposed to…to…” to what? To wait? Wait for what? You? But how long, Haz? I’m already seventeen. ‘You aren’t allowed to be touched. You’re off limits to everyone. YOU ARE NOT FUCKING THEIRS! YOU ARE…YOU’RE MINE.” The desperation to his voice causes Louis’ heart to feel like it’s been stabbed. An unforgiving blade.

Whispers, “B-But I’m not, Haz. ‘M really not.” Don’t play with my emotions.

“I know,” a defeated breath that sends an angry hurt reeling through him. “I don’t know what’s wrong with me. Lou, something’s wrong with me. I just…I need to sleep it off. ‘M sorry. I don’t know,” he stumbles, sounding so lost, so terrified that Louis’s heart is fisted by compassion. Confusion. “H-Haz, what’s wrong? Are you…okay?”

There’s a pause, then, “Yeah. Yeah…I just…tired. Just…tired.” You’re always tired these days.

It’s more than that–it’s in the terrified distress in his eyes. “I…You…I left because I saw you. Um with Maxine. I-I-It upset me. You lied to me. I thought…I thought we told each other everything.” Seems it’s just been me.

“We do,” he claims seriously, but there’s a note to his voice. A note anyone else would have missed. A guilty note that is enough to tell Louis it’s true; he’s been deceived.

“No anymore,” Louis says with a cold bite. “You didn’t tell me you started snorting coke. You didn’t tell me you even talked to Maxine. You don’t tell me anything. And everything you have been tellin’ me doesn’t fucking add up. Don’t treat me like ‘m stupid, Harry.”

“I don’t have to tell you shit,” the Alpha snarls, defensive because he must know he’s been caught. Caught in his web of lies. “I have no reason to tell you everythin’ and anythin’. Just ‘cause you’re stupid enough to tell me doesn’t mean I’m stupid enough to tell you.”

Ouch. Another dull knife. An unbearable pain that fuels his sudden fire. Louis sits up, and hisses, ‘I’m your best friend! We are supposed to have…to have that trust!’

“You’re not my best friend,” nonchalance hurts, Louis finds.

But he does not flinch, simply lifts his chin and acts with the same nonchalance. Like he’s not hurt at all. “I am and you know–,”

“How about this? You’re just a pretty little lay,” the Alpha tells him with a malice Louis has never had directed at him before. Water angrily crawls up to his beach–so much for paradise.

“Just wanted you to give it up to me, all of it, all you have, so I could just fuck off like Andrew. What would you do, Lou? Take a picture of my cock? Can’t say it’s tiny. Can’t say you’re not a whore for letting me hit it.”

As his heart runs away from him, blood trails left in his wake, Louis disconnects with his emotions. Sees a stranger before him. “Well it’s a good fuckin’ thing I never opened my legs for
you, then, innit? He’s a better fuck then you for sure.”

“How about you fuckin’ compare it?”

“There’s nothin’ to compare,” Louis says simply, stands up and straightens his clothes and hair as he carries on, “You’re not even worth a try. Why don’t you go lick Maxine’s whore cunt, huh? And her bonding spot while you’re at it. You couldn’t take care of me sexually if you fuckin’ tried. I’d like to not fake all the noises, ya know? Tried to be nice, I did. But oh well, you can just sniff coke off her tits, too. Oh, wait, you like arse, so sniff it off her fucking flat arse. Meanwhile any Alpha I want will please me, and take care of me like you never could.” Numb, Louis opens the door and storms out without a backwards glance; but of course it’s never that easy with Harry Styles.

“Don’t walk away from me, Louis.”

Louis wishes him farewell with the finger.

“GOD DAMN IT, LOUIS.” A roar that causes his hands to shake with anxiety as he hopes someone will come to investigate so he can leave without what he’s sure will happen, happening. But of course not, the two often play like this; it’s nothing out of the ordinary. Except it’s real.

He’s at the head of the stairs when a hand turns him, and he’s yanked off his feet. Draped over his shoulder, Louis shrieks at the top of his lungs, “NO! NO! Go do what you have to fuckin’ do! I don’t care anymore! YOU ALWAYS FUCKIN’ MAKE IT CLEAR JUST HOW YOU FUCKING FEEL ABOUT ME! You made it clear that this isn’t even a friendship—,” a harsh hand slaps his arse so hard Louis jerks, and gasps, before lashing back. His nails bite into his bare back. So satisfied with how he breaks the skin, red left in his wake, Louis snarls, “Oops! I think I left a mark! WHAT WOULD MAXINE FUCKIN’ SAY?”

Another harsh slap that causes Louis to start, voice broken with how loud he’s being, “HOW DARE YOU! DON’T SLAP MY–,” one more. Oh, God, under the needling punishment Louis feels it all coming back. All the heated proximity, all the—No. He refuses to be a friend fuck. Never. “ARSE! You selfish motherfucker! I—” they reenter the dimly lit room, and the door is slammed so hard the borders shake as he’s abruptly placed on his feet.

Impulsively, the boy lashes out at him; tosses slaps and nails and punches. By the time he’s finished, he’s breathing shortly with exertion, and his wrists are confined by Harry’s unreasonably large hands. “L-Let me go.”

“No.”
“Harry–,”
“No.”
“I–,”
“NO.”

It’s final. The dam bursts as Louis surrenders, collapsing on his chest, burying his face there in hopes that his scalding tears aren’t detected. “I’m sorry,” Harry says hoarsely, lifts him by the backs of his thighs and carries him with an eerie grace to the bed. “I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean that. You’re my everything. My very best. You’re mine.” But not your Omega. Just your friend.

A pitiful noise tumbles past his salty lips as Louis trembles under the force of his tears. “Please, don’t cry. I love you. I love you so much. I didn’t mean it. Not any of it.”

Not the love I need. Why? I was just feeling over it, and you had to…to… “A-A-Am I just a pity f-f-friend? A pity fuck? Do…Do…you e-e-even want me a-a-at all?”
“No! No, you’re the most important person in my life. You’re all I have and want and need. I’m sorry I lied. I’m sorry I don’t communicate like I should. I’m just…I don’t understand what it is myself, Louis. I just...Just something in my head...Louis, it ain’t right. It’s all screwed up. I need...I need to f-f-fix it. I will. I just...I...I’m so sorry.”

Louis sniffles, “P-Promise me. Promise me you w-w-won’t lie to me ever again.” But his pinky is left cold, empty.

“I can’t.”

As his hands ball into little fists, Louis bursts into flames of fury. “I ask for so little,” he shouts into his chest, “And I get nothing! You’re so selfish! You’re so fuckin’ selfish with yourself!”

“And you’re far too selfless with yourself, pup,” a controlled, sage response.

“Don’t you dare! Don’t fuckin’ play big brother while you’re fuckin’ at it! I know what’s best for you blah blah blah bullshit! Your mouth...was just on my fucking bonding spot! A-A-And it was weird! It wasn’t us. But it was better than you actin’ like my brother when we both fuckin’ know you’re not! You couldn’t play that role if you fuckin’ tried! You adore me! YOU ADORE ME! And it’s not in a friend way. But when you finally fuckin’ realise it’ll be too late! I’m goin’ to leave you one day! When I’m stronger, when I’m better, when I...when I...can, I’m going to leave you, Harry Styles!”

A silence swarms, then, softly, resigned, “I’m sorry.” That’s all. That’s it.

“I hate you,” Louis hisses, and doesn’t have to thrash to break free–Harry lets it happen. “I hate you! I hate you f-f-for not caring enough about my feelings! For stringing me along! I h-h-hate you most for makin’ it so I can’t help but love you!”

“’S okay, paradise,” it’s another breath as he sits there, “I hate me, too. It’s okay.” God, what is wrong with him? Why is he so pitiful?

“I won’t feel bad for you now,” he says frigidly, on his feet again.

“Don’t want you to. I never want you to see me as less of an Alpha. I just...The shit in my head...It’s not right. But I will fix it. I will.”

“With your fucking drugs?” Louis sneers, flicking his fringe. “Well have fun with that and Maxine and all your fucking not right bullshit. A little difficulty in life causes you to think you have it bad? Okay. Sure. You’re such a little bitch.”

The betrayal that flares in his blank stare causes Louis to regret the words, though not for long because Harry snarls, “I will have a better fuckin’ time without you! You little spoilt inconsiderate cruel whore!” Ha!

Louis doesn’t flinch. “I’m inconsiderate? Okay.” In seconds he turns on the lights, ignores the sudden flare in his eyes to make it to his desk. Like he knows what he’s thinking, the Alpha stands and follows, “What are you doing?”

“’M taking all my shit back. Oh, matter of fact, I should just destroy it! Ruin it for anyone else.”

As the Alpha stands there, all wilted curls and tired bruises underneath his eyes, he blanches. “No. No, Louis, don’t! Don’t do—,” but he kneels to the very last drawer and yanks it open to find the crisp paper of one of his endless letters, rips it in half, lets the pieces flutter to the carpet. Standing there, Harry flinches, then whispers, “Please. Stop. You’re...You’re ruining...You’re...”
“Is your head feelin’ bett’ah now, H?” he asks sweetly, opens another drawer and oh what do you know? A mug. Huh.

Blinded by his hurt, Louis reels his arm back and lets it shatter against the wall. Satisfaction wells up at the sight of the bits. Though it’s stolen when Harry shoves past him to the drop before the largely shattered pieces, mumbling, “No, no, no…”

Louis kneels in search of the photos, what will hurt the most. But when he opens the album book…there is nothing. “What did you do with our pictures, Harry?”

With the bits in his hands, the Alpha keeps his head low, and remains silent. Louis storms over to him and hisses, “What did you do with them, damn it?”

Those horribly hurt eyes lift to meet his as he carefully lowers the mugs’ remains to the desk, and points to the far wall. When the boy follows his stare…his heart just…Crumbles. It’s a collage of all their pictures, ones Louis has never seen before, more than several hundred taking over almost the entire wall. “Oh,” it’s a revolted breath.

“I can take them down,” the Alpha says coolly. “You can have them back. I just thought it would…I dunno. Make it better at night. Well I was fucking wrong,” it’s an enraged sneer by the end.

As he stands Louis flinches, flinches like he’s been stabbed.

“In fact, fuck it, I will!”

“No,” Louis whispers, clinging to his legs, wraps around his gangly limbs so he can’t move without toppling over and cries, “DON’T YOU DARE!”

“You did it to me!” it’s unstable, broken.

“Because I’m impulsive! Because you hurt me! Because you…I’m a tosser! I know it! But, please, don’t…don’t tear it down! D-Don’t ruin it, too.”

There’s a heavy, unsteady breath, then, “You are an impulsive little tosser. I won’t ruin it. I don’t ruin shit unlike some people. I will have to fuckin’ find a way to make that letter perfect, to fix that mug.”

Louis hides his face in his thigh, hides his little smile. “But you’re a mean t-t-wat. And you can’t make anything perfect once it’s already been broken.”

“That’s if it’s been broken too many times. If it’s broken once there is a chance you can make it perfect again.”

Louis sniffles. “Nobody likes perfect anyway. We aren’t perfect.”

“That’ll be my fault.”

“Stop that,” the boy whispers, confusion knitting his brows. “Where is this comin’ from? Where is my Harry?” How long has it been since I lost him?

At this, the Alpha shrugs, then smiles wistfully down at him. Louis’s tummy clenches up. “He’s still here. Just been broken a few times already is all.”

Oh, no… “What if I can’t put myself back together as the perfect boy you thought I was?”
Louis noses at his thigh, then comforts honestly, “You’ll always be perfect for me. Always.”

“But…I’m…I’ve been broken too many times.”

“Doesn’t matt’ah. One day, Haz, we will fit like we’re ‘possed to.”

“H…How many times does a person have to break before they’re ruined, paradise?” A scared, desperate question. One Louis does not have the answer to.

Sadness sweeps through him, though he doesn’t understand why. Harry isn’t ruined. It’s impossible to ruin him. “I dunno, Haz. I…I don’t know.”

“Well…I think one day we will find out.”

Louis hadn’t listened, hadn’t read between the lines, hadn’t understood. But it was not his fault—he couldn’t have been expected to have known what he meant by that, because far before that point the Alpha was impossible to understand. But that…that was just the start of their great depression.

The sobs didn’t do anything, but empty him out for five minutes and then cause the jagged ache in his throat to intensify until he was clutching his old stupid scarf to fulfill his lungs needs. Nope. No healing there.

And though the confession that he also fucked up a bit did help, it certainly didn’t heal. To accept that it wasn’t only Harry’s fault, because as his best friend he should have been able to read between his blurred lines, but…he didn’t, couldn’t. For a little while that ignorance was bliss, until the truth razed and torn and broke them, broke him, broke Harry one more time.

But Louis has found that he still can’t help but look on the bright side—his jagged edges fit Harry’s to perfection now.

The freedom is so refreshing; he reckons he’s a bit fucked up…because surely someone isn’t supposed to be pleased by this. But that someone will never be him—he refuses to look back on the shit times, refuses to be the negative elephant in a room now.

This must be the reason that Louis never could let go—never took those Alphas who courted him seriously, never listened when Niall spoke around a mouthful of pizza, “Lizten, Lou, if that idiot don’t love you by now, he ain’t ever gonna love you,” or when he snubbed anyone who dared imply the same. See, Louis always wins, should have known he wasn’t losing to begin with, because no person ends their triumphs without blood-loss, bruises, and broken pieces. Some battles are worse than others, but those are the most gratifying to win.

He nursed his battle wounds, and he has won many battles, but the war isn’t over. Close, but not quite—close enough that he can taste it.

He is okay, but mostly everything has changed.

Because his Alpha is still not okay.

Because his Alpha left him with these hideous scars that might never fade.

Because he left his Alpha to his manic mind and demons, left him to the force of the truth…

Because he is not sorry, because he will never be sorry for being unable to fight a war that was never his to fight. Because he definitely won’t be sorry when Harry is okay and proud of himself for finally fucking winning all on his own, for finally being better than what he let the drugs, the past, make him into, for finally being the Alpha he needs to be.
Because he has eternal faith in himself and his belief; and he believes that this will all work out because *at last they fit how they were always meant to*. In the future this won’t all just be a nightmare...no, it will *always* be there reality, but now Louis is able to deal with the remnants of Harry’s broken mind. And he’s ready to deal with the overwhelming *recovery that will find them*.

He is just ready to have his Harry back. And he has already forgiven his broken Alpha, and the echoes of the boy who went through hell and couldn’t come back without demons on his shoulders and slithering through his insides. He’s forgiven *himself*, and the echoes of a boy who once thought if you couldn’t see *broken* then it just didn’t exist, of the boy who just didn’t know when to *quit*. To trust in himself.

There is still so much pain to be dealt with…and in time it will be.

But for now Louis is just ready to *go home*.

-0-

*This is a disaster. I am such a damn disaster,* Harry thinks, sneering at the man in the reflection. Despite his efforts to look decent, put together even, the man standing before him looks like he’s been through a shipwreck.

Decadent, but dressed like the water only flooded his heaving lungs. Dressed like his insides haven’t been eroded by the constant merciless overflow. Like he is put together. That is what makes that he’s in shattered pieces so *obvious*.

No matter how much food Harry shoved down his throat in these three weeks leading up to the Tomlinson’s annual charity ball, no matter how hard he hit the gym, he still looks too lean. Nowhere near what he should and used to be…but thinner since Louis’ last seen him from that relapse.

He was told the navy blue suit would bring out his colour, but he knows better than to ever believe another of his Mum’s helpers. The suit just accentuates his weight loss; the collar of the button up is too tight at the base of his neck where the tie further strangle him. The color bares the pasty colour of his constantly sweat sheen face, *emphasizes* the pale, near blue bruises underneath his demented eyes from the lack of sleep, noticeable with how his hairs been styled, loose waves at his shoulders (at least it’s just dried out, not greasy).

Christ–done with this, his shaky fingers start to yank at the initialed cufflinks, mouth curled in his disgust. Almost snarls at the Alpha in the reflection. Almost–he’s startled by a hand closing over his. Beside him, Gemma smiles hesitantly, “You look sharp, quit messin’ with it.”

“I look like a dead man walkin’,” his voice is too damned weak, tugging at the tie instead before just removing it (not this thing).

“Well that’s the appeal, babe. Like the Devil in disguise.”

*Of course*–tension seizes his shoulders, though Gemma only continues, “Here. Put this on. See if it helps.”

A bronze mask is placed in his hand. When he’s fit it over his features and tied the ends, undulated relief sweeps through him. The mask conceals the upper half of his face; which works to hide the sunken in illusion to his eyes, the deep circles beneath them.

When he is able to tear his stare from the mirror and down to where his older sister stands, the female Alpha is sporting a toothy grin. A little, bloodred mask is over her eyes, down to the tip of her nose and the start of her fair cheeks. “I’m Lancelot,” he decides slowly, grinning weakly in response. “Yeah ‘m Lance.”

“Interesting choice,” she says, then brightly, “Well, Lance-y, be a dear and escort your dear old sister.” As she intertwines their arms, the Alpha starts them out of the room, making it a point not to drag his feet despite how weighed down he feels, with all this hopeless water.

As his parents have already entered the limo it’s simple enough to slip in without interruption, beside his relaxed, easy Father, who claims as the ride starts, “I am Sir Finland.”

“Sir Finland,” Ann laughs with a delighted chime. “Perfect as I am Lady Fiona.”

“Oh Sir Lancelot and I, Lady Geneva, are betrothed,” Gemma chimes in.

“Save me,” he makes a halfhearted attempt to joke, but focuses more on splaying his hands on his knees as to keep them still. But it does nothing to stop his right leg from jumping over the course of the ride. Anxiety boils in his watered down lungs. *If he thought it was difficult to breathe before…*

Caught up in their excitement his family does not seem to notice his silence, engrossed in conversation he just cannot bring himself to join—he must preserve his breath.

Tonight is the night. *Christ.*

Even now he hasn’t had enough time to prepare. But *fuck* his limbs refuse to budge; nothing moves him, nothing to help him take those last steps. Perpetually fixed mere inches from the end of this treacherous road.

And he just…needs to find the last pieces to a puzzle that will never fit. Just needs to. But the constant fear is lodged in his throat, the fear that *this is it*; he was allowed the time, and surpassed the unknown deadline. Louis belongs to someone else. Louis has *found someone*. Because he could not wait forever on someone like him—he never expected him to either, always knew this time in his life would come.

But not quite so soon…Never so soon.

Just…he needs to hear it from Louis. Just needs to…tell him. Tell him what he *never had the chance to*. So he doesn’t forget that there is *always* a second choice, someone to come back to.

Just so…he knows. Just so he knows…his love has not dulled with distance, that he doesn’t *stop thinking about him*, that he never will, that the magic might not be there anymore, but…he will never *stop missing him*. *Never not want him back home with him.* And if, by some miracle, is *blessed with one last chance…he will cherish it, cherish him.* And if he isn’t, then he will cherish him the same.

Too soon the vehicle stops, and then he is on his feet with his heart battering at his ribs, anxious bullets aimed at his veins. But he does not lower his face, stares straight ahead and straightens to his full height and takes in the familiar mansion, decorated to perfection, but with the same warm aura. The view steals his breath. Reminds him of his paradise, like mostly *everything does.* But this *is* where he spent most of his life with him.

As he drinks in what he remembers all too well he’s thrown quizzical looks, but doesn’t care. He isn’t here to please them, to earn their worthless approval (that’s later), he is here for answers, for him. *For paradise.*
When he wills his limbs to start towards the grand entrance the events that follow occur in a rush. Somehow he finds himself in the magnificent ballroom they were only ever allowed into this time of the year (for this very charity event). Like every year the design is novel, but he can’t look much into it; just notices the paper-lanterns (the only light to the extravagant room), the brimming conversation and emotion and just stands there in the middle of the upheaval. Somehow he’s lost his family, his “date”.

Alone in an entire horde of people; unrecognized. A simple…someone. A nobody. Swept away by the realisation, Harry makes it to the sidelines with his back to the wall and his eyes screwed shut. All the noise, the emotion, the scents…an overload. A brilliant overload. Christ, he hasn’t had so much palpable noise in so damn long–hasn’t had a semblance of a life that doesn’t consist of his shot-to-hell mind.

Alive–he feels alive; it’s more than the beat of his heart right now. It’s life, its emotion. A treacherous hope flowers in his chest.

Sometimes it’s like this, sometimes he forgets him long enough to forget why he wants to.

But sometimes, like now, he remembers their every beautiful facet all too well. Remembers their masterpiece was torn into bits and pieces by his hands, breaking his beautiful boy like all those promises.

A while passes in this trance until the illumination shifts and he is far from paralyzed by time.

An indescribable instinct possesses him. Just like that the Alpha falls into it, moves without issue, doesn’t feel the hideous fire in his veins, doesn’t feel the cold sweat that’s sheen on his face or the tired bruises that pale his features. Doesn’t feel like a recovering cokehead. Doesn’t feel like he’s in ruins. Broken—that is his answer. He is broken. For now…that’s fine.

This is the closest he’s been to this sensation in years; feels like an exact someone, not a residual something.

Like this Harry shoulders through the crowd without obstruction, under the dim illumination, through the classical music and the infinite exchanges. For once he is where he wants to be, knows where to find himself this last time. To find them.

This travel was never to recovery…It’s his course back home. Home to him. “I promise I will always come home to you.” It’s another promise he will not break.

As the Alpha tears free of the human horde, he doesn’t pause, doesn’t need guidance here; finds his way on his own, familiar footsteps through familiar halls.

“C’mon, Haz, c’mon…” his voice chimes in his head; child Louis’ voice, untouched by the trails of life or puberty. All of sudden he’s so ready to do this, to find the answers through his paradise.

“You’ll always be perfect for me, Haz. Always.”

Please, if there was ever any genuine honesty between them let it have been those words, rather than the ones he’d spoken afterwards, “But I’ve been broken too many times.”

Even now, despite all he has been through, fought for and against, nothing is definite; not in his life.
Without hesitance Harry tries the handle, smiles when he finds the faulty lock has not been replaced after all this time. With a whine in protest the heavy Oakwood door comes apart for him. As he slips through the door to the secret passageway that leads out to the back of the manor his steps do not falter. On the stone walls his fingertips run, and all the times they scampered down this stairway as children at midnight once everyone was asleep comes to life before his eyes. “C’mon, Haz, c’mon!”

He is prepared to now. Without doubt.

At the foot of the corridor the Alpha eases the exit open, invites the frigid air to meet him as the damp earth sinks underneath his boots. Not once does he stop; carries on, down the trail marred with dead leaves and winters frost-laden grass to the playground that’s been abandoned with their maturity.

The entire wooden structure is piled by snow. The swing set some measures away appears frail with nature’s mistreatment, ominous in its isolation.

But that is not what calls to him, not what beckons him.

As the Alpha crouches before one of the two still seats, his vision adjusts and can make out the painted strawberries. This one had been Louis’ s. He knows because his handiwork is smeared because he just couldn’t wait on the paint to dry.

The strawberries are perfect even so; all smeared and worn and sprawled in child’s chicken scratch. With a soft smile, Harry reaches forward to just brush over it impulsively. “That’s mine,” a reedy voice announces as Harry snatches his hand back, whirls too fast and topples backwards into the mulch. He is in his sights now; at the very end of the trail Louis stands there, small and ethereal. Like an apparition. But there’s an ice-blue mask that’s over both beautiful eyes, but curls to conceal only the left portion of his face, sharpens his already too chiseled jaw on the right side, accentuates his pert nose, and must be what makes his smile seem so real, directed at him. Louis wouldn’t gift him with one of his special, breathtaking smiles, not now. Probably not ever again. A crippling thought.

And oh lovely, his heart decides it’s in a race, and winning by miles. For some heartbeats he just lies there, propped up on his elbows.

Careful, as to not startle him, Harry sits up, brushes the mulch from his back, shoulders, and hair with hands that shake uncontrollably.

In the dim moonlight he is so damn lovely; that icy stare looks almost…blurred (he doesn’t have to think to know there are tears in his treacherous eyes).

Graceful as ever Louis closes the short distance. “Hi, Haz,” it’s a timid sigh, so warm his breath fans out against the cold.

But oh Christ he feels paralyzed, lost in time. Caught in the gentle sound of his name on paradise’s lips, his cruel tongue, in the unexpected welcome, in the chance to talk he does not deserve to have. Even bountiful as he is…Harry would not have fathomed Louis would offer him this.

A hurricane of emotion settles in his chest. Moisture sears in his eyes as the Alpha watches him settle on his swing, mesmerized by how his feet still dangle just a bit, by how he fits like he always has, by how the swing gladly accepts his weight and carries him easily as he sways back and forth slowly. “C’mon,” Louis summons quietly, rattling the chain to the swing beside his.

In a trance, desperate to have him a moment more, Harry does so; joins him by settling on the
swing beside his, not bothered by how it squeals under his weight now.

“You’re goin’ to break it, I reckon. You’ve filled out quite a bit,” Louis muses softly, like he’s unable to maintain anymore silence—for this he is forever thankful. “You look…uh, nice. Kinda. I mean you’ve always been handsome, but I mean, you look…healthier. Like a vegetable. Or a fruit. You’re more a fruit, I’d say.”

Oh, God—he’s started to prattle. Like he does when he has a lot on his mind but he’s unsure how to start with what’s really bothering him. And he’s missed listening to him talk on and on like this. Missed it so much he’s content with listening forever. “I…Oh, damn it, I’m just ramblin’ again. What I am trying to say is that you’ve gained weight. There.” Please, don’t stop there.

As to quit staring like some creep, Harry lurches forward on the swing. “Paradise,” is all his thick tongue can form.

The cold eases the scorching fear that’s taken form in his stomach as he sways silently.

“Did I ever tell you…I still have that stupid scarf from three winters ago? The one you left in my room?” What scarf?

“No,” the Alpha whispers, puzzled.

“Um the one that’s hideous hunter green? You wore it in your hair. When you came t-t-to help me wrap the Christmas gifts. And I all but ripped it out with your hair because you tried to find my gift to you.” Like that the pieces of the scene fall into place; he’d tackled him to the floor before Harry regained dominance and tickled him until he threatened to pee. Which of course he’d responded with, “Ooh, kinky, I like.” Luckily enough Louis was in a proper mood that day, and hadn’t pissed on him for that remark. “And then–”

“I remember,” he tells him inaudibly.

Yeah…I just…I couldn’t let the bloody thing go. It just…Reminded me of us. Smells like you…still.”

Unable to speak the Alpha focuses on the blur in his vision that comes with every lurch. But fuck his heart crashes into his chest, what does that mean? “I…I…um,” he tries hoarsely.

“Just I remember everything all too well,” the boy says wistfully.

“Me too,” his voice sounds strangled.

‘I…I’m ready to talk, Haz,” it’s a secret between them that forms uneasy knots in his chest. “I just…I dunno where to start. Where should I start?’”

Like I know. As to halt his pace, Harry plants his feet on the mulch, then whispers, “Honestly. Let’s just…start honestly.”

Louis continues his breezy wave. “I remember how you used to laugh at all my jokes. Throwin’ your head back like you always did with that oddly endearing cackle. I thought it was strange. How funny you thought I was. But I always tried to stay true to my humour nonetheless.” We remember so differently…

“I remember how shy you made yourself seem. Like you weren’t the most extroverted little brat anyone ever had the pleasure of knowin’. I couldn’t understand why, out of all the people, you chose me.”
“Didn’t choose you,” the boy protests.

“Like…I didn’t understand how you could become attached to me when I gave you absolutely nothing to attach to. I’ve never understood it, I thought everything about you was strange. Even now I find it strange that you never thought I was funny.” It’s the most flow his words have had in months.

“’Cause you aren’t…” it’s almost a question, like he’s absurd to think otherwise.

“But I am,” he reminds because Louis must’ve forgotten how many times he’s laughed at his jokes, too, “What d’you call a fake noodle?”

“Mmm, what,” Louis sighs, but there is a fond note to the sound that yanks viciously at his heartstrings. Hurts like it hasn’t in a while—*hurts the best.*

“At menata.”

The insistent silence between them is what does it; Harry’s stare darts in his direction with no intention of resting on him. *What a joke,* his gaze just clings to him, like he has the right to stare like this. Just the Omega’s bottom lip is caught between his little canines and his nose is scrunched with the effort it’s taken him to deny his laughter.

“Laugh,” he encourages softly. “It was funny.”

Just like that he dissolves into giggles. The sound is so…delighted, that his heart stalls and his breath falters as he watches him in this light. The realisation that he’s the reason behind his laughter doesn’t cause pride to well up in him like it used to, rather soothes the knots of unease, warms him like nothing else.

“How cheesey that is,” Louis breathes around little whimsical laughs, “was funny!”

“Makin’ you laugh always put me on top of the world,” the Alpha whispers stupidly; watches as his mirth fades, though a little smile remains.

When he faces him the Alpha wants to divert his stare…but can’t because those breathtaking blues enthrall him. “I wanna know why you always agreed to any outrageous thing I wanted.”

“I still would,” is what he hears himself say.

Louis’ head tilts to the right, brows creased in concentration that makes him feel exposed. Even so he doesn’t tear his gaze away, because he’s tired of this better façade he’s maintained. He’s almost better…but he’s tired, he’s exhausted, and he just wants someone else to see what he’s done. Wants *Louis* to see. “Why.”

“You deserve whatever you want.” The wind teases Louis’s hair, and he notices that it’s been trimmed, doesn’t fall in quite the same way.

“Even if what I want hurts me?”

“You deserve…” his throat seizes up, and he clears it three times in order to finish, “whatever you want.”

Emotion dances in his bottomless stare, then, “I wish I didn’t hate small talk so much. Or I’d have asked how you’ve been.”

“I don’t like the wait,” he seconds for no apparent reason—he has no say in what they talk about.
Because he’d take anything over nothing at all.

The inevitable comes too soon. “I found someone.”

Serrated knives to the chest, an anguish apart from all others. “I know,” it’s a broken breath as he forces himself to stare straight ahead (unable to show how much this ruins him, because Louis shouldn’t know; though it’s unlikely this might make him guilty, and he doesn’t need to be. Doesn’t need to feel guilty for finally finding his happiness—he deserves his happiness. And that is all Harry wants for him. If this is the way, then so be it) and tightens his hands over the bitter chains. “I know. That’s…I…That’s lovely, Lou.” It is—his happiness is lovely.

“But it’s not, Haz,” the sadness in his voice wrecks him. “I don’t love him. I don’t even like him. I want to break his nose all the time. His perfect nose.”

This sadness stabs at him until he rasps, “Why.”

“Lots ah reasons. Just…he thinks he’s…you, mostly.” Funny that.

A bitter laugh crawls up his throat. “I’d gladly trade places.”

But the boy disregards his response to explain, “He thinks…Well thought he owned my heart. He didn’t touch it, Haz, he owned it. In his mind he owned me. I broke his nose today.”

With his heart jammed in overdrive, his thoughts in a scramble of chaotic questions, the Alpha only repeats, “Why.”

“Well, he tried to tell me what to eat. Knocked my chicken nugget out of my hand. McDonalds is apparently unacceptable,” the boy snarls—were he not so obviously upset, the sound would be adorable.

And he can’t even feel hope, because anger sears in his veins; his Alpha claws at his chest as his teeth clench. “Said I was getting’ fat. I needed a salad. A salad, Haz. Like some rabbit!” There’s a minute, calming breath, then, quietly, “He thought he was saving my reputation. Said I was his, and I was stuck with him because nobody else could want me. A cokehead’s whore.” Guilt rears into his chest—oh fuck what have I done to his reputation? “But that wasn’t the worst of it. No, the worst…he tried to call me his paradise.”

Mine, his Alpha snarls, pure territorial instinct, my paradise. Only fucking mine.

Unable to speak, Harry swallows thickly.

Louis doesn’t seem to notice, carries on wistfully, “Nobody else…has ever been allowed to call me a damn pet name like that. Nobody. And he just…he tried to make it common, make it his. Like it was special between me and him. Like…Like it was his name for me.” It’s become a dark entity in his chest. This fury. But he won’t lose his temper here…can’t. “I’ve always wondered…why paradise? Why not darling or sugarplum or summat?”

“Well for one I would never call you fuckin’ sugarplum, ” is the guttural response that finds him. Louis shoves at his shoulder, “C’mon, ‘Az! Be serious.” And the gesture is too comfortable, too normal for them...

“Cause, Lou. You’re beyond me. A place I always want to be but can’t have permanently because you’re too precious, too special, meant for more. You were always…my escape from reality. Because…when I needed to get away from all the shit, you were always there. You always made it okay, calmed me, made it like nothing outside of you existed. A heart meant to withstand touch, to cleanse that which touches it. A person that stripped me of it all, all the shit. A
person that felt like…a safe haven. Your mind was the place I escaped to. Your heart, your soul…You’re the one that made me feel the best. You’re all that…saved me. You’re…my paradise.”

And how hadn’t he realised this. God, Louis is bright. He was there. How–?

“Oh,” is the little tremulous breath, then, “I never…felt like that. Like paradise. Not to you.”

“I should’ve made sure you did,” he whispers tautly. “Because you have always been paradise to me. I don’t consider paradise a beach or a dreamland or whatever the hell else. Not enough. It’s you. You’re a paradise. You felt like it then, feel like it now. You will always be paradise to me. And every day I wished I could run to you, and every time I didn’t…I almost did.”

“I…” the boy starts in a wobbly voice, but Harry’s not finished.

“There wasn’t one day I didn’t love you. You never didn’t matter. I was glad to give you all I had left,” he steadies his voice into a modulated tone, “I loved you when you decided we were in love. I loved you when you were obnoxious and mean. I loved you when you were sleepy and soft. I loved you when you cried. When you smiled. I just…I can’t remember life without you, Louis. Did I even have good days before you dumped that slushie over my head?”

Louis doesn’t take even a moment before launching into his response, “That’s not fair! I’ve always wanted to hear that. When I laughed off the mention of our mating…it’s because I realised we loved each other at the wrong times! I dunno why we couldn’t just…just communicate.” My fault. “I thought…I thought you might love me someday. But not then.”

But…’How could I not, Louis? God, Lou, I saw the whole universe; I saw heaven and paradise and my future and everything I ever wanted, needed, in your eyes. I never stopped looking at you. I still can’t…” I’m so sorry I can’t.

“I…You know I was never one to read between the lines, H,” his mere voice stills his bones, steadies him. Even now. “We never…talked. God, how did we even get away with being friends when we never even touched on this enormous…matter?”

“Persistence,” he supplies easily. “Attachment.” Fear.

“I…I just…” the boy releases a deep, petulant huff, “At the time I suppose we weren’t meant to. Fate has an odd way.”

“This road to recovery’s honestly been a bitch,” he tells him because he wants to turn back time and learn to live right. “It took…my losing you to make the switch, and I just…wish it wouldn’t have.”

“What does even that mean?” Louis demands—the same question he wants to ask him.

Failure has an emotion; it’s burning through him as he murmurs before he can decide to be stupidly silent, “I tried t-to rush. I tried to be quick ‘bout it, paradise. I did. But I just…couldn’t make it in time. I wanted you to see me when I was perfect but–,”

“Well, that’s stupid,” Louis interrupts—it’s not malicious, but sensitively affirmative. “You won’t ever be perfect, H.” Now that’s a bit cruel—he deserves cruel.

Still hurts. But there are no tears left to be wept, so he tries to speak, to say otherwise, to just–

“I was wrong y’know.”

As his shoulders slump under the weight of his confusion, his failure, the Alpha mutters, “I don’t
understand, Lou.”

“We are invincible,” the boy states with misplaced faith. “We’re infinite.”

It’s like the Omega has shoved his little hand straight through his chest to fist his heart; a pain so fierce he can’t even breathe. “That’s…wrong. We’re–,” it’s so weak Louis just cuts right in simply, “Fucked up? Broken? Hurt?”

“Ruined,” a wheeze from his steadily shrinking lungs.

“No, Haz,” Louis whispers thoughtfully. “I was wrong bout that more than the rest. I still believe you are not ruined. And you are proving everyone else.” A soft, serious, “You didn’t ruin anything.”

This must be his cruel streak–to ignite his unavoidable hope; hope he’s incapable of snuffing out. A hope Louis will enjoy humiliating. Furious tears collect in his damned eyes. “Don’t. Don’t give me false hope. Don’t lie to me.”

“M not. You broke me,” from those words he flinches. “But I needed to be broken.” Why is he such a martyr?

A furious noise builds in his throat but Louis faces him. Whispers, an end, “And I forgive you, Harry. I forgive you.”

The ocean that’s obstructed his airways, his lungs, that’s suffocated him, drains into nonexistence. A sweat breaks over his skin as he takes the air in frantically.


“Look at me.”

“I…I can’t…”

“Look at me, Haz.”

And oh Christ he doesn’t know what he expects…but Louis looks soft, sincere. The blues of his eyes are brilliant bottomless pools of emotion. Desperate, the Alpha searches those so very exposed eyes. Finds so much warmth, kindness, acceptance… No arctic hatred, no double motive, no vengeance. “I wanna be happy. And holding onto the past, onto the negative, will never let me have my happiness. I…I want you to heal, too.”

The sweet candor in his voice… “I don’t…deserve that.”

A small smile plays on his mouth. “I didn’t think so at first either. I didn’t. Until I realised I fucked up too. I fucked up so bad. We…made mistakes. Not you alone. We did. We fucked up so bad. And if I deserve to heal, then so do you.”

Oh, God. As his hand comes up to his forehead Harry thinks this is…too much. God, all this time he’s been wishing Louis could still just give him the cold shoulder, a hard time, anything cruel, and yet Louis is here and gives him this; kindness, understanding, forgiveness. And he doesn’t want to understand this Omegas’ dynamic…just wants to…to…hold onto him forever.

“I’m so sorry,” is what he deems most important.

“Yeah, me too,” the Omega murmurs slowly. “You know that sayin’ forgive but don’t forget? I
tossed that shit to the wind three months ago.”

But he can’t be selfish, has to be…careful with him. To make him understand that he can’t trust him still. “You shouldn’t have. D-D-Don’t forget what I did to you.”

Louis messes with his hair, and then shrugs. “Well perhaps I won’t forget. But it won’t be front and center in my mind ever again. It’ll just be back there with all the other stuff I wiped my hands of long ago. You didn’t do it to me anyway. Not entirely. I did it, too.”

That’s wrong. So wrong. Don’t try to take the blame. “Because of me. You did it because of me.”

“But I did more than just that because of you, Haz,” Louis retorts, with a little protective bite that stuns him. “I smiled because of you. I smiled the brightest smile I possibly could. I accepted who I am because of you. Because you never let me forget that I’m beautiful just as I am. But I just don’t get how you couldn’t apply the same to yourself.”

Simple. “I’m not beautiful. I was never beautiful like you are naturally. I was never like that, paradise. I needed to be more.” Or so I thought.

Louis shakes his head softly. “No, Haz. You never needed to be more.”

“I wish I’d have known that back then,” is the pitiful breath that escapes him.

“I wish I’d have told you.” That was never your responsibility.

“I wish I hadn’t let you forget that you were my all-time high…that you are my all-time high.”

When there’s no response, “I realised a lot in these months. The best damned thing I lucked into…you. My best day ever, my finest hour, my wildest dream come true. Mine would all be you. All I ever needed…you. The one regret I can’t work through…you. The one thing I’d rather die than lose…you. Always you, paradise. But I just…can’t sit back and wallow in my sorrows. I’m…I’m almost better. And I’m not askin’ anything else from you. Forgiveness is…enough.” It has to be.

“See,” Louis mumbles, “the problem is I don’t wanna let go. I don’t want to just let it be.”

“Me either,” Harry says faintly, then, selfish as ever, “Lou, will you be my friend again?” That’s all I will ever dare ask for.

“Depends,” the boy allows slyly. “Am I your bestest friend?”


“Then yes, Haz, I will be yours again,” the Omega murmurs gently.

Willpower abandons him as his heart rams into his ribcage. Out of control Harry lurches from his seat and takes him round the waist, clutches him to bury his face in his slender throat. “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. I still need you. I can’t let you go. I’m sorry.”

A little, kind hand brushes his wavy hair.

“I missed you.” Relief, love, need, bleeds. “I missed you so bad.”

“Oh, boy,” Louis whispers, then laughs with a little desperate chime. “Not so fast. I have some ground rules.”

As his veins burn with desperation the Alpha blurts, “Anything.”
“’S not goin’ to be how it was,” the boy decides unevenly. “I don’t trust you. I don’t. You still have to make it to better without me. I’m not comin’ home. I forgive you. I will be yours. Prove to me that you want me home. Prove it to me. Prove to me that I’m a constant. Prove to me that you will never stop trying. Prove to me that...you can make all my dreams come true.”

A fire has been set to his insides. Lost in him the Alpha can’t see two feet in front of him, but he doesn’t mind, because he won’t lose sight of him ever again. He won’t he won’t he won’t. “I don’t want it to be how it was. I want better,” it’s no novel realisation–he’s wanted better for nine months. “Paradise, ‘m goin’ to keep my promises. I am comin’ home to you. I will be better.”

There’s a tiny breath, then, “Okay, Haz. Okay.”

But...he can’t take his arms back and set him free to walk away, can’t take his face from the crook of his neck where that lovely strawberry ocean-y scent wrecks through his senses, can’t can’t can’t. “I don’t want it to be how it was. I want...better,” it’s no novel realisation–he’s wanted better for nine months. “Paradise, ‘m goin’ to keep my promises. I am comin’ home to you. I will be better.”

“You ‘ave to, H. You have to let me go for now.” For now.

“Y-Y-You won’t stay,” he’s terrified of the truth, the inevitable.

“Not right now, no,” the boy allows, but... “Someday I might.”

“I-I-I’ll leave the doors unlocked for you,” Harry tells him roughly through deep inhales. Just taking the mouth-watering scent in. If only to hold him by.

“You what?” the Omega sputters, baffled. “You never...leave anything unlocked...”

“I know. I don’t care. I want you to come home whenever you’re ready. I will leave it...unlocked. For you.” And he will–screw paranoia, the followers always entered uninvited anyway.

“Haz, don’t do that. That’s risky. I...We have to take it one day at a time, okay? I’m not comin’ home anytime soon.” That’s okay. That’s okay. As long as there is a one day...

“But when you can...”

“I will. When I can I will. When you let me.” I promise I will.

As the Alpha squeezes his eyes shut, his arms constrict, and he says like the pitiful fuck he is, “Stay. Stay with me awhile more. Just for tonight. Please.”

“I can’t...but I will let you have my dances.”

“All of them?” A deep, unstable breath.

“Every one.”

“Okay. I...Okay, paradise.”

When the Alpha can do it, take his arms back, he just...can’t lose all contact; takes his dainty hand and kisses his knuckles, savoring the feel of his silky skin, of his warmth. Behind the mask the warmth is there, too, in his tender gaze. Oh, Christ, and he shows him what it really is to cry, on his knees clutching his slim waist, promising over and over and over.

“’M n-not goin’ to see you for awhile after this, am I?” his defeated breath.

“No.” The honesty is what he needs.
“But one day.”

“One day.”

And oh God he will do all he can do make that one day soon.

&&

It’s serious—this determination. It’s another month into November without him that Harry sits at his family’s table just before the sun is set to rise with his laptop. With the search: psychologic treatment centers an overwhelming mass of options stare back at him.

He almost shuts the laptop right then and there but swallows and thinks I can do this, I need to do this.

So he does; until his brain must be mush, unresponsive and fried. It’s when he’s seconds from just saying fuck it and heading to bed a hand lands on his hunched shoulder. “You’re up early,” his Father comments slyly, sipping from a mug before setting another down for him. He smiles in thanks, takes a sip of the…milk?

“Milk?” he asks, almost pouting. “How old am I?”

“Old enough to know where the kitchen is,” Des murmurs in amusement, “Go fix yourself something that suits your fancy. You’ve been staring at this computer for hours. Go.”

He just might. He doesn’t because he has to get this done. “I…” shame flares in his chest, but he doesn’t choke on the words. “I need to get this done. I’m lookin’…into um a psychologist. Therapy. I dunno. I just…don’t know what I’m doin’, Dad.”

After a beat of silence, Harry admits tiredly, scrubbing at his eyes, “I need…help.”

When his Dad doesn’t answer, rather pulls out the seat beside him still in his nightwear and robe, glasses perched on his nose; Harry doesn’t know what to make of it or how to feel. He settles on appreciation. “Alright,” Des states simply. “First, I was serious, get something to drink. Then we’ll start with the basics.”

Because he’s thirsty the Alpha does so, then returns to find the basics aren’t difficult until, “Are you lookin’ to be on medication, son?”

Ashamed, Harry lowers his stare and mutters, “I think…I need it. I think I am. For a while.”

“Good, then here,” he continues without pause, like this is no…surprise, not an absolute dishonor. And so Harry does the same.

It’s just before everyone wakes that the two discover what he’s in search of.

Stretching, the older Alpha murmurs warmly, “Well, the rest is up to you.”

“I…” once again he struggles with the emotion swelling in his throat. “Thank you. Thanks, Dad.”

With a warm smile, a “sure thing, kiddo,” and a pat on the shoulder his Father leaves him to prepare for his day.

Alone, the Alpha dials the number with tremulous fingers and waits. An assistant answers, and he response hoarsely, “Hello. Uh, this is Harry. Harry Styles. And I need help. I would like to… schedule an appointment.”
Louis’ settled between Niall and Zayn when Liam, who’s across the room typing away at his phone, dares to break the ice and ask, “Hey, Lou, I know things have been sort of shit lately, but…” he swallows audibly, “A-Are you okay, mate? Like really okay?”

“Finally someone with the balls to crush this elephant,” Louis sighs, stretching and yawning. “I’m really okay, Li. Thanks. And Harry’s getting there, too.”

“Oh, I know,” Zayn smiles that I-Know-Something-You-Don’t smile, then announces, “Me and Hazza are going to vandalize tonight.”


Niall giggles, shaking his head in disbelief as Zayn concedes, “Okay, that’s not exactly the plan. But I’m hoping I’ll get ’im to do it. Y’know Haz always so gullible.”

“You,” the Omega points an index into his shoulder, disapproving, “are not gettin’ my baby into any more trouble, you hear me?”

“He’s a grown–,” Niall tries though Louis pins him with a withering glare, effectively shutting him up.

“I promise no trouble,” Zayn kisses his cheek sloppily. “He came to me and I’m not turning away such a…um fragile creature. After you broke his heart.”

Gawking, Louis sputters, “I…what…I broke his heart? He literally broke mine!”

“Who told you to go snorting up with an addict not anywhere in the right state of mind?” Liam comments, in agreement. “You knew right from wrong better than Harry did.”

Slightly hurt by the way his friends have taken Harry’s side over his Louis mutters, “Whatever, have fun with Harry, guys. I’m out.”

“Not so fast!” Niall stands in his way with stubborn alight blue eyes. “Don’t go gettin’ in your feelings, Louis. We are as much on Harry’s side as we are on yours. It was nobody’s fault. Shit happens. It is what it is. It doesn’t matter how or why, it just happened. Nobody is taking sides.”

Knowing he is right, but unwilling to admit it, Louis crosses his arms and pouts, “Liam is.”

“I’m not, Lou,” Liam says softly, “That might’ve come out wrong. I’m sorry. All I’m saying is that both of you made mistakes. We are here for the both of you.”

“Okay. He’s still mine.”

“Wouldn’t dream of takin’ him from you. We’re just trying to help him, too.”

With a small smile Louis thinks they make a proper support-system, the lot of them.

&&

With his heart in his mouth Louis tries the front door–it is indeed open. Affection wells up within him as he twists the familiar handle.

When he steps in he almost expects the Alpha to be there…but of course he isn’t. And when Louis steps into the (oddly) warm entry room unbidden tears collect in his eyes. But when he
really looks, the wretched tears spill down his pale cheeks. “Haz?” he calls unevenly, captivated by the photos patterned on the teal walls, unable to do anything but look at what Harry’s done. To just drink in the masterpiece he’s made of their home.

All on his own.

Oh but its Louis’ home too…he’s there, on the walls, in the photos he hadn’t known existed. Precious black-and-whites, very Harry-esque.

When there is no response the Omega dares to take a cautious step forward. But the caution is unnecessary—the wood doesn’t even squeak. It’s…soundless. In confusion Louis peers down at the woodworks. It’s the same wood the Alpha cherished so much. Except, it’s…silent. Just like he demanded.

Emotion caves in on him. He stumbles forward through bleary eyes, silently.

It’s all so very different. So very put together. And oh God Louis sets the wine on the kitchens marble island in the kitchen he’s never seen before. On impulse the Omega opens the nearest cabinet. Rows and rows of different sorts of cereal are lined from the top shelf to the last. And he’s on fire with the evidence that he remembers Louis’s damned laziness, how he’d rather just eat cereal than lift a finger to cook an actual meal.

Before the boy dissolves into his tears, he surveys the rest of the house; notices the subtle differences to massive ones; the high tech ventilation system they certainly hadn’t had, but explains the constant warmth through each crevasse of their house. Oh, Haz…

When Louis thinks there is not one place untouched…he inches into his previous bedroom and falls apart. It’s all the same. Just as he left it. In an absolute mess.

Home. Oh, God, he’s finally home. At least for a little while.

Exhausted, on fire like a thousand suns, with his heart screaming for Harry, wondering where the hell his Alpha is, Louis sheds his thick clothes and walks nude (aside from his socks) upstairs into the very place he wants to be—Harry’s room.

The achingly familiar scent is so strong, so thick he can taste it, cologne and evergreen and just Harry.

As his head swims Louis notices that damned desk is seems to have been discarded (fucking finally), notices how empty this room is. Notices their photo on the bedside table, notices the scented candles, the extended wardrobe. Careful, as to not disturb this blessed still, Louis sneaks into the wardrobe, and smiles softly at how packed it is already, even huge, with all his diva shit.

Without care, like the shit he is, Louis makes a mess of the entire space until he comes across an article of clothing that makes the cut; worn, thick, posh. A cream cable-knit sweater that appears to have been worn recently; and when he buries his nose in the material he’s correct; his scent is all over it.

Pleased, Louis shrugs into the piece; it’s much too large. Gives him sweater-paws, reaches mid-thigh.

With little snivels the Omega worms into the Alpha’s made to perfection (like he won’t just muck it up tonight) blankets. There, curled up, warm, Louis cries and cries and cries himself to sleep. It’s the best damned cry he’s had in ever.

&&
Somehow the vehicle he parks beside goes unnoticed, even when he trudges through the piled snow up the drive. Lost to his thoughts—today’s session had been particularly tiresome, his nerves are shot.

A month into this therapeutic shit has proven useless.

The room is too small—though it’s actually not, he is simply too much. Christ, he takes up so much space, though he’s forced his body into the leather bi-sectional. Even the leather irritates him; creaks with his every move. And he moves quite a bit; fidgets. Which draws too much attention.

“What is it that makes you feel better, Harry?” the psychologist asks, watching him with those intuitive fuckin’ peepers. More often than not Doctor Viehl just pisses him off. It’s not that he hates her, but he hates how fuckin’ right she always is, the most exalted wisdom.

“My paradise,” an automatic answer of truth as he stares blankly at the laptop in her lap.

“Cocaine, Harry?”

Her assumption spikes his sensitive temper. “No. That is my monster, not my paradise. My paradise is...” him. Louis.

The encouraging expression she wears is too much; his barriers slam back. “I don’t want to talk ‘bout that.”

“Understandable,” she placates; sometimes he wishes she’d push him. “Can we talk about the monster a minute then, Harry?” And he hates how she says his name; all careful and kind. Like he’s not who he is. Like he’s not a hellhole even after he bared to this stranger all that’s brought him here.

“Sure.”

“How does the monster make you feel?”

At the crawling question Harry flinches, then after a moment, “...Better.”

“What’s the difference between the monster and your paradise then?”

Screw her fuckin’ questions. “I need him. I don’t need...the cocaine,” he says shakily. “I can...live without the coke. I can’t live without him...”

“Would you say that too is an addiction?”

Why the hell not? “I...I don’t think so,” he mumbles around a frown.

“Why don’t you tell me the difference? I’m not quite understanding.” Its pretty believable—she’s watching him with interested eyes and heavy brows. But no, she doesn’t think he quite understands himself.

“I...uh...I can’t say?” he sounds as confused as she.

“Are you sure you can’t live without your paradise, Harry?” I can, I’ve been doin’ so for ten months, but I would rather not...

“I think the difference is that I can’t live happily without him really. I can live happily without the monster. I thought that living without my fix was hell, but I realised when my paradise left me that I c-c-could manage to live happily if I had him. I would rather live happily with him, then
unhappily without the monster.”

“I see. But what marks them apart? Do you think it’s the difference it makes in you?”

Okay, what the fuck? Harry blinks rapidly. “I…I’m not understanding, Viehl.”

“Your paradise…why is he so special?”

Like this, he reiterates, “Because he is my escape from reality; he’s perfection to me. Almost unrealistically perfect.”

“But how does he make you feel?”

“Better,” he snaps, annoyed. “I’ve said this.”

“That’s very broad, Harry. Elaborate, look into that word: better.” And here it is; the look inside yourself, open your slimy infestation of mind to yourself. Understand you.

For whatever reason Harry keeps up with it, plays along. Not because he has to in order to be better, but because he wants to…to understand himself. “I…He makes me want to be the very best I can. That the very best is being who I am. He makes me want to fix all that’s wrong with myself and the world. He makes me feel like I can do it. Like every me is worth it, even fucked up me. He quiets the voices. He’s made me realise that…it’s okay to not be okay or whatever. Made me realise things I’d never have figured out if I’d been on my own. Like the followers…he made me realise it was in my head. And the monster…he made me realise I didn’t need the monster. Shit like that.”

“That’s all very good, Harry. Now what better does the monster offer? Be honest.” Like I’m not?

Well, sometimes, on the worse days, the Alpha does lie, shit lies to just make her job more difficult.

Except…he swallows thickly, then, “Coke…Coke makes me feel like ‘m already who I should be. Like all is right in the world, in myself. Like I’m invincible. Untouchable. Like the shit in my head isn’t shit.” The lust stirs in the pit of his stomach, but Harry focuses on her.

“Can you set the two betters apart?”

“I…I know I should say somethin’ like I am actually better with paradise in comparison to the monster. But I can’t. I have neither in my life right now and…I don’t know that I’d take neither if I had a decision. If I can’t have paradise…I want the monster. If I can have paradise…I don’t want the monster. But it’s never if I can’t have paradise I don’t want the monster. Or if I can have him, I want the monster anyway…”

“Because you don’t feel you could make yourself better?”

“No,” Harry mutters, frowning once again, “No I’m doin’ so right now.” I’m just not happy. I feel empty.

“Then why?”

“Because I don’t want to make myself better all on my own. I’m greedy.”

“I see,” she says slowly.

“What. What do you see, doc? Because I don’t fuckin’ know.”
“Well, Harry, it doesn’t matter what I see. What do you see in that?”

“A person in love with two polar opposites.”

“Is that all?”

I don’t even know. As he toys with his rings his shoulder hunch and rise in a shrug.

“How about this, why don’t you think about this until our next session? Think about why it is you don’t want to make yourself better all on your own?”

“I know that. It’s because I’m a fuckin’ cokehead. I love my fix. I love my paradise. Tell me somethin’ I don’t know, lady.”

“Are you sure you’re in with love your fix?” Of course she doesn’t; because that’s for Harry figure out on his own.

No.

When he doesn’t answer she says quietly, “Think about that, Harry. Think about why you claimed to love your fix before you claimed to love your paradise. Think about the meaning of love. And the meaning of addiction, obsession even. I will see you this Monday, yes?”

And he hasn’t quit attempting to unravel that priceless difference. So far he hasn’t found one, really, but it’s only been three hours since then. Usually these monumental realisations take two days of constant consideration. As the Alpha steps into the warm house his brows crease in confusion–not only in the entry rooms light on (he never turns this light out) but the entire house seems to be on, alive.

Break in? Doubtful–why would they turn on all the lights and give themselves away?

Slowly, not too bothered, Harry shrugs out of his coat, removes his leather gloves and tosses his keys onto the side table before ambling through the hall easily (who honestly cares if there is an intruder at this point?). As far as he can see there isn’t anything amiss. The house feels no different aside from the slight charge that must be his paranoia kicking in. Except as he’s passing the kitchen for the second time an object on the island counter catches his eye. A bottle of unopened wine sits there, alone and rich.

A fever starts in his veins as he wheels out of the kitchen to the first hall to his room at the very end. It’s open (he is sure he hasn’t opened it since the last day of renovation). But his minute hope is worthless–though it still smells like him, that lovely strawberry breeze, it’s empty of life still.

The fever leaves him in a cold sweat; tears threaten to blur his stare but Harry blinks rapidly until they’re stemmed.

He’s known that Louis wouldn’t be coming home for a while; there is no reason for him to have thought otherwise now; it’s probably an electrical issue, it’s probably that he forgot to put that wine up on the rack some time during the week (he overlooks a lot these days).

In his bedroom he doesn’t bother with the lights or look up from his boots, just shrugs out of his shirt, letting the material flutter to the floor, then starts on belt when, “Mmm. Keep your trousers on at least, Styles. You ‘ave company,” a little, sleepy voice mumbles.

At the memorable voice stuns him into immobility; stunned his hands halt; but no, no, it’s his mind fuckin’ with his emotions. The shit wants to devastate him when he looks over to see absolutely no paradise.
“Haz?”

“Listen,” he mutters tiredly, loosening his belt enough that he can undo the button and yank down the zip. “I know ‘m mental, okay? I know he’s not comin’ back. Just stop. I don’t need any more reminders; I don’t need that mental damage.”

“Huh?” a soft, truly confused breath (yeah right) that causes him to roll his eyes as he sits at the end at the end of the mattress to take off his boots. “Don’t act all innocent. Christ I can comfort myself by now, too, aright? I’m not…I don’t–,”

“’Az, look at me.”

“No,” the Alpha snarls at he tosses his left boot, listening to his derisive thud. “’Cause you…you won’t really be there.”

“Please.”

God damn it why can’t he say no to him? To himself? With a bracing breath, the Alpha twists to face him, and pries his eyes open. There’s a blurred silhouette, small and fragile, clutching the blankets to his fragile shoulders.

Unimpressed with the vision, the Alpha turns back to start on his right boot. “Nice try. A little silhouette. Hah. Like I’ve not seen that one before. I need to try a bit harder.”

“You’re mad,” the vision giggles adorably. “You’re completely absolutely utterly mad.”

“Don’t we all know it?” he mumbles around a rueful grin.

“For christsakes Haz I’m real.”

“Prove it,” he challenges–his brain can never anticipate what real Louis would do.

A little indignant noise surrounds the silence before a pillow is thrown at him. Of course it misses. “Been there, done that.”

The shuffles in the sheets don’t faze him as his boot plops to the wood. When he turns to tell him to just surrender already, little hands splay over his shoulder blades. The touch is warm, feels so real, as his skin is fire where his little hands run up to his bare shoulders, down to his pecs. The breath leaves him in a hiss as soft linen presses to his back, a warm, soft body underneath follows. A face pops out from beside his shoulder; an impish smile melts his expression, his pale with winter face. “Real enough?”

Bewilderment strikes him, “What?”

“Harry! Ugh. Look, you’re mad, we all know. But ‘m not a damn ghost or in your head or whatever!” his voice is adorably whiney, like when he’s sleepy.

“But…”

“Haz I’m real. Look, feel me.” A small hand yanks at his shoulder, and in a trance he lowers his body as a small petite, real, warm, body settles over his, straddles his waist. Oh, Christ, his weight is so real; comfortingly pressed against him. And when his limp hand is yanked up and under his shapeless top…his hand splays on its own accord. Palm wide enough, fingers long enough, to take up the soft pudgy flesh of his tummy.

Oh, hell, that feels so real; can’t be his imagination. It’s…his belly underneath his calloused hand.
The flat, but slight fleshy tummy he’s buried his face in time and time over, obsessed with the idea of how round—fuck.

“Paradise.”

“Nice of you to catch up, slow poke! That’s what’ve been sayin’!”

“Paradise…” it’s a husky breath as the happiness bullets through his system. It’s a sweet sensation. “Paradise. You’re home.”

“Just a visit,” Louis corrects sadly.

“You’re home,” his words aren’t absorbed; his mind roiling with slow intoxication. “Fuck. Fuck, you’re home.”

“For…For now,” the boy allows suspiciously.

An overwhelming riptide of relief crashes into him, and his eyes must roll because Louis claws at his chest with his freehand. “’Az! Don’t fuckin’ swoon like some fangirl!” The bite of his blunt nails’ shoves him back to reality as his stare drinks him in; the soft radiance that naturally overcomes his winter-paled skin. The kinky tease to his hair; the sassy expression on his beautiful face; pert nose, sarcastic eyes, pouty mouth.

“’M your biggest fan,” he jokes hoarsely, chuckling (or so it’s meant to be, sounds like he’s being strangled) a bit as Louis snorts prettily. “Oh, fuck…I thought…I thought…” you changed your mind.

Without permission he snakes him around his slim waist and moves so he’s pinned beneath him.

“I didn’t, baby,” the boy gasps, nails biting into his shoulder before his warm hand trails up his throat to stroke his waves from his face. “Won’t ever change my mind ‘bout this. You.”

With a hoarse sound he props himself on one arm and leans his to burrow his face in the slope of his neck. There he breathes him in, thumbs circles into his tummy as his heart slows with the ease, the relief. “I missed you. So bad.”

As he noses at his throat, silent, taking him in, Louis exhales shakily, “Where were you? You’re home late.” There are no accusations in the question, just innocent curiosity. “Therapy.”

A sharp, pleased inhale. “Oh, how was it?” God, he’s so cute when he’s trying to seem nonchalant—appreciation stirs in his chest.

“How are you?” More importantly.

“I…I’m happy, actually. Stupidly happy.”

Low in his throat the Alpha hums, whispers at the shell of his right ear. “What’s got you so happy?”

“You.”

Confusion jabs at him; he stills, brows knitted. “What did I do?”

The hand in his hair scrunches. “A lot, Haz,” the boy’s voice is breathy. “You’ve done so much. The house…it’s so perfect.”

“’S not enough.”
“Enough to make me so happy for now.”

As his heart constricts the Alpha whispers, into his hair, “Therapy was shit. She makes me question my entire world. It’s…confusing.”

“In ah bad way?”

“Dunno. Reckon not…I uh…I was four months clean. Up until three weeks before the Masquerade. I fucked up…Had to start all over. Its three months now.” Shame burns in his throat–fuckin’ pathetic.

“Oh, love. Oh, oh, oh, love. That’s…so amazin’ to hear.” What?

“’S not long enough. I shouldn’t have been so weak. I should’ve–,”

“’S in the past. Three months is progress. That’s so amazing,” Louis tells him softly.

“But–,” he tries to protest because what?

“Don’t snub your accomplishments, Haz. You’re takin’ it one day at time. Be proud,” the Omega snaps sharply.

Sickness curdles in his stomach–he doesn’t know. “I still think about it,” Harry confesses.

“Think and do are entirely different things. Stop tryin’ to put yourself down.”

“’M not. I just I–,”

“Shush,” the little creature chides, and shoves at his chest so he sprawls out beside him. In moments he’s in the center of the bed, curling small in the blankets, then peeking out to hold the material up in welcome. Without hesitance, the Alpha crawls up beside him. On his side Harry stares at him in awe; watches a beautiful blush spread high on his cheeks before he curves towards him, whispers shyly, “Hold me.”

Careful, like he’s fragile glass, the Alpha shows him onto his side, then closes the distance by fitting his thigh between his achingly bare, achingly creamy and thick, thighs. Like this Louis’ face is pressed to his chest and his little fists balled underneath his chin; he buries his nose in his thin hair. Louis shivers deliciously. “You’re so warm.”

“You too, paradise.”

“I…” his breath is warm on his chest, “Cuddle me. Just make me…happy a while more.”

“Stay the night,” the Alpha breathes persuasively.

Louis’ squirms still, then, “I shouldn’t.”

“Please. ’S already past sundown.” Like nobody’s driven in the night–well his reckless driver of an Omega should not be on the streets at night. It’s for the safety of the public, really. “I’ll cook whatever you want.”

“I…” the boy sounds so close to surrender he can taste it.

“Please, I’ll sleep on the other side of the house if you want. I’ll let you eat dinner on your own, too. I’ll…I’ll be silent. I’ll do whatever I have to if you’ll spend one night with me, Louis.”
Louis shakes his head a bit. “I’m so not stayin’ the night if you leave me alone one second I’m here. I want you practically up my arse.” As the words wreck through him, the idea of his—, Louis curses, “I…Not…You know what I mean.”

A bit sickened by his thoughts, the Alpha mutters, “I know. I’ll…I’ll be your shadow. I will handcuff us.”

“You have handcuffs? What the bloody hell for?” there’s an adorable edge to his voice; an edge of jealousy he’s never heard so prominent before. For some reason being the cause of his jealousy sends a wildfire through his bloodstream.

“I don’t really know,” he manages sheepishly. “I was a bit…stupid for a while without you. Just thought I would handcuff meself to the bed in order to stay clean or somethin’.”

Once he’s explained the tension drains from his frame and Louis snickers. “I think that’s a bloody brilliant idea. You handcuff yourself to the bed. Then I’ll handcuff meself to you. Bam. We’re all happy.” Fuck, sounds about right.

Emotion shimmers to life within him, like he’s coming together. The force dazes him enough that Louis takes his silence for something else. “Cuddle me first. Then I want you to cook…lobster.”

“Alright,” not a beat of hesitance, “I’ll have to have some delivered or I can–,”

“Jeez, H, I was yankin’ your chains! I don’t care what you make. Just make it good.”

“When don’t I?” he asks dryly.

“You haven’t cooked a proper meal in the last three years. You’re rusty.”

“I cooked just last week.” A smirk conquers his mouth.

“And didn’t invite me over?” the boy sounds scandalised enough that he almost laughs; the sound dies before it’s heard.

“I don’t have your number…” he reminds him with a bite. “I would’ve if I could’ve.”

Louis sighs. “Well what was on the menu?”

“Eggs and ham.” (Sadly, he is right, prior to that day he hadn’t cooked for years; he had needed to start small, remember how to function in the kitchen).

“Green eggs ‘nd ham?”

“Sure.”

“Mmm. What ‘bout dessert then? What will we have for dessert?” the easily sidetracked Omega asks.

“Cereal. Wine.” If you still enjoy that.

“You know me too well,” Louis accuses as a little finger jabs at his chest.

“Your point?”

“You’re dumb.”

“That makes sense.”
“Is that Styles sarcasm ‘m hearing?”

“Dunno,” he smiles slowly, pleased. “You tell me.”

With an adorable “umph,” the Omega squirms away, and the Alpha breathes better than he has in months at the familiar upset act. “Awe, little Louis upset?”

“HUMPH,” he does it once more, hiding his face in the blankets.

“I like it. Like it when you’re all adorably upset,” he blurts, staring hungrily. “You look so sassy. So adorable.” Just wanna kiss you so bad.

Louis peeks from the sheets, all innocent blues. “Tell me more. And I might stay upset.”

Tonguing at the sharp point of his canine Harry does so huskily, “I love it when you come home unannounced and sleep in my bed in nothing but my sweater.”

Louis sucks on his bottom lip, a delicious rose returning to his cheeks. “Y-You noticed?”

“Always notice when you’re in my clothes.”

“Maybe I’ll come home and wear them more often then.”

It’s an open that he takes to speak suggestively, “Every weekend would be nice. I would love that.”

“Mmm,” the boy arches an artful brow, mirth alight in his beautiful eyes. “Persuade me.”

“How.”

“Dunno. You tell me,” he echoes sweetly.

“Make me happy,” the Alpha commands, leaning in until their faces are mere inches apart. Louis’s blues drown him. “Make me happy and come home, paradise. I don’t want to wait anymore. I want your time. At least on the weekends.”

Louis’s mouth parts a bit; a pretty glaze to his pretty eyes.

“Come home on the weekends and let me take care of you. Let me listen to you complain about your week. Let me tell you about mine. Let me cook for you, or order take out, or just cereal. Let me feed you, pet you. Let me hold you, make sure you’re happy. Make sure you’re not lonely because I know how easy it is for you to feel so. And let me make this right. Let’s do all the stuff we haven’t in too long. Let’s listen to old records at midnight, and talk like we never did. Prank me; let me tell you stupid jokes. Louis, let me take care of you like I’m meant to.”

“What ‘bout when you don’t want me around b-b-because I start to annoy you?”

“I always want you around,” the Alpha murmurs with ease, because it’s true.

“What ‘bout when you have a shit day?”

“Been havin’ shit days. Had one today, but it doesn’t matter now because you’re here.”

Louis bites his bottom lip, then seconds after, “When you want your fix more?”

“Never will. I need you. Don’t need that shit.”
Louis shivers, then, “’M just scared. So scared we’ll screw up all over again.”

“’M not. I’m not scared. Don’t be scared. We…We’ve been through the worst. I’ll take care of you.”

“I’ve heard that before…” scared, small.

A backhand to the face, stab at his shifty confidence. Louis whimpers, takes his face in both damp hands, “No. No, I didn’t mean it that way. I just…I’m sorry for that. I’m scared. Please, don’t be upset, don’t be sad or angry. I want to stay. I want to do this. Don’t expect me be fearless though.”

Frantic, Harry crushes him to his chest. As Louis breathes out, he breathes in. “Promise,” he pleads with the last of his hope. “Promise me, Louis. Every weekend. I need you.”

A pinky curls around his; his heart fuckin’ soars. “I pinky promise. Every weekend. I’ll be here by the time you come home every Friday night.”

“And Saturday morning?”

“And every Sunday morning I’ll be here, too,” Louis whispers softly.

What must be hours later, the Alpha jerks awake with his hair matted to his forehead, looks down to where his sweaty palms have flattened on his side to find there is no dark crimson liquid oozing from a raw wound, just an old scar. Even so he twitches like mad as the residual pain of the night terror, the memory, slithers from his conscious mind to the cataleptic woodworks of his infested brain. As his heart hammers viciously, disorientation tears through his inward catastrophe. Louis. Louis was here. Louis…Louis…When there is no sign or sight of the Omega his ribcage constricts cruelly around his most vital organs.

“He left,” the monster sneers, then laughs with a bladed edge, “Again.”

A breath is jerked from his lungs as Harry stands and scrambles out of the room; just follows the nearly inaudible, but musical hum that can be heard once he’s midway down the hall. As his heart slows Harry makes it to the first floor, through the halls to until the object of his attention is located. In the kitchen entrance, the Alpha leans, drinks him in.

There is he is; tiny and soft in Harry’s sweater, in the black socks bunched at his thin ankles. And oh fuck he’s humming so gently as he prepares his tea–slides around in his socks and doesn’t put one item he uses back in its proper spot (or at least the sink). Just being the absolute mess he is; the beautiful mess. Oh, God. It’s like he was never gone. Like he never left.

As his heart bleeds with boundless affection Harry speaks slowly, “You’re so beautiful.”

Before he is even finished Louis squeals, so startled the spoon he was using to stir clatters to the counter as he whirls around. “Bloody hell, Harry! D-Don’t sneak up on me like that! Christ! Tea nearly gave me first degree burns!”

“Makes us even,” he murmurs faintly, with a crooked smile.

Louis’s frail shoulders relax underneath the sweater before he bats at his fringe. “Jeez, kinda miss the squeaky wood right about now. Come. Let’s dance in the fridge light.” I knew you would.

“Nah,” he shakes his head. “I’d rather not embarrass myself with my scary lack of grace any more than I have to, thanks.”
Louis lifts his teacup daintily, then, “Okay, then we can talk ‘bout the scars, yeah?” And his sneaky smile is hidden behind the teacup that’s to his mouth.

With a playful sound (to hide how fuckin’ terrified he is) the Alpha turns out the lights and tugs the fridge open. As the fluorescent light spills into the darkness Harry takes him around the waist, snatches the teacup and gulps down the (bitter) liquid which earns him a scadalised screech as he tosses the thing into the sink. “Still an arsehole I see!”

In the soft illumination Louis pouts.

“Heey! You asked for this. I know it ain’t my style, but look at me now,” he says diplomatically as he does just that. Louis rests his head on his shoulder, slim arms wound around his waist as he nips at his flesh, which nearly earns them a nice meet-and-greet with the floor. “Well you said you’d do anything with me anywhere, didn’t you?”

“Hence,” he breathes into his hair, “why we’re here. I don’t care to dance. But look at us now.”

“This cannot be considered dancing. All you’re doin’ is spinning us round the kitchen,” Louis retorts into his skin; skin that sensitizes under his mere proximity.

“Don’t judge my dance skills, paradise,” he scolds, constricting his arms just because.

“Missed you so bad,” the Omega mumbles.

“Missed my shit dance skills?” Harry jokes; because light feels so damned nice right now.

“M not teasin’, H. I missed you. I missed talkin’ to you if only like this. I missed you bein’ a proper dick and my being a twat.”

With his eyes shut the Alpha whispers, “I don’t wanna remember life without you. Don’t wanna be without you ever. I thought you left…When I woke up and you weren’t in bed I thought you left me again.”

Louis sighs gently. “Wouldn’t leave without a proper goodbye…” I fuckin’ hate goodbyes.

“Don’t leave at all,” Harry presses without any actual strength.

“You know what has to happen in order for me to stay.”

Don’t remind me. Worth it. It’s worth it. “You still goin’ to cook for me?” the boy demands without warning.

“It’s half past midnight.”

“And?” Okaay then.

“Well what is it you’d like?”

“Food,” the boy simply chirps.

See, Harry knows him, knows he’s being so very broad because he wants to complain when he’s given what he didn’t ask for. But he doesn’t mind, simply breathes, “Grilled cheese?”

Louis stills, obviously unprepared for this. “Mmm. I’d like that. And wine?”

“Definitely wine.”
“Get to it then,” the Omega orders haughtily, but presses a chaste kiss to his jaw before scampering to the kitchen island, disregarding the stool to hop onto the counterpane. Stunned, the Alpha relishes in the remnants of his warmth, the ghost of his kiss on his skin. Until Louis tilts his head and smiles silkily. “Chop chop.”

He listens; puts his hands to work and remarks on his lovely run on sentences. In these fifteen minutes he’s swarmed with the familiarity—how his voice becomes a singsong with how quick he speaks, how he can understand no matter the pace because he’s listened to this all these blessed years. How the boy can move from one subject to the next in a matter of one minute; “Do you think we can down this whole bottle tonight?”, “Oi! Did you know Arizona Ice Tea is made of bull piss!?” , “Haaaz, you’re takin’ too long! I’m starvin’!”

Until he’s overwhelmed by his enormity, by how they fit— he says so little, but Louis says enough for the both of them when needed.

And tears have misted his eyes by the time he cuts his sandwich diagonal; so it’s in two right triangles, just like he fancies. Louis doesn’t wait on him to hand the dish over, simply stands and starts rummaging through the cabinets (all of which the Alpha closes when he doesn’t), “Ugh,” he mutters, one hand curled at the hem of the sweater to keep it at his thighs as he stretches. Leaning on the island the Alpha watches in amusement until he (at last) pauses to admit defeat, “Where are the bloody wineglasses, Harry?”

With a pointed look to the cabinet across from him, Harry attempts to stifle his smirk. “That look is so suspicious,” Louis murmurs darkly as he scampers over to the cupboard. Though he tries to appear innocent it must be futile because the boy stretches to open the cupboard; a moment later he tosses a dark look over his shoulder and whines, “Now that’s just wrong! You did that on purpose!”

Well, he can’t say he did; but it’s a pleasant realisation all the same. The flutes are rowed at the very top shelf of the high cabinet.

“You are foul, Styles,” Louis hisses, and crosses his arms. “No wine tonight I suppose.”

Across from his the Alpha crosses his own arms and holds his sapphire stare. “I could just take them down for us…if you ask nicely.”

“Definitely no wine.”

“C’mon, paradise,” he encourages with a cheeky smile. “Just say please.”

Louis sighs dejectedly, then bites his lip and lowers his stare. “And I really wanted that wine…” his voice is so dull, so sad.

It’s no surprise, how manipulative his Omega really can be. Yet like the fool he is for this one boy, Harry falls for it every time, “Alright. Tone down the melancholy; you will have your wine.”

And it’s only when he’s retrieved two flutes that Louis lets the façade fall from his face and beams in triumph, snatching them from his hands and placing them on the marble island before removing the wine from the freezer.

Like a pro he hunts down the corkscrew then with a little, “Aha!” snatches it up and removes the cork like it’s easy. Once he’s filled them both to the edge (he’s always enjoyed liquor a bit too much) the boy takes his plate and settles on the stool. When he doesn’t move the boy peers up through thick lashes, “Aren’t you eating?”
“Yeah,” he mutters hastily, then as to cover his stupidity. “Yeah I am.”

When he does Louis starts in and treats the grilled cheese like a royal meal; the compliments and the praise and the fawning isn’t too much. Though he doesn’t just accept these sweet responses…he isn’t the least bit uncomfortable. In fact he’s too comfortable, too happy, it’s surreal for him. Throughout Harry’s hands itch to take the sandwich from him and just feed him until his tummy is full. But he suppresses the instinct to listen to him talk about how he’s taken an interest in monkeys. Oh, Christ, he should not be considering a monkey as a birthday gift…but he is. Can’t help it. Not when his sapphire eyes are alight with excitement, and he continues to giggle around sips of wine, “I wanna monkey, Haz. I wanna monkey!”

And by the time he’s finished Louis has dumped his plate in the sink and downed three cups of wine. The emptiness to the house has been replaced by Louis’s presence; it’s warmer than it’s been in ten months as the boy hugs the bottle to his chest and ambles into the living room. Right now it’s a home.

With no intentions of drinking even until a buzz, the Alpha continues to babysit his first drink and pupsits Louis all the same.

He’s already intoxicated by his mere proximity, his sight. In the living room Louis settles in the middle of the carpet, with his bare legs tucked underneath his sweater-clad bum. “Lower the lights and start up the Coldplay while I pour our drinks.”

As to escape his inevitable upset when he realises his drink doesn’t need a refill, the Alpha does so, makes it to lower the overhead lights until it’s almost dark in the vast room, and Louis mumbles, “’Az, why aren’t you drinkin’?”

“Wine still isn’t my drink, love,” he reminds him–it’s true, he’d much rather those mixed fruity drinks. When he starts up his playlist Coldplay isn’t what starts up, but Manchester Orchestra works, as Louis smiles up at him and pats the spot beside him. “Don’t be shy,” he snickers before sipping at his refill.

When he settles criss-crossed beside him, the Omega smiles and hands him his glass with a firm, adorable, “Drink.”

To placate him the Alpha takes a gulp of the tart liquor, then whispers when he realises that stare hasn’t left him, “What?”

“Nothin’,” Louis tells him softly.

As the music drifts over the room, the Alpha stares at him, watches him sip and sip and sip like he talks and talks and talks.

An endless comfort found just in his voice, addled with alcohol as time gets lost.

"And that is how I bruised my bum ice skating," he finishes his ambient tale with an emphasis that tears him from his trance.

"You weren't even listening, were you?" the boy accuses with an adorable pout to his bottom lip, and a jab of his finger. When he only grins slowly his pout softens into a curious smile, "Where'd ya go?"

As the Omega lies back beside him, the Alpha follows his movement unconsciously, shifting onto his side so they are curved towards each other. "Hmm?"

Lost in the lowfire that's arisen in his glassy stare Harry breathes, "To paradise."
As his expression melts, the Omega breathes back, "Yeah? And how was it?"

"Beautiful," is what his mouth forms. "All I've ever needed."

"Oh," Louis mumbles sleepily.

Hesitant, Harry brushes their hands, asks, "Can I?"

Without a response, Louis twines their fingers; and oh God it’s his lifeline, the very beat of his heart.

"Can I say it?"

Louis shivers, then mumbles, "If you must."

"I love you. Paradise, I am so in love with you."

Another shiver as their gazes cling and bore and oh God those blues sparkle with tears that spill down his flushed cheeks. "Haz. Haz, hold me."

Frantic to have him before he changes his mind again, he hitchs his creamy thigh over his hip and shoves one arm underneath his slim torso, then over to bury his face in his hair. God he is so small wrapped around him, so fairylike.

It sets a wildfire of Alpha instinct to his veins.

Mine.

Louis cries softly; not in strangled sobs or wet weeps. Just soft quivers, and broken breaths. "W-Waited so long. Waited so long to 'ear that."

"I'm sorry I waited so long to say it."

"B-Bett'ah late than nevah," the Omega snivels, then lifts his face to plant a wet, forgiving kiss to his jaw.

"Want meh to show you how much I love you, Alpha?" And fuck is it cruel how sexual his voice becomes, a silky purr. The fire escalates enough that he is burning from the inside out.

"No, baby," he forces through clenched teeth, hand clamping on his sharp hipbone.

"'Az, why don't you want me?"

"You know that’s..." but the boy has relaxed and lulled to sleep by the time he has started to tell him what is scarred in his heart. Damn it. No. No, Louis isn’t supposed to fall asleep drunk with the idea that Harry does not want his body; like he hasn't wanted to worship his body since he was fifteen popping knots to the idea of knotting him.

And he almost wakes him.

But the Omega mumbles in his sleep, "your paradise," and he can't bear to. Can't stand to deprive him of his sleep.

Instead he holds him awhile more, clings to him, basks in his warmth.

When he stands Louis clings to him as well, like the baby monkey he wants so bad; he is one.
"'Az?"

"Yes, paradise?" he asks quietly as he walks through the halls, leaving darkness in their wake.

"Sleep wi’ me. I’ll try. Once again before we can response Louis' relaxed all his weight, asleep just like that. Because he has to with Louis in the house, he bolts the front door and activates the security. From there he just...goes upstairs, into his room; where he wants Louis to be at all times he is here. In his bed. Limbs tangled in his sheets, scent caught in the material.

Careful, Harry tries to put him to bed and hit the shower but Louis whimpers, the sound so terrified that he freezes.

"Haz, don’t leave me, no," he’s mumbling like he might shatter and he lowers them both to the mattress. Whispers, "I won’t ever again, paradise. Not ever again."

Until he calms enough that he can move to at least wrap them in the blankets, hold him to his chest.

For a while he listens to his breaths, hyperaware of his every fidget (since he was a child Louis couldn’t sleep still), and his every sound that sheds blessed light on his dreams.

Until he is warm enough that sleep decides he is a worthy victim.

&&

A torn noise threatens to steal his sleep. Louis whimpers in protest, unable to understand what is happening in his desperation to stay asleep. Except hands take his arms roughly, forces him to face consciousness.

A shocked gasp spills from his mouth as Louis is yanked up the mattress; through sleep blurred eyes Louis makes out the Alpha above him, responsible.

Oh, no.

Hatred is stark in his blind stare; how his hair curls from his sweat, plastered to his forehead, and his mouth is curled, marks his distress. A nightmare. “You’re a sick bastard,” Harry snarls with an eerie edge to his voice.

Anxiety bathes him, but Louis shores up his courage and whispers earnestly, “Haz. Wake up. You’re goin’ to hurt me.”

And he must hear him because he flinches hard, “Fuck you!”


An upset, confused breath leaves his flared nostrils, but he doesn’t move, so Louis presses, “I came home, Harry. Come home, baby. I need you.”

With a crippled noise, so much like a sob, the Alpha’s weight slumps over him; steals his breath. Oh, God, he’s so heavy—a sharp pain on his ribs, an elated flutter to his heart.

When the Omega catches his breath, he’s able to take his arm back and runs his fingers through the Alpha’s damp, knotted waves. The sound that Harry emits next is one of pure relief. “That’s right, baby. ‘M here for you. “
Sleep calls to him, so Louis just pets him as he lolls in and out of awareness. Somewhere throughout sacred sleep reclaims him.

&&

“Paradise, c’mon, up!” the Alpha insists for what feels like the hundredth time. Tired irritation creeps up on him, but it’s hushed by the boyish anticipation in Harry’s raspy voice. “Louis, we’re goin’ to miss it!”

Just...Louis is so sleepy, and he doesn’t see why they have to watch the sun rise. Nope, makes absolutely no sense.

Through lethargic movements the Omega sits up and scrubs at his droopy eyes. In triumph Harry casts him that utterly charming Cheshire-Cat smirk then before Louis remember how to speak, tosses him clothes; with his reverie pierced Louis flushes and focuses on shrugging into the clothes (not without noting Harry preoccupies his attention with some stupid posh watch, like it’ll be three hours later if he dares tears his stare from the bloody piece).

The outfit is ridiculous on him; tight but far too long skinnies, a thin sweater and one of this damned peacoat’s to finish. Considerably plumper Louis grumbles, “Dare I ask to brush my teeth before we leave?”

With a truly worried look, Harry peers up, then back to his watch, “You have one minute.”

“Ugh! What is this military camp?” As the words sink in, Louis wishes he hadn’t said it, but Harry just mutters darkly, “Fifty seconds, paradise.”

Relieved to avoid any tension Louis flees to the bathroom where he takes his time limit seriously, snatches one of the spares from the cabinet and brushes fiercely, gurgling mouthwash by the time Harry knocks. It’s obvious he doesn’t expect Louis to have been finished as he nearly falls over him when he yanks the door open.

When he catches his footing he takes Louis’s arm, gentle but insistent, and ushers them from the room down the steps to the back; through the French doors and into the snow. In such a rush Louis sinks into the snow and stumbles, unable to help but giggle, “Gee, Haz! Chill!”

“’S chill enough out here.”

And Louis dissolves into giggles at that one, tossing snow at him until he’s dodging snow balls and smiling stupidly, and his fingers are numb.

“Stop, stop,” the Alpha laughs, taking his wrists in those long, binding fingers. “Your fingers will fall off.”

Louis stares up at him, smiling back at his alert, alight jade eyes. Underneath the willow trees Louis drags him, because the grass is frosted but nowhere near piled in snow. Plus it gives them the perfect view of the sky.

When the boy tugs at his wrist Harry lets them go (and he almost wishes he wouldn’t, like he won’t let his gaze go). “Look,” he whispers, but Louis is looking and would rather not stop spiraling in the hurricane that has claimed his stare.

Helpless, Louis stands there and stares back at him.

“We missed it,” he whispers.
“I know,” the boy says as his face erupts in a luminous smile.

Seraphs spread their wings in his tummy at the intense streak to his eyes. “Can’t let me have anythin’ nice can you?”

“You have me,” Louis retorts sweetly.

God. His face only splits into a boyish smile that isn’t fair, he’s supposed to be put out.

When he opens his mouth to wipe that smile right off his damn face the Alpha tackles him—well not really though Louis squeals like he does. He just takes him by the waist softly and lowers him to the grass, where he shivers, but traces his jawline, holding his eyes.

“I wish I could make you better,” the confession tumbles right off his tongue. “I wish I could just touch you like this and make it all go away.”

As his fingers stroke the Alpha whispers, “You do. You make me better.”

Gaze boring into those sober, happy eyes, Louis believes him.

&&

It’s that night that Louis finally says what Harry’s been waiting years to hear, “I want to know what happened at the Institution.”

Anxiety trembles down the back of his neck, like spiders crawling down his back. More than reluctant, Harry looks down at how his hands are too tight around another wineglass; moments from shattering it. All his control is centered on relaxing his fingers enough that it doesn’t, and muttering, “Ask me then.”

“W…What were the others like?” Louis asks, tilting his head curiously across from him on the sofa.

Oh, that’s not too bad. “Emotionless, mostly. It was strict survival there. Emotions were too risky, makes you weak and susceptible. You show none or beat the consequences. There was the main Institution but most of the patrons had us scattered about the outskirts.”

Louis lets out a little breath. “Survival of the fittest.”

“Exactly.”

“What was the worst of it?”

Very bad.

To withhold his lapse Harry throws back the entire glass in two gulps. It’s warm in his stomach, but nothing can replace the cold terror that’s seized his bones. When he’s taken more than too many deep breaths, “There wasn’t r-really a worst. It was all just one oversized hellhole with a shit ton of demons. It was…all… I dunno, I met someone when I was fifteen. I met her on the run. There was a pack of ‘em. Sometimes the stronger Alphas ran in packs, and that was very difficult to take out on your own. I climbed a tree. No other open. They were just waiting. For whatever reason she came back for me…and took them all out on her own. For me…She was nineteen and beautiful and so damn kind to me.” It’s an old loss that aches in him. “We were never too close, don’t even know her name to this day, but we shared shelter. She was the only one who seemed human anymore. She like…took me under her wing, and taught me what it meant to survive.
“Just weeks before closing I c-came back and she was in a chair with her back to me. When I went up to her…her throat had been slit. There was a pool of blood. And e-even I didn’t bother to…to…examine the place before I let my guard down. The…Her killer was still there; he was so young, too. Like me. He had to be fifteen, sixteen. And I was meant to be his next hit. I…I was so…consumed by rage, and I did what I had to…to survive, Lou. I buried them both and I didn’t look back…I didn’t f-f-eel much. I l-learnt my lesson: Never get too attached, never let your guard down.”

There’s a torn sound, but before he can even look Louis crashes into him, knocking the empty glass to the carpet. The boy clings to him with all the strength he possesses; arms wound around his neck and hands bury themselves in his hair. “I’m so sorry. That could’ve been you. So many t-times that could’ve been y-you, Haz. Don’t go back there, Haz. Please.” His breathing becomes so erratic it’s disturbing.

“Paradise,” Harry breathes, running his hand up and down the curve of his spine. “Calm down, breathe. I’m here. I’m never…I’m here to stay.”

“Haz, ‘m so sorry, ‘m so sorry, ‘m…”

Carefully Harry drags him into his lap and leans back into the sofa, savoring his warm body. “Shh, love, don’t do this. Don’t be sorry. You ‘ave no reason to be. It’s not your fault.”

“I just…I didn’t know, Haz. I didn’t know people w-w-were being hurt! Children. I’m s-so horrified. What is the Council doi’in’ to our people? It’s…It’s so,” his voice breaks. *I used to ask myself the same thing.*

“Louis, please, enough. Stop–,”

“I can’t!” the boy shrills. “I can’t, Harry. I didn’t know there was a true possibility of you not comin’ home to me! You took that risk. You…H-How could you do that?”

“I don’t know,” he offers uselessly. “I don’t know how I could do that, Louis. I don’t know. But there isn’t one day I don’t regret it.”

Louis whimpers, “I-I-I would’ve killed you if you hadn’t come home to me!”

“But I didn’t…come home.”

“I know! But at least you’re still on your way! At least I-I still h-have you. If I had lost you…”

“You would’ve been fine,” Harry whispers with more conviction. “You’d have been fine because you always win.”

“I couldn’t be-beat death! Are you mental?”

“Yes, but I am also right.”

“I wouldn’t have wanted to win,” the Omega disputes, but the trembles weaken until he’s still again. “I woulda wanted to lose, I just don’t want to be without you ever again. I couldn’t do it, couldn’t Haz, just couldn’t.”

It’s glaringly clear that he’s not the only one; they did this to each other, built this co-dependency together. It’s in Louis’ voice, the slight trill to his words that etch his belief. And when Louis believes in something it’s with all his precious heart.

“Well ‘m here. And I don’t have any plans to not be here ever again.”
“But do you want to be here?”

It’s another question Harry’s asked himself over the years. “I want to be anywhere you are, paradise.”

Jesus Christ when Louis lifts his head to stare at him through damp lashes and bottomless blue’s…it’s never once been a lie. “Even if it meant I’d suffer my entire life I’d choose to be here, to live on. All the emotional damage this world has to offer is worth it when there is you to prove me wrong time and time. To prove me wrong when I think the world is shithole full of bad people. To prove me wrong when I think I am, too.”

“You’re not a bad person. You’ve been bad places, but you are not a bad person.”

For once Harry doesn’t choose to believe him, he just does.

&&

To escape his mind’s constant confines Harry cuts his session short. It’s just once, he tells himself, just once—come Monday he will be back on track, back to baby steps. Just he can’t stand to stay away from home.

Christ, the compulsion is lethal; beyond any responsibility, beyond any reason. Just…there, irreversible and seemingly permanent; he doesn’t know what it is.

Okay, screw that, he knows exactly what it is. It’s his damned Alpha body, it’s the rut he’s due for in six imminent days.

Prior to this the last four ruts have been manageable, almost docile with his withdrawal; his body too drained to retain its steady animalistic desires. The addict’s lust for the monster much more dominant than his Alpha’s to breed.

Now, nearly seven months clean, the withdrawal pains have faded into (usually) easily ignored hunger-pains. Near nonexistent, with five months since Louis’s somewhat came back into life. With the reattachment his Alpha’s territorial instincts have reared to the forefront of his mind; an insatiable craving to have the Omega permanently, without the possibility of losing him ever again.

It’s flared hot in his veins, his Alpha lies in wait beneath his skin, a restless need slowly overpowering his restraint, especially now.

So it’s no surprise that Friday night the compulsion is at its most lethal the precise moment the Harry steps up to the entrance to find it unlocked. An instinctive anger builds in his chest as he ducks inside the warm house, the fresh air replaced by their scents, thick with the airless heat. Fuck is it lovely—to walk into his scent over and over again. Delicious strawberry breeze drips from the ceilings, seeps from the woodworks, drifts from the curtains to pummel the hell out of his senses.

As his muscles bunch the Alpha works through his mandatory routine, but it’s feels off. The clatter of his keys on the table feels loud enough to rupture his sensitive eardrums, his footsteps, much too cautious, ricochets around the walls of his skull, thud thud thud thud. On and on. Even the low lights pierce his eyes. The feel of the cool marble on his hands, where he finds himself braced in the kitchen, nearly coats him in frost.

Not right. The shift in sensory input is not unnoticed, but overlooked because a shrill pierces the houses’ steady atmosphere. In seconds he’s torn through the kitchen, the halls, upstairs to all but
break the third floor sitting room door down.

Instinct rips through him, forceful and hostile, as Harry examines the room through sharp, filed eyes. It’s as it’s been all this time, with only the shock of Louis attempting to climb up the bookcase to the right wall. “What?” he demands when he located no true threat though his Alpha, primed to protect, refuses to relax until Louis provides an explanation for scaring the fuck out of him. “What’s the matter?”

Louis makes a distressed noise, and then tosses a horrified look at him. And if the circumstances were different Harry might find this humorous, because God is Louis adorable like this, with round pleading oceans, and an O shaped mouth that releases another series of shrieks as he struggles to make it to the top of the bookshelf. “Haz! Haz, oh fuck, there is a mutated spider!” Which means there is a tiny, harmless insect that Louis needs to have destroyed in order to rest peacefully tonight—such a pup.

As the obviously terrified boy’s eyes dart frantically, all but pasted to the floor, the Alpha steals the moment to compose himself, to stem his unstable agitation.

It’s not enough time before Louis is demanding his assistance, “There, there! No! No, there! OmiGod, Harold! Hurry up! It’s goin’ to get away and lay its demonic spawn in our house!” And he is still on the hunt when worse comes to worst.

As Harry is working to crush the itsy-bitsy (honestly Louis insists he isn’t afraid of anything, but it’s rather sad to see him like this; almost makes him smile) spider with his boot that the bookcase Louis hugs tilts with his weight. Which, lovely.

Before the bookcase crushes the gasping boy, Harry shoves him, with perhaps a bit too much force (his rut affects his strength, unleashes the animal mostly chained by the human), them both out of the way and into the sofa, which, under their force topples backwards with them.

With an impressive crash that shakes the structure underneath them Harry finds himself sprawled out on the floor beside the wall with another body settled over his. The throb at the back of his skull from the fall is dulled with a fierce streak of the animal’s want. In the next second he has Louis, who lets him hear the prettiest little gasp, pinned to the hardwood with his thin wrists in one of his hands, stretched above Louis’s head so he is as helpless as Harry wants him.

With a flash of his extended canines the Alpha stares down at him; fuck he looks like paradise. With that innocent expression on his pretty face, all doe-ocean-eyes and a pink mouth parted to release little, startled breaths. In his little skimpy silk spaghetti strap that reveals the erotic lines of his clavicle, the almost shiny skin at the base of his slender neck, skin his teeth should be buried in.

As he reels with the territorial edge to his thoughts Louis pants softly, “Oh no no no it escaped!”

Over the fuckin’ spider Harry demands with control he does not feel, “Why was the front door unlocked, Louis?”

This catches his strayed attention; a lovely blush spreads high on his cheeks as he cranes his neck to really look at him (distract him). See, he knows he’s fucked up, he’s been warned time and time to lock the front door behind him. And that he still hasn’t fallen into the habit means it’s not worth remembering.

Fuck does Harry want to make him remember. Wants to force him onto his belly, draw his little shorts down his creamy thighs, and leave handprints on his perky ass to last him the weeks of absence. Wants to spank him until every time he locks the door behind him he gets wet with the
remembrance of his punishment.

Of course Louis doesn’t realise the severity of his thoughts, and plays innocent, “Oopsie! I must’ve forgotten when I went back out to check the mail.” Adds a cherry of distraction, “Did you know we keep getting John Smith’s mail?! Who the hell is this Smith anyway? Did he move in when I moved out, Harold? Did you cheat on me?”

*What a joke.* “Oh, no, lovely,” he drawls softly, squeezing his wrists. “You won’t charm your way out of this one. Ramblin’ or not.”

“I won’t?” Louis asks sweetly, batting those thick lashes at him.

The little *tease* spreads the wildfire in his veins. As the Alpha bares his canines, Louis sucks on his bottom lip, silent. “*Explain yourself,*” the timbre bleeds without permission. It’s effective, he must say, as Louis softens underneath him, lashes whisper shut as he mumbles, “Nothin’ to explain. I obviously didn’t remember. Get over it.”

In his head it’s so quiet, his Alpha in control, untouched by all the shit; severe, lethal to any other Alpha, but his Omega’s bitch.

“You put yourself at risk,” he states through clenched teeth, constricting his hand once when Louis tries a feeble tug.

“H-Hardly,” the boy chides, all breathy and pliable. “I am in my own bloody–,”

“It’s *late.* Anyone could’ve waltzed on in and you’d have never seen it coming.” Just the idea shades his vision in crimson; fury ablaze in his stare until Louis squirms a bit, whispers uselessly, “I-I knew you were on your way–,”

“Not here. I wasn’t *fucking here,*” Harry interrupts sharply, flashing his canines once, urging him to choose his next words wisely. Though he does not have the chance because he continues, “You’ve been bad. Bad paradise. Bad boy,” his voice lowers a thousand octaves as he lowers his weight enough that their mouths are inches away. It’s been five months since he kissed him at his party. Five months since he’s tasted his delicious mouth. Impatient, his Alpha claws at his chest, but he’s not interested in *his* sexual indulgence, “You know what happens to bad little Omegas?”

“Harry,” Louis breathes in obvious confusion, his eyes so round and ingenious staring up at him now. “W-What is up with you? You’re overre–,”

“You could have been hurt,” he bites back, knowing sensibly he is overreacting, but even a *chance* of Louis being harmed is too much for his Alpha right now (ever). “You are the most important person in my life ever and I need you to be safe when I can’t be here to make sure of it.”

With an adorably confused expression, Louis whispers, oddly placating, like he knows Harry is seconds from losing his mind, “I’m sorry, baby. Nothing happened. ‘M fine. You’re home now.”

The shimmer of emotion in his soft stare, paired with the tender words, slashes at his control, and he jerks him upright then turns him onto his tummy. It’s only when his fingers sneak underneath the waistband of his shorts that Louis gasps, “Haz? What…what are you doin’?”

The tremble of alarm to his reedy voice shoves Harry straight into the shattered shards of *reality.* With a shudder, Harry scrambles away from him on his knees, cursing viciously when his back meets the opposite wall.

And oh God Louis stays on his tummy a second more, the loveliest view of his luscious ass on display as cock takes an interest, fattening in his trousers. The awkward silence that carries
between them almost unsettles him, but *fuck the little shorts hug his ass in the most teasing ways and--*,

Effectively putting an end to his thoughts Louis sits up slowly, and faces him with an adorably *dopey* smile illuminating his pretty features. “Was that Alpha Harry?”

A relieved breath leaves his desperate lungs. “Worried, upset H,” which is true, he *is worried and upset*. Or he was. Now his stare has latched onto the strap that’s slid down his shoulder to his upper arm, loose, teasing him.

Louis crawls, *crawls* (*fuck such a tease*), over to him, then, once between his spread legs, points an accusing index at him. “No. I’ve met worried upset H. And he doesn’t call me a *bad boy* and try to pull my shorts down.”

*Fuck.* As expected the Omega is *on the dot*–he’d overestimated his Alpha’s restraint, his obsession with Louis. Selfish as ever because Harry won’t tell him to leave; won’t warn him that he might be on edge this entire weekend and wanting to get up in his sweet ass.

Sickness swelters in his stomach; he is so sick, so *twisted*. Warm fingertips stroke his jawline as Louis breathes, “’M not upset. You wouldn’t have hurt me.”

*Wrong.* More so than normal Harry is a *danger* to him. Insane, wired, and *starved for him*. “I’m sorry.”

“Not every time you touch me d’you have to apologise, baby,” Louis tells him foolishly, always *so naive, so carless with himself*. Like he hasn’t witnessed just what he’s capable of…

“I shouldn’t be allowed to cross those boundaries without your permission,” he says pointedly, then opens his eyes (he hadn’t realised he’d closed them) to show him the twisted lust that must be aflame there even now. Of course there is no indication Louis notices, brows furrowed only a bit.

“You have my permission,” Louis mumbles, petulant.

Hope needles at his veins, and he wants to kiss him, wants to–before he can respond Louis shrieks, “*oh my fuck! There is it!*” scrambling onto the fallen sofa with a desperate expression.

And they’re back on track.

When the insect threat has been terminated, thanks to Harry’s *not so trusty boot*, Louis shudders in absolute relief. It’s not that he’s afraid of spiders, but that…that was *Si-Fi mutated spider*, and *pregnant* with more than just one, but dozens, of little Satan spawns.

Pleased, Louis cheers, “*Go, Haz! Go!*” and “*yes, baby, yes!*” as Harry stomps on the little nasty offspring, though this only earns him a dark, upset look from the Alpha. Under that look his Omega whimpers, and Louis shrinks a bit, tries to seem smaller.

Alpha is certainly not pleased with him tonight.

And his displeasure upsets Louis like nothing else, needles and nettles him. Just…it’s not like Harry to act out on his emotions, as long as Louis has known, he’s bottled up his emotions aside from his easily sparked temper.

The moments prior’s lapse in control was abrupt enough to set alarm bells off in his head; obviously something is bothering him. Louis just needs to *find out what*. And if it’s up to him he
It’s not difficult to coax Alpha into talking to him these days.

Louis decides, once the Alpha is scraping the sad remains of spider from his shoe and onto the wood (ew) that his day must’ve been particularly shit.

Well he’s here now, and he is determined to make it better. Louis can be a proper sweet Omega when he wants to be; and he wants to be right now. Wants to be a good boy for his Alpha.

With a sunny smile Louis clambers away from the backwards sofa and hops over the scattered books to where he stands, then stretches on his tiptoes to kiss his clenched jaw in silent thanks. “Proper prince, you are,” he whispers between a few more kisses. Then, when the Alpha doesn’t react, Louis leaves the room despite how his body screams in protest to the distance.

Mercifully, Harry follows, footsteps heavy thuds closing in on him. Goose bumps form on his arms at how the chase causes heat to coil in his tummy. “Where are you goin’?” he demands with that sexy Alpha edge.

Louis’s heart flutters; oh God does he sound possessive, and oh God does it make his Omega purr.

“Downstairs,” he’s pleased that his voice doesn’t quiver despite how unsettled he feels. “Why?”

“No. Go lie in bed while I shower.” Another demand that causes butterflies to spread their wings in his belly—like the good boy he is, Louis obeys, and starts to continue downstairs to his room. Before he’s midway down a hand splays on his hip, reels him backwards into a solid frame. “Know you heard me.” A shiver runs up his spine as Harry’s mouth brushes the curve of his ear, voice so deep and Alpha.

Louis huffs, like he’s so bothered, “Yes! And I’m goin’ to lie down!”

“I meant in my bed.”

Oh. Oh, oh, oh. Absolute warmth floors him, and Louis melts. “I…I think I need some assistance,” he tells him cleverly; yes he does need assistance because his knees are all weak and trembly, but Harry will think he’s just mouthing him. A win-win.

Effortless, like Louis weighs a mere stone, the Alpha lifts him mated-style, underneath the thighs and around the waist to he’s cradled to his chest, mouth at the base of his throat. A shiver wrecks through him, an exquisite heat coming together in his tummy. Harry’s hand is just so unreasonably large, splayed hot on his skin like it owns him, the pads of his palms rough, and the tips of his long fingers buried in his soft flesh; the sensation is too much for a mere touch, all thrills and white-hot pleasure. With his nose to his throat all he can smell is him, all that Alpha evergreen, with a tinge of the lavender from his new detergent (he insisted he needed more change).

Louis bites his bottom lip against a whine. The confusion center in brain is in utter chaos—little Louis’s must be running about shrieking at the fire that’s been set and–

Without any notice the Alpha dumps him, rather rudely, onto his mattress.

Boneless, Louis lies there, staring blindly at the ceiling while Harry storms through the room, then, with a serious, “stay,” leaves him to his own company.

Awhile the Omega does just lie there, but too soon becomes restless and tries to make sense of his whirlpool thoughts. It’s obvious there is something that’s set him on edge. Louis will have to confront him. Once he’s eaten. A hungry, not high, and already pissy Alpha, even Harry who tends to be more laidback, isn’t immune to that fatal combination (Louis had learnt from titface
Preston. Of course Louis knows his Alpha wouldn’t try to bruise him, but he also just wants to make sure Harry’s eaten.

For now Louis will focus on being especially sugar sweet to him. Soon enough Alpha will talk to him and when his job to make him feel better has been completed, he will curl up small in his lap, and let him play some black-and-white romance film. Wake up with Harry sprawled out on top of him, (preferably not due to a nightmare) and let him fit between his thighs and–

The interconnected bathroom door is yanked open to thicken the atmosphere with steamy air as Louis’ attention is reclaimed by said Alpha.

With an irritated grunt (which may or may not cause a telltale stirring low in his belly—no, no that’s not right. Louis isn’t due for another three weeks) Harry saunters about the room with joggers lying precariously low at his hips, the muscles of his back and shoulders bunched and damp with the remnants of his shower. As the boy’s mouth floods with saliva Louis worries his bottom lip and waits until the Alpha’s shrugged into a white-T, stretching to define the telling bulges of his biceps. Arms meant to pin him to the wall and–, “Paradise. You there?” Harry’s voice, low and easy now, pierces his reverie.

Louis flushes hot, and turns his scarlet face into the sheets, “Wha’ was that?’

“What to make for dinner?”

Oh, God. Nervous knots form in his tummy. It’s seems like going through dinner here, alone, might not be the best choice at this point, not with Harry’s behaviour. Abruptly, Louis is desperate to leave the confines of their house, for fresh, non-Harry-scented air. “How ‘bout we go out?”

There is a deep breath, then, curiously, “A meandyou.” God, the last time they’d gone on a date…Louis had felt on top of the world, and then fell off, plunged straight towards the end.

Louis shakes those thoughts urgently; no. In the past. In the past.

Uselessly, he nods, but avoids his stare because the dread must lurk in his own eyes; Harry doesn’t need to think Louis doesn’t want to be taken on a date. Because Louis does, wants to be the only one allowed on dates with him. “Get dressed. Wear somethin’ of mines.”

Once again the Omega doesn’t understand; this isn’t like him. This extreme Alpha attitude, but it’s also not like Louis to get all hot and bothered over it.

With anyone else Louis might’ve disowned them, humiliated them, tortuited them, acted out, an untamed Omega by default, but this isn’t anyone. This is Harry.

Harry who is asserting his dominance in privacy, behaving like a proper bonded Alpha; staking a not-so-passive claim.

Thrilled, never having experienced Harry like this, Louis sits up, and when he stands he is pleased to have squeezed into his favourite trousers this evening. Once he is upright that jeweled stare rakes over him, up and down, so slowly, taking him in, and stirring heat in his tummy.

On instinct, the boy pretends not to notice and sashays around his (Gee when had Harry filled out so much?) body into his wardrobe. But there Louis decides he isn’t interested in his loose clothes, needs to match the stretch of his trousers with his top.

Without another look towards Harry, the Omega leaves the room. He isn’t even down the hall before an arm bands around his waist, mouth to his ear, “You aren’t in anything of mine.”
Louis swallows, then, breathlessly, “Wait. Let the artist create his masterpiece.”

With that he squirms free, aware that the Alpha trails him, watches him kneel and forage through the duffle he’d left in the entry room. After a moment the boy snatches his choice, stands with it safely tucked to his tummy, and darts back upstairs into the wardrobe that’s darkness conceals him from Harry’s focused, heated stare.

See, Louis just couldn’t resist—so he’s a little naughty? Who isn’t, it’s the twenty first century. Really, he isn’t keen on women’s wear, but it hadn’t taken much convincing for him to purchase this skimpy little piece, just Niall howling, “Proper fuck material!”

It’s not much, but as a crop-top the white sets his skin tone beautifully, reaches mid-tummy, and is just a tad loose over his shoulders. As to please him, Louis shrugs into his heavy, worn leather jacket, and then flutters downstairs into his bathroom, where he closes and locks the door behind him. Easily, he runs the eyeliner dark, tries out the mascara (listen he might as well) which enhances his already stellar lashes, causes his eyes to appear so much wider than their usual crinkle, accentuates his features in ways that leave him feeling especially pretty.

After he’s teased his hair enough Louis takes a deep breath, clutches the lapels of the jacket and steps out with a toothy grin for Harry who is much closer to the door than he’d anticipated.

He walks straight into him, and inhales sharply when Harry doesn’t even move a hint, unlike how deer-just-born-limbed he is any other time.

Before the boy can stumble the Alpha grasps his hips, then looks over his outfit and whispers indifferently, “Nice.”

Disappointment churns in his belly as Louis lowers his eyes self-consciously. “You don’t like?”

A low groan works up Harry’s throat; this spreads heat high on his cheeks where the Alpha leans in and nuzzles. “Look so pretty, paradise. Gonna attract so much attention. Don’t like that.”

Oh. A breathy sound tumbles from his mouth as Harry hums, “You smell like me with this on,” the praise in his voice sends fireflies through his veins, fireflies that coat his skin with a healthy glow. With a sigh Harry backs up, but otherwise does not comment, nor seems visibly moved.

Which Louis pouts over the entire ride to the little intimate restaurant Harry takes them to—somehow the fresh air doesn’t help a bit, because Harry doesn’t let up. In fact he watches him eat, brushes their hands, and plays footsies under the table with him. Gives him the attention his Omega craves. Lets Louis ramble on and on about his week, from the final Calc exam that kicked his arse, the study group spat he’d started with Liam (because who the hell let him decide Louis was a better tutor at Calc, not Louis, nope), to the stressful night babysitting his siblings due to his parent’s political emergency.

And like most Fridays the Alpha listens with genuine interest, assures him that the exam results will prove otherwise, that Liam was only being the sugar-cookie he is, and…well, he is the sweetest older brother in the world. “I am quite compassionate, aren’t I?” Louis teases with an impish grin.

Just like that it happens again; his jade stare flares, and his shoulders tense. “Gonna be a proper papa someday.”

Unprepared for that comment Louis’s fork clatters back onto his plate, straight into his mash. Stunned, the boy gapes until Harry’s stare flickers to his barely touched dish. “Finish,” he presses bleakly.
Louis functions on command, shovels his food into his mouth, unable to meet his eyes the rest of dinner.

Once both are finished the Alpha fishes his wallet from his back pocket but pauses, casts him an oddly shy look. “Do you mind if I take the bill?”

Louis shakes his head silently, touched that he even asked.

With a satisfied smirk Harry downs the bill, and then helps him to his feet and out. At home Harry distracts from talking about his odd behaviour by bringing out the ice-cream. Or Louis lets himself be distracted, huddling into Harry’s side at the start of the film that appears to date back to the 60s.

With the darkness around them, only illuminated by the soft television light, Louis happily pops spoonfuls of frosty ice-cream into his mouth, but doesn’t even blink when Harry takes the spoon gently.

Methodically, Harry feeds him; stares down at him with those kind eyes, whispers sweet words, “So brill, must’ve aced that exam,” and “take care of pups so well,” and “screw Liam,” and “gonna keep you forever, paradise.” Until the boy is sprawled out in his lap, full and satisfied and so very loved as Harry runs his hand down to the bare small of his back. In comparison to Louis’s softness, his hand is rough, brands him. Louis mewls sleepily, noses at his thigh.

“Pretty boy.”

But Louis has already eased into sleep, hopes that the weekend will stay just like this despite it all. & &

Of course not–Louis wakes up before the sun has shown itself. Alone.

With an irritated snuffle the boy stands and leaves the room on unsteady feet; on the hunt. Louis finds him scrolling through his phone in the living room. Pouty, the boy slaps his phone out of his hand and settles happily in his lap.

“You shouldn’t be awake,” Harry breathes into his hair.

Louis paws at his necklaces, mumbles sleepily, “Come back to bed, ‘Az.”

“Can’t sleep.”

As his heart constricts Louis nuzzles his throat. “Sleep with me.”

“’S only makin’ it worse,” the Alpha says, so pained Louis blinks, tries to back up but Harry holds him fast. “No, no. Just…your scent is in my nose. And it’s…harder to focus on sleepin’.”

“You shouldn’t focus on anything,” the Omega tells him surely. “Just let your mind wander…”

“What if I find bad places?”

Louis’s heart throbs with compassion for the genuine terror in his voice. Careful, he lifts his arm, then lets his hand caress the waves in his face. “Then I’ll be there to push you along in the better direction.”

When the Alpha chuckles, and takes his hand, a rush of absolute joy comes over him. “Off to bed, then.”

Louis is ushered to his feet, but when Harry stands, there’s a sudden silence. In the dimly lit space
their eyes meet with a sudden heat. Louis flushes, and blurts quietly, “Why do I feel like you wanna kiss me?”

“’Cause I want to kiss you.” Confident, hushed, smoky.

“Oh,” Louis whispers, impossibly hotter as Harry takes his free hand, squeezes both.

“Wanna let me kiss you?”

As his thumb strokes his knuckles, Louis feels the heat low low low in his tummy as his Omega whimpers, overwhelmed. Unable to find his voice the boy nods with his mouth parted a bit in invitation. A dark look clouds his features, but Louis can’t think into it because Harry crowds him, leans forward tentatively, and brushes their mouth experimentally.

Louis exhales shakily, overwhelmed, squeezing his hands so hard his fingers ache as Louis tilts his head back to allow better access.

With a harsh breath Harry dips forward with more force, molds their mouths until Louis almost whimpers, flooded with so much want. But the Alpha looks down, smiles, then whispers, “Sleep?” No.

Louis nods nonetheless, squeezes his hands, and lets Harry show him upstairs, still in a daze by the time they stumble into his room. In bed, Harry curls around him, cocoons them in the blankets until Louis’s face is pressed to his chest, lulled by the steady drum of his heartbeat.

Sleep doesn’t hesitate to claim him.

&&

It’s hours later that Louis comes to for the last time; alone and hot. A combination that does not sit well with him in the least; achy for no apparent reason (like he’d worked through exercises last night) Louis lugs himself to the bathroom.

Louis inhales sharply at his reflection. Oh, no–he does not look well. In fact he looks doomed. All flushed, sensitive skin, bright knot-me eyes, and a mouth that looks swollen, like he’d been ravished last night rather than harmlessly pecked. Oh this is so not good. This is his heated look, hot like a fuckin’ oven look.

Oh, fabulous, ‘Sexual Healing’ comes to mind, and Louis whimpers in dismay because he is already losing his sense.

No, no, no–he’s not due for three weeks. Since his first heat Louis has not had an early or late heat. He is always on time.

So this is just…him reacting to Harry’s achingly Alpha behaviour. That’s all.

In need of a refresher Louis brushes his teeth, mouth washes and flosses (yes, sits on the counter for ten more minutes to floss, which, let’s be honest, he’s not too dedicated to doing). Afterwards, Louis sheds his clothes, and steps into the shower. As he’s too heated already, Louis does what he does best, showers in the freezing cold, sighing happily as his skin becomes soapy and slippery. Once he’s washed his hair out with Harry’s stupid fruity, anti-frizz, the boy rinses thoroughly.

Drastically cooler Louis steps out, dries hastily, and returns to the room to find he’d left his duffle downstairs. Well…if he can just sneak into his bedroom, that won’t be an issue.

Yeah, he’s able enough to be quiet, especially now that the woods decent. It’s only when Louis is
downstairs that he thinks *I'm screwed*–he has to pass the kitchen, the *very open kitchen*, to the next hall. But no, he is so screwed because Harry is in the bloody kitchen doing *God knows what,* (probably cooking but Louis doesn’t care) ruining his scheme.

Squaring his shoulders Louis clutches the towel securely to his chest (so that the hem reaches the tops of his thighs) and walks across the hall, pausing at the kitchen entrance.

Unable to lift his stare, sure that Harry’s seen him nonetheless (if the clank of an unknown is anything to go by) Louis mumbles petulantly, “I am put out with you.” And continues on his way.

Even more hurtful, the Alpha *doesn’t follow,* so Louis frowns and focuses on an appropriate outfit–which means he steps out of his room in his shortest pink shorts that reach mid-thigh and one of the many white stolen T-shirts from Harry, tucked in and loose.

Haughtily, Louis storms back into the kitchen, hops onto the island counter and waits for Harry to take notice.

It isn’t much a wait as the Alpha turns with a contrite smile, and offers him a cuppa. Just because he wants tea, Louis takes it, but doesn’t speak until Harry asks quietly, “Sleep well?”

Louis sniffs, and then accuses, “You left me. Again.”

“Was feelin’ off,” the Alpha explains as Louis sips at his tea, warmed to find it’s exactly how he takes it.

“You feel ill?” the Omega asks softly, once he’s swallowed. “C’mere. Lemme…” With a reluctant look Harry leans in so Louis palms at his forehead. “Haz,” the boy hisses, concerned. “You’re *burning up!* I think you’re runnin’ a fever.”

For a moment Harry noses at his wrist, then seems to consider his words, tensed. “I feel fine now, really. Not sick at least,” he assures him, which only worsens the worry curled up in his chest.

“We should cancel our plans with the lads, it’s–;”

With a slow, too syrupy laugh the Alpha shakes his head, whispers with that same *magnetic note,* “Paradise, love, ‘m fine. Excited to spend time with them. It’ll be fine.”

“Ohay,” Louis whispers in submission, because Harry *never* wants to spend time with people who *care for him* (well Louis aside), curling his fingers at Harry’s jaw. “Okay.”

&&

This is not Louis’s idea of *fine.* Ever since Liam, Grimmy, Zayn, and Niall stepped through their door Harry’s been *anything but fine.*

In fact his tension stifles the entire room, where all six laze, Niall and Louis before the telly on the spread carpet, caught up in a furious game of *Fifa.* Liam is in quiet conversation with Zayn, meanwhile Harry’s let Grimmy fiddle with his phone (he doesn’t know what those two are up to). But the Alpha on the sofa does not seem to be paying Grimmy any mind; stare burning holes into him as Louis struggles to focus on *destroying Niall.* But he’s far too distracted, can’t stand the distance, tosses the controller and crawls to the sofa to Harry.

“Hey!” Niall squawks, though Louis doesn’t hear him around how his heartbeat flutters wildly.

And oh God his skin *warms* under his hot stare as Louis smiles shyly. “Hi.”
Slowly, Harry murmurs, “Hey.”

“Whatcha–,”

“Got it!” Grimmy interrupts obliviously, though the dark look Harry pins him with warms Louis’ blood. “Alright! So let’s play!”

Turns out it’s one of those ‘would you rather,’ apps. Excited, Louis climbs into his Alpha’s lap, smiles smugly at Niall’s questioning ‘what is this?’ look, raises his brows to say, ‘That’s right, he loves me,’ to the infuriatingly doubtful Irishman.

“Li, start us off!” Louis encourages as Harry’s arms round his waist.

“Alright,” Liam mumbles, then, “Would you rather live in a world with no problems, or a world you rule over?”

Louis is first to chirp, “Where I rule!”

“No problems,” Harry murmurs simply, which Louis responds by tossing the traitor a put out look.

“Where is the fun in having no problems?” Louis asks in exasperation once Liam, Grimmy, and Zayn second Harry. Niall is the only one on his side, Louis loves Niall.

“Not all of us are evil little power-hungry brats,” Zayn murmurs with an easy smirk. Beneath him the Alpha stiffens, a low, menacing sound tears through their space. Oh. The sound is so sexual, so promising, that Louis’s mouth parts, warm all over, especially where Harry’s arms have tightened at his waist. Obviously shocked (Louis would be too, were he not so delighted) the others gawk, but Liam laughs nervously, “Right, well, Nick, your go.”

Grimmy takes it with a wicked look to Harry that makes Louis narrow his eyes. Is there something he knows that Louis does not? “Would you lot rather be half your height, or double your weight?”

“Double the weight!” Louis decides firmly, first once again, then cranes his neck to look up at Harry through thick lashes, “You’d still love me, wouldn’t you? If I was a little plumper?”

With a slow smile Harry murmurs, “Course. I’d love you no matter what size.”

Now the Omega thinks that’s an outright lie, because what, but it doesn’t stop his face from melting into his most affectionate smile.

“AHEM!” Niall interrupts pointedly, “Are we declaring love now? ‘Cause Louis I think has a lot of confessin’ to do.”

“Shut up, Niall,” Louis reprimands.

“How ‘bout no,” the Irish boy laughs, “How ‘bout you tell us just what’s goin’ on between you and Harry?”

“How about you fuck off,” the Alpha snarls with more malice than necessary. Louis inhales sharply, “Harry!”

“No, no,” Liam says smoothly. “Let’s hear what Harry has to say after he broke your heart.” The sharp, protective edge to Liam’s voice stuns Louis, who pins him with a hurt look.
“Hey,” Grimmy says sharply. “H wasn’t fuckin’ breaking his heart just because. It wasn’t intentional. He was hurt himself. And if you were half the friend you are to Louis, Payne, you’d know this.”

“We tried to be,” Zayn hisses. “They both pushed us away.”

Louis’s irritation spikes at being pinpointed. “And you didn’t push anyone away, Zayn? Where have you been the last year? Oh, that’s right, not here for anyone. Dicking around in your new and improved life where we don’t exist.”

Zayn visibly bristles, but Liam, awe Liam, “Okay, okay now–,”

“You don’t know shit about me, anymore, Payne,” Harry hisses. “You were too far up Louis’s arse to begin with. Well Louis never wanted you! Hurt?”

“And what about you wanting everyone but Louis?” Niall snaps.

“I never wanted anyone else,” the Alpha snarls.

“So why didn’t you act like it, Harry?” Louis asks, for no reason other than he’s caught up in this emotional rage.

A still settles uncomfortably over the room as Louis stares at Harry, who looks dumbstruck. As hurt tears flood his eyes Louis wonders what the hell is going on? Why is everyone so touchy today? And realises its Harry’s fault. “I…” the Alpha whispers, then stares down into his eyes; Louis feels like he’s rolling in the spring grass, as Harry cups his face in gentle hands, “Cause I was scared. Scared because Louis…you change your mind about everything and anything. And what happened when you changed your mind about us? You are everything I’ve ever needed. And I couldn’t risk losing you just to gain a sexual connection when we had a relationship just with a friendship. We weren’t like normal friends. We never were…I was always so into you. I was just so fuckin’ scared. I couldn’t lose you. But I ended up…losin’ you anyway.”

Applauds erupts, Niall laughing wildly, “Yes! Yes! Just what we all needed to hear! I can sleep at peace tonight!” Like it’s his relationship.

“I think…” Louis says breathlessly, “that we need a refill on drinks. Haz, baby, why don’t you come help me?”

Without waiting on a response, in need of an escape, the boy stands and staggers out, through the halls with Harry trailing and into the kitchen.

There, in privacy, Louis whirls to face him. “What was that?” he asks in a daze.

“What was what?” He stands there with his hands in his pockets.


“What I said? It was the truth.”

Louis shakes his head. “We’ll talk about it later. Now…Let’s just…” Unable to think the boy opens the freezer and works to take out the icy bottles.

An arm snakes his waist, “Did I do somethin’ wrong?”

“Everything.”
“Care to explain?”

“No.”

“I think you’re beautiful.”

“Compliments won’t get–,”

“Christ, so pretty,” the Alpha whispers, nose trailing up his neck, nuzzling his jaw. Louis nearly drops the beers, though Harry whispers, “You take my breath away.”

“You’re so…”

“In love with you,” the Alpha finishes as Louis swallows a whimper. “H-Haz. Maybe you should take a kip.”

“Why?” there’s an unexpected note of jealousy to his voice. “So you can be alone with two other Alphas?”

Louis nudges the fridge closed gently with his hip, takes a deep breath and turns to face him. Except he’s flattened to the door, a furious Harry crowding him. Louis softens without reason as the scent, thick and sexual, wafts through him. In a little daze the Omega rubs against him, all heated, mouth at his jaw. “No. ‘Cause you’re all twitchy, and look like you might snap poor Liam’s neck, and break Grimmy’s kneecaps. You are makin’ everyone uncomfortable, baby. I think you need to sleep. You’re bein’ a dick.”

“I think they need to leave before I do anything that involves leavin’ you alone with them.”

Louis’s mouth parts on its own accord. “Yeah?” he asks breathily, then once he realises, “I am allowed to have a bit of fun without you, aren’t I?”

The older Alpha’s stiffen is answer enough; he releases a heavy, slightly put out breath. “Harry, I am a twenty year old man! I don’t need you–,”

“And I’m a twenty two year old man who can scent how unmated you are from miles away,” Harry retorts without wavering or hesitation.

“You’re scenting things,” Louis breathes into the cords of his throat, confused by how his veins pop, like he’s been shouting, singing. Louis wants to bite there. “Scenting you. Have been since yesterday.” A large hand splays over his hip as Harry noses at his jaw, trailing down his throat. Sensitive, already wanting, Louis bites his bottom lip against a whimper and bares his throat better as Harry continues, “‘S been in my nose. Couldn’t let you out of the house without smelling like me. Couldn’t sleep last night.”

Louis wants to think into those words, wants to uncover the little detail he seems to be missing, but sweet sharp heat bullets through his bloodstream, has him clutching the broad of his shoulders and whimpering when his scent tugs at his tummy in that desperate way. Empty–so empty. Need it.

“Haz,” the boy gasps, “I…Stop.”

“Ohay,” the Alpha rasps, and separates them in stumbling movements. Between them the current is irresistible, and Louis watches Harry watch him, awash with heat just from how his muscles twitch, obviously wanting as much as Louis.
“Stop,” Louis says breathily. “Stop watchin’ me.”

“I can’t,” Harry says with a pained note that causes his heart to constrict.

“Let’s just ride with it,” Louis suggests desperately, and sighs in absolute relief when Harry takes his hips to reel him in with an awe-struck expression that just–

“What the fuckin’ hell is takin’ so long? I’m dry as the Sahara des–,” an Irish complaint halts with a little yelp.

Harry looks over with murder in his eyes. “We are perfectly platonic.”

“’S just hot as the Sahara desert in here,” Niall retorts with a pointed look. “Come on! It’s bonding time! Getcha arses back in the room!”

With a weak smile, Louis forces more distance, and gathers the bottles, following Niall’s lead as the heat spreads through his veins, dizzies him. In the doorway Louis tosses a pleading look back at Harry, then whispers, “Behave.” And keeps on going.

&&

Once the others have fucked off, thanks to Louis’s disappearance nearly an hour prior, “I’m not feelin’ quite right, lads. Bedtime for me,” Harry shuts the front door with more force than intended, and jabs the security pad into activation. Irritated to have been left to the solitude, he forces his limbs in the opposite direction, to the kitchen, where he busies his hands by pouring champagne in to a flute, prepared to down the entire bottle alone tonight. Christ, but he doesn’t want liquor. No, what he wants is to set fire to his nose and electrify his neurotransmitters with dopamine.

“Do it,” the withered disembodied voice materializes with a pleased bite.

Yeah, fuck, that’s what he wants. Second best is enough.

Except a small, existent, voice interrupts weakly, “Where’s mine?” The voices vanish in the presence of Louis, who is unaware that he almost lost, almost surrendered. So pitiful, I am.

Disturbed, Harry faces him leisurely, braced for the shame. There is none. Fuck. Propped on the wall Louis looks…sick. Well, no. Louis looks radiant, in a very sick way. With flushed rosy cheeks, cerulean stare clouded with what must be sickness, bottom lip caught between his canines. Christ, he looks delicious–surely someone seemingly ill should not look so tempting. Of course this is Louis, who seems to defy all ordinary expectations.

Concern flickers to life in his chest, his Alpha satisfied as fuck (sick bastard he’s become). “Paradise. You still feelin’ ill, lovely?” he asks carefully.

As the boy’s lashes flutter Louis nods feebly, sucking his bottom lip into his mouth. No, he’s the twisted one–so focused on his pretty mouth, his cock already thick in his trousers.

“C’mon, back to bed,” he orders huskily as he shoves his reactions to the curb, watching Louis shake his head in protest, “No, no. ‘S okay. Just hot in here.”

“You’re just sick, paradise,” he tells him, approaching in quick, sure steps. Serious, the Alpha holds out his hand, but Louis refuses, opting to clutch the wall instead. With a quick breath, Harry acts swiftly, before he can fight back, circles his slim waist in one arm, the other underneath his
bare, creamy thighs to lift his weight. With a small sigh the Omega winds his arms around his throat, melts effortlessly. It’s only when he noses at his feathery, damp hair that Harry catches the faint scent.

A hiss escapes his clenched teeth as his Alpha claws at him; the sweet, floral (he knows this scent and what it means) scent ignites the starved need. A wildfire flares to life as he just savors it; inhales again and again and again, carrying him up to his bedroom on instinct, because that’s where he belongs. Warm, fit to perfection for him, Louis trembles, mumbles in an adorable slur, “’Az, ‘s hot. So hot.”

Yeah, fuck he feels it too, especially when he takes them into his bedroom, naturally cool. Too impatient to distance them, Louis scrambles onto the mattress, but whimpers curiously, curled up with his miniature legs tucked underneath him and his face in the pillows. Oh, Christ, so tiny, so helpless, meant to be protected.

“I’ll…I’ll…just…” his tongue feels thick in his mouth as his hands shake uncontrollably, the idea of leaving him like this feels like barbwire lashing at his every nerve. “Go…”

Before his Alpha severs the chains to his constraints Harry leaves his room. In need of the support as his Alpha raises hell against his idiotic actions Harry braces on the wall down the hall and fists his hair as rough sounds, between snarls and curses, rip up his throat. Clearly the Omega’s heat is rapidly ruining them–and oh, fuck, if he doesn’t leave they are ruined.

This has to stop, he has to fix this.

Without permission he starts towards his door once again, stops there and reminds himself that nothing will happen. Not now. He will fix this like he could never seem to fix anything else; just check on him, and then call Jay and save them both. That is that.

Afterwards he will seclude himself, snort up so much he can’t feel his Alpha rattling the chains of his self-control and–no, can’t do that either. Can’t, can’t…But it’s so much more appealing than this raging urge to breed this one boy, this one beautiful, untouchable–Can’t, can’t…

Desperate to escape these cravings Harry cracks the door open, then slumps against the jamb. Yeah, he’s screwed–has been since that little boy smiled that smile, bat those eyes, stole him with his first words, killed him with all his goodbyes, hooked him with one touch. One touch, hell. The perfect drug–no other could compare.

The fragrance is the loveliest scent that’s ever shot up his nose, wrecked his senses.

In his trousers his cock pounds, screams to get out.

“Paradise?” he calls hoarsely into the darkness.

When all that sounds is a little helpless whimper Harry dares to step inside, and dares to shut the door behind him. Fuck, nobody loves drugs as much as me apparently. Can’t ever break free.

The perfume of him…Instinct clashes with his restraint; in the back of his throat Harry starts to growl, and his fingers curl into claws. As his feet take over, marching him to the bed, instinct threatens to leave his mind behind.

Louis writhers on top of the mattress, tangled in the sheets. When those beautiful, hazy eyes find him the boy cries out softly, but then settles down, as if he’s willed himself calm. Christ, Harry wishes he could do the same.

“’M okay.” It’s when he rolls over onto his belly that Harry realises he’s shed his clothes, bare and
beautiful, all sun-kissed skin and pale pink flush. And his creamy, chunky thighs rub wetly before he pulls the duvet over his body. The impulse to rip the offensive material from his view streaks through him—his every disciplinary measure is executed to keep him still. “I’m…really…”

A shock wave of pheromones emanates from him, so potent it shoves him backwards as the boy jackknifes into an achingly tiny ball. “Go,” he whimpers. “Worse…when you’re ‘ere. Oh… God…Haz.”

As he lets out a ragged curse the Alpha stumbles back to the exit even though his body roars for him to stay.

_Fuck, call call call._ Desperate, he searches his pockets for his phone, and comes up so damn empty. In the kitchen, _God damn it_, he’d left his phone in the—

In an autopilot he starts down the hall towards the stairway, but doesn’t even make it before the bedroom door comes open, and Louis snivels needily, “Stay. Stay stay stay. ‘Az, it hurts. It hurts. It…” the rest is incoherent in his distress as Harry’s animal tears through his shields. Any reason out of reach.

A rough sound builds in his chest as Harry turns to him. And oh _Christ_, the poor boy is doubled over on the floor, clutching the blankets to his body with his face pressed to the wood as tears spill down his flushed cheeks. Mindless, he carries himself straight into the warzone, a sheen sweat coating his skin as the fire within burns him.

As to soothe him, the Alpha kneels, whispers, “Oh, love. I know. I know, paradise…” he brushes his hair out of his vivid eyes.

“But I’ll take care of you.”

_“Please. Hurts so…” fuck_, through little jolts Louis tosses onto his back, lets the blankets slide down his smooth skin to reveal his body. At the sight, his cock throbs hotly, and his breath becomes short, chopped. He’s so damp, heated in a delicious blush; his nipples tight and bright at the tips, the soft cradle of his hips, where his cock is wet, flushed brilliantly and hard, curved at his softy, pudgy belly. _Beautiful. Irresistible._ “It hurts. Hurts so bad, Alpha. It won’t stop. ‘S getting worse! It hu–,”

In a rupture the boy undulates wildly, an intense flare of energy spears from his little body. The strength of the hormones blinds him; confused by his Alpha’s crazed response he doesn’t feel when Louis clutches his forearm with enough force to bend his bones.

When the peak fades seconds after, Harry wonders if he’s broken his wrist. It isn’t that he cares about the pain; he will _gladly take any that Louis needs to give him_. But if the boy is clinging to him this urgently, he can’t imagine what’s going through his insides.

With a wince he realises Louis’s bitten his lower lip hard enough to make his flesh bleed. A groan tears up his throat as the Alpha takes him around the slim waist, tows him upright with as much care as he can manage, into his lap where he fists his hair, and tilts his head enough that he can dip forward and claim his sweet mouth.

Louis’s lips are so warm and soft under his tongue as he parts them enough to taste him, not the metallic tinge of his blood. On fire, the Alpha dominates his mouth, catches the remnants of the wine he’d sipped on, the delicious _heat_ as the boy tries to kiss him back. _Fuck_, his efforts are so sloppy, _wet, driving him insane_. How inexperienced his little tongue is, soft and desperate, as he tries to meet his forceful thrusts. With a rough breath Harry’s canines clamp down on his swollen bottom lip. Under the sharp points Louis whines needily, trembles and pants as the Alpha softens, sucks his flesh as his cock pounds with his heartbeat.
Wild with the taste, the feel as his blunt nails bite into his shoulders, he tenses at the wet little pop that follows his retreat.

“Alpha, Alpha, Alpha,” the boy chants breathily, so sexy, as he bounces carelessly in his lap, luscious ass nestling his cock just enough to be so damned good. With another growl, Harry palms at the slight juts of his hipbones, pacing him. “Yeah, pup. You're my boy.”

Focused on him, the dominant instinct to own him reels through him; the flushed Omega is so lovely, glowing with his heat, head tossed back as he mewls, moves his hips frantically. So wet Harry’s trousers feel damp with his slick, slick so potent the fragrance intoxicates his senses.

“Paradise,” he breathes raggedly, trying to halt his rutting. “Baby, I need to know–,”

“God, Harry, what!” Louis cries, distress flaring into sexual frustration as he collapses, face buried in his throat.

The sharp tone maddens his Alpha; his palms burn to leave prints on his perky ass, to remind him who owns him. But, fuck no, not now, he can’t be that Alpha right now. Not when Louis needs him. Christ for once Louis needs him, and he will do his best to give the boy at least some of what he’s given Harry.

“You on the pill, pup?”

Another flourish of white-hot energy ripples through him. Crazed, the Alpha rocks him backwards, buries his face in his slender throat and just gets his mouth on him. Mouths at his silky, innocent skin, marks him, bites and sucks and owns as Louis mewls, “Uh,” little hands shoved in his hair to anchor them as he continues, high-pitched and delicious, “Haz, please. I need… hurts…”

“I know, pup,” he snarls into his skin, scrapes in punishment, needing to find that delicious spot of his. “Gonna make you feel better. Just tell me you’re on the pill.” Tell me you're not. Tell me you're fertile. I'm going to knot you so fuckin’ good either way. Because fuck he has to have him. Can’t stop. Doesn’t ever want to.

“Alpha,” Louis whimpers, the sound so broken, and needy enough to have his cock diamond hard by now. “Paradise,” he prompts, mouth inches above where he wants to be, breath hot on his sensitive skin.

“Yes, it sounds like a lie, such a lie, but oh God, he doesn’t stop there, rambles on and on as his delicate body spasms, “On it, on it, on it…”

Satisfied, so fucking aware of what he’s about to do, but unable to care, his teeth close over his special spot as Louis seizes up, clutching his hair hard enough that pleasure wrecks through him, flares hot in his bloodstream. Motionless, he breathes erratically through his nose as the Omega trembles through his orgasm. Christ, he could do it, take him while he won’t stop him…Sink his canines into his skin and bond him, like any sane Alpha would. But oh Christ this is Louis, Louis who hasn’t committed to anything in his life, who will feel so trapped, betrayed when he’s in his right mind and– With a hurt noise he lets up, his Alpha enraged as he plants worthless kisses to his sensitive skin, to make up for his loss.

Just…he will take what Louis’s offered and nothing more. Fuck, it’s not enough. It’s not enough. But it will be; his cock just needs to get up inside of his virgin hole, knot him first, and make him happy. Please him like he’s meant to.

A fierce snarl crawls up his throat before he asks, petting his smooth damp thighs. “Can you stand
for me, pup? Show me just how pretty you are.”

Soft in his arms Louis purrs, and shakes his head. Like he has any choice.

“Stand up, Louis,” he orders darkly. “Be good.” With a beautiful little whimper the boy obeys, dainty hands braced on his shoulders to help him stand. On his feet, Louis sways, so small, enticing and ethereal like this.

Growls tear up his throat. “Yeah, pup. Fuck, so pretty. So pretty for me.”

Swollen mouth parted the boy’s lashes flutter shut, feathery hair damp in his face as he breathes, “Yes, Alpha.” In praise, on his knees he presses sweet kisses over his arched, bitten throat, down his chest to close his mouth over one of his little peaked nipples. Just like that Louis’ back bows and he moans breathily as his hands fist his hair again. “Uh, please, please, Alpha, please.” Pleasure lashes at him, cock impossibly hard, painful in the best ways, as Harry decides he loves to hear him beg, to know him like this, vulnerable and sweet.

Starved, the Alpha teases him, wants him to remember, alternates between his little nipples; tugs with his teeth, soothes the sting with his tongue, sucks gently, until both are swollen and puffy. Louis cries softly, “need it, Alpha, need it…” until he is close to the same point, but mouths down his belly, hands splayed on his sides, feeling the fragile, slight ridges of his ribs underneath him. The taste on his skin intensifies his Alpha’s want as he ducks his head to nip as his hipbone, mouth ghosting over his drippy hard cock. Fuck, later. Later he will taste him there, too. Tempting him, Louis rears his hips. Goaded, the Alpha growls, “Don’t move,” though his hands force the boy’s creamy thighs open wide, slick coats his hands as he circles him firmly, so his face is to the wall, sweet ass round and delicious in Harry’s face.

With the proximity, the fragrance intensifies, shatters any hesitance as he palms at the perky rounds of his ass. When the Omega jerks back into his touch with the neediest sound, Harry slaps his ass, hard and heavy, captivated by how his flesh ripples under his palm. With a stunned yelp, his hips try to shy, but Harry holds him fast, rough. “Stay still.”

Just like that Louis stills, melts into his touch. “Good boy,” he praises huskily, thumbing at the dimples at the small of his back. This earns him another feeble mewl before Harry spreads his full cheeks. “Fuck, pup,” his voice sounds like he’s been denied water in decades as he stares at his pink tiny hole, glistening with slick in the dim light. A shudder runs over his tense muscles as he noses at his ass, inhales the scent deep into his lungs, feels heat flower, as he snarls, cock threatening to swell just from the promise of what he will have.

So long…too long… “Can’t wait, pup,” he breathes, raw with need.

Without permission he dips forward, brushes his puffy hole with his mouth as Louis “uh”’s piercingly, then gasps, rocks back just a bit so his mouth is flush to his little hole. Christ, he’s on fire, drenched and swollen against his mouth. Crazed, the Alpha licks a fat stripe across his fluttering hole, the delicious thick wet coats his tongue, intoxicates his mind. “Mine,” he breathes hotly, flattening his tongue to collect it all, sucking like he might have it all, as Louis cries out in his orgasm, another torrent of slick oozing into his mouth. “Taste so fuckin’ good, paradise,” a groan works up his throat as Louis slumps into the wall, mumbling drowsily, “Alpha, gimme…” Like he could ever possibly resist.

The subsequent force of energy that radiates from him is so heady Harry nips at his hole a bit, grazes his swollen flesh with his teeth, growling as Louis weeps in dry heaves.

“Still, pup,” another frantic groan as he forces his mouth away, “Let me just…open you up.”
But Louis is too lost in his pain to hear him. As to keep him in place despite his thrashing, his arm cages his waist as he lifts his trembling hand, sneaks his fingers between his wet rounds, rubs his tiny hole with the pad of his index, sinking the digit into his tight little space. Just like that the Omega tenses, shivers with him, then whimpers, “Yes.”

“Yeah, pup,” he says raggedly. “More? Just ask, baby. Ask,” with force he circles his finger in his slick heat, then steals it back only to drive back with a shudder, “nicely.” Beg for it.

“Please,” Louis hiccups without hesitation, so beautifully Omega, “Please, Alpha.”

With a husky, “fuck, baby, so tight,” he works him with the one a second more, relishing in how it sucks his finger back in, begging for more, before easing a second. So hot around him, fuck. Desperate to feel him around his cock, the Alpha circles his fingers, rocks them against his prostate gently to sooth the burn of the stretch as Louis mewls and spreads wider for him. And fuck, even as he spreads him open, Louis is clamped around his fingers like he owns them. Fuck does he own him. “Mine. Nobody else can have,” he tells him, throat sore with the abrupt emotional response the idea erupts in his chest.


Wired, with his cock bulging, the Alpha thrusts his fingers with more force, until he’s able to add the next. Fuck, it’s minutes later and doesn’t feel open enough to take his cock, even as he stretches him, prodding mercilessly at his sweet spot. “Need need need,” Louis moans over and over and fuck he needs him.

Mad with the impulse, he takes his fingers back, ignores his upset noise to peel out of his shirt, yanking his fly down so his cock is freed; fat, hard. At the feel of the cool air, Harry hisses, but kicks out of his shoes, the bloody tight trousers next. Fuck, his cock pounds, fat enough that he hesitates. This will hurt him, oh God, he can’t hurt–no, fuck Louis was made to take this, take him. A fierce thrill runs up his spine as he flattens his palms on either side of his head, leans forward to nose at his slack jaw. “Goin’ to fuck you now, okay, pup?”

With another broken noise Louis turns his face so Harry can claim his mouth, reaching between them to show his cock between his arse, nestled between his perky, wet flesh. Groaning low in his throat Harry breathes into his mouth as his prods at his hole; like this the head of his cock catches the hot thick liquid, feels the sensation everywhere as he shudders viciously. Quivering, Louis begs, trying to rock back, force it, “Please. Make it better, Harry, make it better.”

White-hot pleasure scalds his veins as he presses tight against his hot, tiny entrance. “Mine,” he whispers into his sweet mouth, taking his little, damp palm in his free hand as Louis mews, perks his ass out in invitation. With care, the Alpha forces the thick head of his cock past his tight fluttery rim. A little gasp spills into his mouth from Louis’s, but he doesn’t stop, can’t fucking stop, wills him to take it as he presses steadily, until his hips are flush to his ass, ecstasy hot in his stomach, feral in his veins. Christ he’s so tight, clamped on his throbbing cock, hot and wet and–, “Mine,” he breathes throatily into his mouth, tonguing at him slowly. “You don’t fuckin’ leave me again. Never leave me again, paradise. You aren’t allowed to leave me.”

“Nev’ah,” Louis moans breathily, head bowed as he shivers.

_Fuck._ Forehead to his frail shoulder the Alpha circles his waist, holds him with no intentions of ever fucking letting go again, lost in sensation as instinct captures his body. It’s not slow. Can’t be, not with how desperate he is to own him, as his thrusts build, a punishing rhythm that leaves him panting into his damp skin; drives his cock into his little hole as Louis whimpers frantically, “Alpha,” and clenches around him.
Low in Harry’s throat growls build, until he’s arching the Omega for better access, cock ramming into his sweet bundle of nerves as Louis cries out, squeezing his hand so hard it aches dully.

“Gonna come, paradise?” he demands, fucking into him with more force than he’d anticipated he’d use when he took Louis’s virginity. But he can’t stop, bruising his hips as he thrusts hard, builds a brutal rhythm of bliss until Louis tenses, clenching so tight around his cock as he cries into his arm.

Emotion claws at his chest as the heat in his blood flares, “Please, baby, I’ll be so proper to you, never hurt you again,” talking without reason, blind, sweating with his bonding scent a screaming roar in his nose until the heat starts to come apart, his cock expanding at the base. On reflex, he tries to leave his body, but the orgasm tackles him, shoots up his spine in red-hot pleasure, not like anything he’s experienced with anyone else, as his knot latches onto the walls of his stretched hole. “Oh, God,” Louis moans, and seizes up a bit in another orgasm.

Possessive, his canines flash, but before he can sink them into the bared skin of his throat Harry turns his face, screws his eyes shut and loses himself to the sensation as his come bullets into his sweet, soft body, pours into him, fills him so good.

With a hoarse sound, once the pleasures become a pulse in his veins, Harry idly wonders how the fuck he’s supposed to take them to the bed, but decides seconds after there is no possible way. Caught within him, there to stay for at least ten minutes, he whispers amorously, “So beautiful, pup. So good for me. My paradise,” as he lowers them to the floor, careful as he spreads the abandoned blanket; still his knot tugs at the boy’s entrance. Through clenched teeth Harry holds the mewling Omega around the waist, curves around him on his side, mouths gently at his love-bitten neck as he pets his trembling thighs. “So good, pup,” he continues huskily when his cock doesn’t stop, pleasure spiraling on and on. “Best boy for me.”

The words Louis whispers next Harry will always believe, “You’re my Alpha, love my Alpha.”

Clasping his hand Louis turns his face into Harry’s bicep, and sighs, that dreamy, faraway sound.

The hush in the house, in Louis’s body, is jarring. The hush in his fucked up mind more so. Christ it feels so nice.

Nice? No, doesn’t cut it.

Better. Louis makes him feel alive, better, awakened.

A somebody.

An authoritative hand spreads his wet thighs as Louis mewls sleepily, attuned to that touch and the desire it allures in his veins.

“Pup,” a husky drawl as hot hands splay over his sticky thighs. Heat drizzles over him as Harry fits between his thighs.

“Alpha,” Louis mumbles drowsily before lifting his droopy lids to be welcomed by darkness. Slowly his senses return to him as his vision adjusts to find Harry on his knees between his thighs. With him looming, waves damp around his face, unashamed stare hot and wanting, the Omega whimpers, wet and drippy, more than his slick, but Harry’s come from however many minutes (hours?) ago. Blearily, the boy reaches forward to brush his stomach, shivering when his muscles jump under his touch, and Harry growls, arm folded underneath his thighs. Easily, he palms at the
jut of his hipbone with his free hand, hitches his waist, and carries his wobbly legs over his shoulder.

As his belly clenches up, Louis whispers, “please,” and moans breathily when the Alpha’s hips lurch, and the blunt head of his cock nudges at his drenched hole.

“Want it, paradise?” the Alpha asks, voice so many octaves lower, dark and smoky.

Madly, Louis nods, paws at his chest and circles his hips needily, so the head of Harry’s cock catches on the puffy rim of his hole again. As pleasure coils low in his belly, Harry groans, masculine and pleased, nodding like he’s mad all the same (which he is, and Louis loves him for it). “Yeah, pup. Want it, too.”

Even now he doesn’t ease him into it—God, Louis loves him.

With a little mewl, the boy claws at the sheets, fists them once Harry’s shoved his cock deep inside him. Even five rounds later the stretch burns. Burns so beautifully, an ache that connects with his every nerve as Harry’s cock throbs, pressed so tight to his slick walls. God, he’s just too big, surely not meant to split him open like this. With a thrill Louis remembers he’s only going to get bigger.

As the Alpha snarls above him, Louis’ lashes flutter shut as his mouth parts and he rides the riptides of pleasure, glad to let Harry do all the work because he can’t function, can’t breathe, so full and needy to be taken care of like this. Taken care of by Harry. Like never before. Emotion wells in his chest, happiness spreads tears in his eyes. Promise me you’ll keep your promises this time.

Pleasure steals him from the emotional breakdown.

With every quick, short thrust Harry jabs at Louis’ sweetest spot, until, in a fever, a scream forms in his frantic lungs. Bliss comes apart with an intensity that seems to never end. Oh, yes, oh, yes. In this moment the boy drifts from reality, lost to the white-wash pleasure, unable to do anything but feel.

When the boy’s senses return to him, Harry’s hands have latched onto his hips, so forceful Louis knows there will be bruises, hopes they’re permanent, as a fresh wave of need raptures over him.

“My,” the Alpha growls viscously, driving into him, so hard and huge that Louis feels him in his tummy, bows under the intense sensation.

“Less name our pup Darcy,” the Omega slurs, in a boundless daze from his previous orgasm, and the one coiling in his tummy with every thrust.

At this Harry’s pace falters. A little chill of fear runs down his spine, cold and unwelcome, as he pries his heavy lids open. Above him the Alpha looks so feral, so sexy, canines peeking from his mouth, nostrils flared and brows furrowed in concentration. The sweat that’s formed at his temples trickles down towards his lashes, and looks so delicious Louis wants to lick at him, taste him on his tongue. But more than that the sensitive skin at his neck aches, and oh God, his Omega mewls, upset to have been denied Harry’s bonding bite. Self-conscious because oh God, why not? Doesn’t Alpha want to have me like that?

Obviously not right now, with his dilated stare fastened to his already bloated tummy.

“Yeah? That’s what ‘m doin’, paradise?” he demands through coarse breaths, with the timbre in his voice. “Breedin’ you?”
Involuntarily, Louis arches, mouthed parted to release a series of moans as Harry’s cock, fat and throbbing inside of him, presses insistently on his prostate. “Yes,” he pants, the truth. “Givin’ me all your pups, Alpha.”

Without permission the boy slides his hand down his sweat-slickened tummy to fist his cock. The dull relief doesn’t last. Louis gasps, stunned, when the Alpha empties him, turns him onto his belly, jerks his hips up so his ass is perked in the air and slaps his flesh so hard tears spear in his eyes, and spill down his flushed cheeks when Harry’s cock drives where it belongs, in his ass. “I didn’t say you could touch,” Harry snarls, draped over his back, hips flush to his ass, mouth hot on his ear as Louis convulses, working his cock tightly as the fireworks burst behind his eyes. Come paints his chest and tummy, and Louis is lost.

“So perfect for me, pup,” he breathes roughly, pace quick and sloppy. Sharp, sweet thrusts knock the breath from his chest in breathy mewls as his cock thickens impossibly. “Love you so much, paradise. My paradise, my—,” the rest is consumed by his growls as his knot expands painfully, so deep inside of him, locking them.

At the stretch, the sensation of warm come soothes the ache, causes him to whimper as he comes dry. Dizzy, exhausted, Louis sighs at the sweet relief as the energy in his veins eases up, and the intense heat cools.

Slumped over him, heavy in the best ways, his breath is hot on his shoulder, “best boy, so perfect, take me so well,” until Louis smiles sleepily, because he makes him feel like it’s true.

&&

A deprived, all too familiar energy forces Louis into consciousness. Flushed, desperate, the boy sits up to find Alpha isn’t with him, nowhere to be seen. Oh, no. Oh, no. Louis needs him, he needs him. Almost sick with feverish need, the Omega climbs out of bed and stumbles out of the room on weak knees. Tremors rock his fragile frame, but the energy is an agonizing inferno in his veins. Tears collect in his bleary eyes.

Disoriented, so lost, everything around him feels cold, so cold.

When he’s downstairs Louis catches noise in the direction of the kitchen and all but runs. Alas he is so clumsy in this state that he trips over the lip of the wood in the entrance and—,

Arms hook underneath his, save his fall, but Louis doesn’t care, vicious sobs creeping up his throat. “You left me, you left me,” he fists his waves as he cries into his throat, throat raw with how Harry’s scent intoxicates him, coats his skin and his insides.

“I was makin’ you somethin’ to eat, paradise, hush. Please, don’t cry,” the Alpha assures him though Louis is too busy unbuttoning his sheer top, pouting at the mere sight of clothes, to care. It’s difficult, his vision cloudy with exhaustion, but Louis just needs, he needs. With a husky groan, Harry replaces his hands, tears the thin material so Louis’ palms flatten on his ink-marred skin, a purr working through him.

As slick trickles down the backs of his thighs, his sensitive balls, Louis plants wet kisses up the column of his throat. “Alpha, need it, please.”

“Fuck, paradise. You haven’t eaten in—,”

Louis dissolves into frustrated tears as his nails scour down his chest, leave an angry pink in their wake where his skin is bare of tattoos. “I…I…n-n-eed you, Haz. I need it. Hurts, hurts so bad.”
A possessive sound, deep and raspy, marks the Alpha’s surrender as his hands knead the flesh of his ass, hiking him up his body. With a pleased gasp, Louis clutches the broad of his shoulders and ruts into his chest, “yesyesyes.”

As rough hands spread his cheeks, Louis struggles to breathe, the sensation of the cool air on his sore, heated flesh painfully good. In seconds fingers have sneaked between his wet ass, and Louis trembles, sinks his teeth into his neck as the rough pads of his fingers rub over his swollen, drippy entrance. A raspy demand, “Want my fingers, pup?”

Louis shakes his head frantically, “Want your knot, Alpha.”

Canines nip at his ear, wreck shivers up his spine. “Babies?”

Fervently, face on fire, the Omega nods, heat coiled low low low in his tummy.

“Goin’ to stretch you out a bit first.”

In protest the boy whines, but he’s set on the counterpane of the island, the cool marble bites at his heated, wet flesh. “Lay back, pup,” the Alpha orders silkily. Submissive, Louis does so, knocks a glass onto the floor, where it shatters, with his hand though neither care at this point.

On his back, Louis arches a bit in invitation, more so when Harry kneels, mouth latching onto the skin of the inside of his thigh, stingy as he leaves his mark with a bite. “Wanna mark you all over. Everywhere. So everyone knows you’re mine,” said so fiercely, with such a territorial edge, that Louis’ thighs fall as far apart as they can. Growls rip through the room as Louis squirms, circles his hips and whispers, “Take me.” Like that his mouth finds his skin once more. Impulsively, Louis’ thighs clamp around his head, mewls tumble from his mouth when Harry makes a low, pleased sound, but pries his legs apart. “Patience.”

“Take me,” Louis hisses, bothered, needy.

“Gladly,” the Alpha purrs into his slightly rounded belly before his tongue circles his navel, and he whispers hoarsely, nosing at his pudgy flesh, “Wanna knock you up, pup.” Heat pours over him because oh God he already has. There is no doubt in his manipulative mind that he’s been knocked up with all the come that’s filled him. But it’s a secret, Alpha has no idea. Louis opens his mouth to tell him, but Harry’s mouth falls wetly over his cock. Pleasure wrecks through him as Harry sucks softly at the head of his cock, tonguing gently at the slit. “Haz.” Louis whines, but he only takes him down, swallows three times and Louis spirals into an orgasm, cries softly as the Alpha swallows like it’s nothing.

Trembles overcome him when Harry pulls away gently, pets his bruised hip. “Come so quick for me, pup.”

A tired little noise forms in his throat as the Omega bucks his hips with all the strength he has left, too aware that his cock is still hard at his belly, not havingflagged a bit with his orgasm.

So hazy, drifting happily, Louis doesn’t expect the next riptide of heat. Except then he’s on fire, blades slice at his veins and scorch his insides as the boy circles his tummy protectively. Shrilly whimpers pierce his ears, his shrilly whimpers, as the tears scald his cheeks.

“Pup,” muffled, deep over the ringing in his ears. “Paradise, baby, are you…?” but he’s bawling, attempting to make himself especially tiny in vain hopes that the cruelty his body’s set against him might ease.

Mercifully, hands pry his sawing legs apart, and Louis hiccups sporadically as the energy wavers.
under his Alphas touch. But it’s there, still smothers him as he quivers, tries to tense up, but Harry commands gently, “C’mon, pup. Relax. Let me put it in.”

Just like that Louis softens, becomes pliable and bends his knees so his legs are to his chest as a pleased growl stuns his senses.

Blunt, his cockhead prods at the Omega’s drenched, swollen hole, and Louis jerks at the hot contact, eyes rolling as the energy within his body flares in another wave of heat, different this time, delicious. “P-Please,” the boy pleads, damp hands slipping on the marble.

With a throaty sound the Alpha takes his hips, and Louis holds his breath as he forces his cock, huge and suffocating, as deep as possible in his ass, felt in his tummy as he cries softly, on fire with heat’s fever. Grunting, Harry circles his ankle, and tugs until his legs are uncurled, wound around his bare waist, hips tilted so he can fuck into him proper.

And he does–Louis slides on the marble as Harry wrecks him, deep and forceful, relentlessly jabbing at his sweetest spot.

“You wanna come, pup?” he asks raggedly, cock almost too fat to shove back once he pulls out a bit. Louis’s mouth rounds as the fire in his belly touches those lovely places in his body. “Go ahead, paradise. Give it to me.” With those words his knot pops, cock buried in his ass as he circles his hips in a way that rails the endless pleasure until it’s caved on him, shatters him as he rocks on his knot, come streaking on his tummy and chest.

In his ears his heart is an erratic drum as Harry’s weight settles over him, the delicious bonding scent dark and prominent as the Alpha groans, sucking another mark into his jaw as his cock pulses, soothing the raw ache within.

Louis slumps, drained as the intensity is abruptly dulled.

Lifting his heavy arms, Louis knots his hands in Harry’s sweat damp curls. “Only love you. I love you so much,” he hears himself say in his trance of pleasure. “Love you, love you…” Exhaustion.
devours him whole as he clings, let’s Harry’s throaty noise, somewhere between a growl and curse, guide him into sleep.

&&

“Paradise,” it’s the one voice that can reach him now. Content with sleep, free of the current in these blessed moments Louis cannot find his voice, throat sore and achy.

When he doesn’t respond a hand grasps his shoulder with immense care. Drowsily, Louis wonders if he’s become a faint impression under the perfect hands, whether he’s lost himself to this distant dreamland. “Pup, wake up.”

Louis scrunches his face at the command, then pokes his tongue out in Harry’s direction. Whispers, “Alpha, sleep.”

The sound this earns him is unreasonably Alpha, unreasonably fond. So much so that his heavy lids refuse to stay shut, defies his will as he peeks through his lashes to find Harry Styles mere inches away. Louis inhales sharply, trapped in the emerald depths of his stare. *Not close enough...*

Upset with the distance Louis tries to roll over on the mattress, press closer, but a hand on his bare, achy hip halts him as Harry explains gently, “You’re on the sofa. Gonna fall on the floor.”

Louis flushes hot with the realisation that the Alpha is on his knees, *on the floor*, and both are in the living room (he doesn’t remember just how this has happened or *why because Louis wants to be in bed, damn it*). This revelation isn’t want steals his attention, fuels his embarrassment.

It’s the Harry is dressed, in another black top and a pair of Adidas joggers. Meanwhile, Louis is all sprawled out on his side, exposed and vulnerable. Warm, Louis sniffs, presses his face into the sofa. A cold sensation lances in his tummy, his very empty tummy. “Hey,” Harry breathes with a note of unease in his gravelly voice. “Pup, look at me.”

Shy, anxious to please him, Louis lifts his face and mumbles as he takes in how his hair’s been tied back in a messy bun. “What.”

“What’s wrong?” Damn him for his troubled look, all dark knitted brows and a pursed mouth. Abruptly the boy remembers that his mouth’s been all over his body, the docile flames alight in seconds.

“’M stark naked. You’re not,” he blurs, despising how rough and small his voice comes.

“You should always be naked.” And his very smile charms Louis’s anxiety, melts him.

“You should always be naked with me so I can ride whenever I wanna. Proper sex-toy,” he tells him pointedly, studying his clear eyes. Emotion flickers to life, one to the next until rapidly settled on amusement.

In the soft light from the hall Harry smiles slowly. “Other way around, paradise. Gatta handcuff you to my bed to make sure you never leave. Preferably naked.”

At the idea Louis shivers, but demands childishly, “Strip, Haz.”

“Dominatrix?” the Alpha teases, though the next flare of emotion to his stare disturbs him. He looks…nervous. Scared even.

Even confused, Louis plays casual. “That was so rude. ‘M more a man than you.”
“Aside from the sex, sure.”

Well, he can’t say it’s farfetched considering how he’d rather lay underneath him and take it. Aside from the sex sounds about right. Slowly, Louis plants his hands on the sofa and sits up, exhaling shakily as his head whirls a bit. The hand on his hip bears down, achy in the best ways, as Harry murmurs, “Gatta feed you. Already lost weight.”

“Semen isn’t proper sustenance, Harold,” he mumbles, but leans forward to fist the material of his shirt in both hands, tugging adamantly until Harry lets it happen. With the proximity the Omega purrs softly, lets him nudge this noses, mouths just inches apart. The tease sends phantom heat through him until he’s in chills, unable to breathe evenly as the Alpha dips forward, brushes their mouths. “Later. First let me feed you while I can.”

Louis whimpers, betrayed. “I wanna be full.”

“Of food,” he finishes stupidly with a note of amusement.

“No,” he mutters, bottom lip jutting.

“Later,” the Alpha repeats with a finality that makes his veins throb wantonly.

“But–,”

Quieting him, Harry’s mouth closes over his bottom lip, sucks gently until he melts into submission, trying to nip him back.

Surrender is inevitable as an arm bands around his bare waist, drags him up to his solid frame. Eager, the Omega wraps his legs around Harry’s middle, parts his mouth more in welcome as he moves to rut against him. “I said later,” he reminds, a hot growl that fills his mouth. But his arm constricts so Louis is stuck, mewling in absolute frustration, nothing like what the energy calls for.

“I hate you,” he snivels once the suction on his bottom lip has quit toying with his nerve-endings.

“Gonna love me when your belly is full.”

Emotion wells in his chest, another rush of joy, silver affection as he burrows his face in Harry’s throat, pets his smoothed back hair. “Take care of me so well, Alpha.”

The shaky breath Harry exhaled spurs him on, “Nobody more perfect for me than you, ‘Az. Only you.”

Wordless, rigid like this bothers him, the Alpha carries them down to the next hall, setting him on the marble counter in the kitchen before trying to step away. “No,” the boy protests softly, clinging. “No sad. You’re not allowed to be sad right now.”

The impassive look on his handsome face scares Louis more than anything else. “I never meant to hurt you,” he tells him without warning, eyes a shade too dark with remorse. “I never wanted to…to…not be with you. Always wanted you with me. When I was away I would always find myself bloodied because all I could focus on was you.

“How scared I was that you’d find someone else, how angry I was that you were okay without me and I couldn’t even make it ten minutes without living in your memory, how I’d lose sight of my emotions and just thought Louis and remembered who I was and who I wanted to be, how I hoped I could touch you, just once…I just…always…I always want the best for you, paradise.

But that’s not…me.”
Heart garroted by the sincere words, gaze misty, Louis leans up to anchor them, cupping his
ticking jaw in his free hand. “Would never want anyone else, could never. Tried real hard, Haz, I
did. But you are best for me. I don’t want you to stop thinkin’ ‘bout me. Don’t stop. Never let me
go.”

“Couldn’t ever. You leave me and I’ll be the physical icon of Every Breath You Take.”

A little gasp tumbles through his mouth. “You’d stalk me?”

Nose buried in his hair the Alpha breathes possessively, “You’re mine. ‘M obsessed with you.
Don’t expect more of me. I would do anything to feel close to you.”

Inexplicable heat blazes in his tummy as his body softens. He’s so aware of how wet he is now.
Just the reassurance that Harry loves him so much dizzies him, turns every part on him on.
Twisted or not Louis wants to be stuffed with his knot and owned in the most intimate ways.

Low in his throat Harry groans, “Smell so lovely, pup.”

“You’re…mental,” the boy retorts breathlessly, tugging at his hair-tie. I love it so much.

Humming, the Alpha reaches up to take his wrists. Louis lets this happen, but slides his hands
down his face, the cords of his neck prominent underneath his palms before he clutches his
shoulders. “Off. I wanna wear this.”

In seconds Harry’s tensed, the tips of his fingers burrowed deliciously in the warm skin of his

Brows furrowed, the boy presses as softly as possible, disinclined to trigger any more resistance,
“Just take it off, H.”

“Why?”

“So we will be even. Me undressed from the waist below; you from the waist above.”

“I just want you naked,” he says thickly.

Louis softens at the indistinct emotion in his voice, but refuses to be led astray. “You’re stalling.
Why?”

“Cause I don’t want…” the Alpha trails. Is he supposed to know the finish, Louis wonders.

“Don’t want?” he prompts thoughtfully.

“The scars,” Harry mutters with revulsion bitter in his voice. “I don’t…They’re…I…”

“Oh,” Louis breathes around the sudden sadness coating his throat. “Oh, baby…”

“Don’t,” there’s an unbearable note of shame to his voice that chills him. “Don’t be all…weird
about it. Don’t feel bad for me. I’m not weak.”

“Of course not…” he breathes, nuzzles his throat to continue, “You’re not weak, baby. Scars
don’t mean weakness, love. I think they just show strength and victory.”

“That’s not what I see when I look at ‘em. You’ll see the same…”

“I’ve seen ‘em already, Harry,” the boy reminds in hopes that this eases him.
Of course not–his muscles lock around him, solid and nerve-racking. “Not like this…Not when ‘m supposed to…Not when…I just don’t want to be unattractive to you…physically.” *Impossible.*

Incredulous giggles fizz in his chest. Muffles the little trills into his shoulder before, “Styles, I am *not* that shallow!” Well, with anyone else Louis *is* that shallow, but he’s never seen any fault in Harry Styles. Not physically, never. God, how could he? Harry is perfect. Perfection at its most sublime. When he remains silent, “Besides, I’m not exactly supermodel material here.”

“That’s a damn lie,” he whispers into his hair. “You’re fuckin’ perfect.”

As his insides come undone, soupy, Louis sighs softly, “Sayin’ that because you fancy me.”

“Love you,” Harry corrects with such conviction. “I love you, paradise. And it’s because your imperfections are too beautiful to be less than perfect.” *Oh, Haz.*

At the words his heart soars, on cloud nine. “Then trust me. Trust me to love *you* the same.”

“What if it’s a mistake?”

“If we keep makin’ the same mistakes then we are very clueless,” Louis decides quietly, lets Harry clutch him impossibly closer to rest his head on his chest, calmed by the race of his heart.

“I want more than friendship,” he claims intensely. “I want more, pup. I want to know that we’ve never just been friends.”

In his chest Louis’s heart stutters as he squeezes his eyes shut, tells Harry’s heart, where his mouth presses over his shirt, “Give this time. Just time. You need to be better first.”

“’M tired of waitin’,” his voice breaks like Louis’ resolve just might.

“Me too,” the boy admits, trying to stem his scalding tears.

“I’m sorry. I don’t mean to put you in a shit position but I just…I need to know.”

“’S okay, baby,” Louis breathes, constricting his arms a bit before he shuffles back to smile timidly up at him. “I want to be here. I want to know all of who you are. Show me.”

And this time he does.

&&

Apprehension crawls, cold and hideous, on his skin as Harry stands over the stove, thinks of the way Louis had just looked at him. It’s not that he has never showed his body before, the opposite really. Strangers, randoms, the *followers*… Simple exposure, their opinions worthless to him. But this is Louis. Louis who acted as if he’d given him a tremendous gift by uncovering the shit on his body, the scars and the story’s cleaved to them. Exposed himself while Louis wasn’t heat-ridden, or emotionally distraught, unable to focus on anything but how he feels.

“*Pretty fuck. World needs to see just how ugly you are inside,*” an arctic memory’s jeer wrecks through his mind.

Desperate for the distraction Harry flips the omelet over and heads straight to the fridge. A cold sweat blooms on his skin as he wrenches the milk carton out, then a plastic container of cut fruit. From there he works to ignore the voices as he spoons all there is into a bowl. It doesn’t look like enough.
“Never enough,” it snarls.

So he snatches a banana and slices it on the top.

As he places the knife down his fingers trace the scar on his side. A phantom pain sizzles to life, and his muscles twitch. Christ, he just wants Louis to come back, distract the memory that’s flared behind his lids, but the Omega is in the living room under strict instruction to choose a decent film.

*Blood oozes over him, threatens to gush down his throat and—*

No, not right now.

He’s here, *now*, and can’t let this happiness die with the shit in his head. Not this time…Not now.

When the omelet is finished, toast buttered, he ends with a bowl of cereal. Satisfied he rolls both a fork and spoon in a napkin, tucks it under his elbow and struggles with the plate and two bowls. In the open living room Harry almost drops the food and pounces, cock tenting his trousers as his Alpha flashes to life in his veins.

*Fuck.*

On the wood, the Omega swims in his shirt, criss-crossed and small, gazing intently at whatever film he’d chosen. All sharp, pretty features alight when he glances over, eyes widening adorably. “Shit, Haz. How many people d’you think you’re feedin’?”

As to keep himself together, caging his Alpha because God damn it Louis *needs to eat*, he approaches to put what he carries on the floor beside him, then returns silently to the kitchen for two water bottles. Once he’s returned he sits a few feet over. Like he feels the compulsion of his stare the Omega shifts to face him, so frail it almost hurts to even dare look.

A heartbeat of staring in awe before Louis blinks owlishly, then smiles tenderly, reaching for the plate first.

Instinctively Harry’s hand shoots out to grip his wrist, where he strokes his smooth skin with his thumb. “Is this okay to eat?”

Louis frowns. “Well unless you’ve poisoned it then I assume so yes.”

Powerless to his charm Harry grins, “I mean does this tickle your fancy?”

“Tickle my fancy? Ugh, H. Don’t say shit like that. It just sounds…” the boy shudders, like he’s so horrified. “I just think—,”

“Tickle your pickle?” his smile widens until it’s toothy with his satisfaction as pink kisses Louis’ face.

“You’re not funny,” Louis says, but a smile plays at the corners of his swollen mouth.

“Crass humor doesn’t do it for you now?”

“Never did,” the boy sniffs haughtily. “Now quit distractin’ me. We need to eat.” He doesn’t release his wrist, instead cautiously picks the fork from the napkin, the muscles and tendons in his forearm working. “Paradise?”

“Hm?”

“I’m gonna feed you now.” As he speaks his damned stomach screams in protest.
An adorable frown claims his mouth before, “But you’re hungry, too.”

Silently, he lets him free to bring the plate a bit closer and tear a corner of the toast. Then he cuts a perfect square out of the omelet and places it on top.

“C’mon. Eat. Take from me,” he says quietly as he leans forward, arm extended until the boy obeys, shifts forward and opens his mouth. As he puts his lips around the food he’d cooked for him, Harry growls low in approval. After he’s swallowed, he comes towards him again with another piece of toast suspended between his fingertips.

“Shouldn’t you have somethin’?” Louis asks timidly. With a thrill he remembers that Louis’ never been bonded by an Alpha, doesn’t understand the intensity of his care.

“Not until you’re full.”

“What if I eat it all?” The mere thought satisfies him like no other.

“Nothin’ would please me more than to know your tummy is full.” When the boy only looks at him like he’s sprouted two heads, “Louis, eat for me.” His insistence, the Alpha lurking in his voice, has Louis opening his mouth again.

Even after he closes his lips Harry watches them, their ever poetic movement.

As the Omega chews, the Alpha picks through the bowl of fruit with his fingertip until settling on a cantaloupe, holding it out for him. The boy takes the piece whole, grinning adorably when a little juice escapes down the side of his mouth. He reaches up with the back of his hand but Harry stops him to lift the napkin, dabbing gently. “’M finished.”

“No, you’re not. You’re still hungry.” He extends half a strawberry, “Open, paradise.” Any resistance melts from that point on.

Like this he feeds Louis choice morsels, the betters, watching him with a primordial satisfaction unlike any he’d felt before. Once he’s through half the omelet, all of the fruit and toast, most of the cereal and the bottle of water Louis claims to be full. As it’s true he makes quick work of what remains, then picks up the plate and heads back to the kitchen with Louis humming happily.

There, he makes himself another omelet, fills a bowl of cereal and works through another banana and two bottles of water. In ten minutes he’s finished, washes his hands and turns the light out on his way back to the living room.

There, the Alpha finds Louis sprawled out on the floor, asleep as an action film plays on. Gunshots erupt, ricochet in his skull until he turns off the television, takes a deep, calming breath and makes it out to return with pillows and a duvet. Carful he crawls over to him, tucks a pillow underneath his head and cocoons him in the blankets, thankful that he doesn’t wake. Some painful measures away, Harry lies on his back and stares blankly into the darkness.

A scene flashes to life there in his worked up brain.

Darkness is an enemy like any other, evils servant. But darkness is where he has found belonging like no other, solace as he drifts through the emptied streets noiselessly, as to go unnoticed in the formidable warzone.

A severe fraction in his mental armor conjures this mistake.

In a wild desperation he shoves his hand into his tattered trousers’ pocket, fishing out the neatly
folded photograph. In colour—the only colour his life retains.

Exquisite blue eyes stare back at him, almost alive with emotion Harry’s forgotten to feel in this year of separation. A fifteen year old pup, his fifteen year old puppy paradise. A captured memory.

Stupidly, the Alpha pauses to run his fingertips over Louis’ face, squeezes his eyes shut and chants inwardly soon. Soon he’ll be home, in paradise. Just...

Ruin comes much sooner.

A boot rams into the back of his knee. Caught off guard his leg gives out and he stumbles in shit attempts to stay upright, blinking wildly to find a pack of looters in the darkness.

There isn’t a chance. He has no chance against the five others visible, but he tries. Because he always tries. Just it’s not ever enough.

Frantic, he hurls himself at the closest, tackles him to the sandy ground and bloodies his face in an emotionless fit, but before he can do much damage he’s hauled backwards by a hand to the hair (he should’ve cut it, fuck he knew he should’ve) and growls as he is shoved onto his back, a boot catching him in the side, where his stitches have yet to heal. Pain caves in on his chest, a hoarse shout knocked from his chest. But he cannot catch his restraint, a crowbar hurled at his stomach. With another raucous sound he tries to double over, clinging to his picture.

But grimy hands pin him to the ground, to take what is dealt to him for his negligence.

The crowbar is replaced with a knife, cozied up to his jugular as another’s point digs into his woundless side. An agony consumes him, but too soon blood is all that marks the ruins. Unable to feel he doesn’t realise the knife’s slide from his insides wetly, doesn’t realise anything except the crumpled picture in his sticky fist is torn away.

Terror bathes him in cold blood. “No,” he croaks weakly, hauling his heavy arm in the bastard’s direction.

“Oh look-e ‘ere, lads. Ain’t this one pretty?” the largest of the lurker’s sneers.

Sheer will lurches his body towards him, canines bared though an object slams between his shoulders, crumbles him. “Give it back!” he roars, frantic and terrified because oh God his photo can’t end up in the wrong hands. They’ll kill him, they’ll kill him...

The leader crouches. “This your mate? A fine little piece.”

A snarl rips up his throat as he finds his slick hand in claws, fighting to take him on. The male rocks back on his heels, just out of reach, laughing callously, “He’s important to you, is he?”

Terror fists his heart, pants on all fours over his chest at the pleased look on his face as his filthy stare peers down at the photo. “I seen ‘im before. That little Council brat? What’s ‘s name?”

“Fuck you!” he snarls, earning himself another slash to the back.

“Louis, sir! Louis Tomlinson!” a faint voice reveals. Harry vows to bathe in his blood.

“Yeah, yeah I ‘member this one. Think he threatened to tear me eyes out if I looked at ‘im again.”

Another slam to the shoulder for his answering snarl, stars bursts before his eyes. “Please,” he hates that he’s been reduced to this, panting. “Please. Rip it up. Just leave him alone. Kill me.
“Anything. Just…leave him outta this.”

_The male in his swimming vision smiles slowly. “No. Don’t think I can. You should’ve left him at home.”_

A muffled, sleepy noise tears him from the nightmare, calls for his attention. Wired, he blinks wildly, then searches the darkness for his attackers, heart bashing into his ribcage. It’s empty, with only a little balled figure inches away. Oh, God, oh God he’s okay. He’s okay.

Relief shreds through his chest as he closes the miniscule distance to gather him up.

A blessing: Louis mewls groggily, “’Arr’eh.” As he breathes him in unevenly, the sound of his voice bullets elation through his veins, seeps into his bones, warms his marrow. A fraught sound rips up his throat as he noses at his soft nest of hair. “Paradise,” he clutches him to his chest, shudders viscously when the boy’s mouth runs up his throat to his jaw. “Paradise paradise paradise.”

“Here, baby. ‘M ‘ere.”

“’M sorry,” he breathes crazily, almost hyperventilating as sweat wilts his hair. “’M sorry I just need you.”

Velvet lips part on his jaw, breath hot and wrecking down his spine as the boy sucks softly, mumbles, “I’ll nev’ah leave you again, baby. Make me so happy, Alpha. So happy. Always…” jostled by the force of his reprieve the words become indistinct, a mere lovely whimsical peal too much like a lullaby. Another novel obscurity swallows him whole with his face buried in Louis’s hair and his back to the sofa.

And oh Christ he doesn’t think he will fear what lurks in the dark ever again.

“Alpha,” a pretty little mewl calls in the darkness. “Alpha, please, please,” the sweet voice continues, fists tuffs of his hair as the fire swelters over him.

Crazed, devoured in flames, Harry lurches forward, swallows his gasp to connect them. As he tongues at his lush mouth, the Alpha muscles him onto his back, and follows because the boy’s violent hold in his hair. Breath hot, delicious, Harry consumes his heat, breathes his air, owns him.

Little, breathy moans fatten his already hard cock in his joggers. With a fierce growl, he takes the collar of his too large T-shirt and tears the material down the middle, lets the side’s whisper to the wood as Louis whimpers, bowing his back beautifully.

With his hands, the Alpha spreads his chunky, wet thighs apart to fit between them, breaking the kiss to loom on his heels. Christ, his sexy little figure glows in the flourish of his heat. All feline, arched like this, striking. With his face in a lovely flush, cerulean gaze vivid. With his little chest heaving uneven breaths, belly so soft, so pudgy, and his cock flushed bright and leaking between his legs. Fuck, his skin is marred all over, bruises and bites and _fuck he is an animal._

Such a rabid fuckin’ animal who can’t _stop_, because damn it paradise is a hell-coloured flame, untamed, a do-or-die.

With an animal-esque sound Harry closes his mouth over one of his peaked nipples, trails his blunt nails down his belly as Louis whimpers, every carnal noise driving him past the brinks of insanity.

“Fuck, pup,” he hums, sucking hard as he fists his pretty wet cock, loose as to make sure he doesn’t come. Under his touch the Omega’s hips jerk, and he pants loudly, “yeah, Alpha, yeah,” so reedy it echoes throughout the entire house.
“Gonna be a good boy for me, pup? Goin’ to wait til I say you can come?”

Hands threaten to rip his hair from the roots as Louis trembles, cries between jagged breaths, “Can’t, Alpha, can’t…”

Thumbing slowly at the wet slit of his cock Harry closes his teeth lightly on his right nipple in punishment, then tongues to soothe him when he twists hard enough that fresh raptures of pleasure course down his spine. “Wanna come from just my fingers?” he asks around wet licks to his puffy bright nipples.

So ready, the boy nods wildly, yanking at his hair unrelentingly. Pleased, Harry takes his bruised hip in one hand, shows him onto his belly where he folds delicately, on his hands and knees for him. The scent stuns his brain, claws at him until he’s snarling, spreading his perky cheeks to present the view he craves. As his eyes roll, his cock pounds with his heartbeat, wanting inside as he leans forward to breathe over his drippy pink entrance.

Louis tenses up, moaning breathily into the wood as he flattens his tongue on his fluttery flesh, grunting at the taste. Delicious, the slick is thick on his tongue, sweet and heady. Urgent, possessively he laps at him, circles teasingly until jabbing insistently at his tight little entrance. When he clenches up, sobbing softly, the Alpha lets him back his ass into his face, slips up in control to just let him have it his way.

Keeping his rounds apart with one hand Harry brings the next between his perky cheeks, teases with the pads of his fingers until the boy is begging ramblingly, “please please please, Alpha.”

“Alright, pup, okay,” he surrenders raggedly around the same want before sinking both his index and his middle into his wet heat. As he thrusts, spreading softly, magnetized by how he’s clenched hotly around his digits, Louis mewls, “uh, uh, uh,”’s the cause his cock to throb fiercely in need of splitting him open proper.

Purposefully, the Alpha seeks out his spot, curls his fingers until rubbing at the bundle of nerves. “Go on, pup. Come for me.” Just like that the boy’s scream pierces his ears as he thrashes, so tight around him it’s impossible to take his fingers back (not that he has any intentions of doing that). “Bloody hell, paradise,” he groans, wraps his arm around his middle to hold him still as he spirals into his orgasm.

Wild, he doesn’t stop, prods at his prostate relentlessly even as Louis cries, “too much, Alpha, too much,” desperate to have his overstimulation, to make fireworks flare all over his beautiful little body. But oh fuck his mouth travels wetly up his delicate shoulder to his neck, the left side where his teeth need to be. Drilling him, he squeezes a third finger, demands huskily, “Tell me we’re not friends, pup.”

When the Omega keens, he closes his teeth over his sensitive skin, snarls under his breath as his Alpha tears through him. The blissed out moans wreck pleasure through him before he growls, fucking into his prostate, “Tell me we aren’t just friends, pup. Fucking tell me and you can come.”

“We’re not friends!” Louis shrills around gulping breaths. “W-W-We’ve nev’ah just been friends. I’ve always been yours. Always.”

“Christ,” he says, deliberate and stretched out as his tongue caresses at his bonding spot. “Give me, pup. Let me have it.” And the boy “mmm”’s high-pitched and broken, amplifying into his orgasm, “Harry, Alpha Alpha, Harry.”

Crazed for him Harry jerks upright, shoves his joggers down his thighs so his cock springs
straight, swelled at the base already. Gripping the fat length the Alpha perks Louis’ ass high for his use, and slowly forces the thick head into his hole, groaning at the white hot lashes the pressure draws. Through rough breaths Harry buries his cock as deep as possible, shudders rocking through him as his cock jerks in his tight heat, the pleasure whiting his vision as Louis continues with those broken frenzied noises, back arched.

“Fuck, pup,” he breathes hoarsely, canines sharp with the purpose of bonding him as he loves his body. “You’re so fuckin’ perfect. Feel so damned good.”

In trembles on the floor the Omega whines softly, dazedly, “oh my God,” clenched up on his cock, sparking the wildfire.

Growls rip from the back of his throat as Harry takes his hips back to shove right where he needs to be again. The friction steals his breath, owns him. But no, he wants to be gentle with him, love his body.

Palms firm on his hips Harry works him with slow, deep thrusts. “Love you, paradise. More than anythin’ in the world. Love you and your sweet little body. Gonna knot you, fill you with my pups. Keep you forever.”

Louis mewls, tries to meet his thrusts but he growls, “Stay still,” and fuck, he listens, all soft and malleable, whimpering erratically. As he closes his eyes the Alpha leans forward, deeper than before, in search of his hands, intertwining them.

“Haz, Haz, please,” Louis cries, squeezing his hands as he stills, cock throbbing with the same desire to wreck his ass. “I need it, Alpha. P-Please, I k-k-know you love me. I know I know I know.”

Destruction is set to his control, demolished as he snarls, shoves his cock where he needs it, fierce and desperate. On fire with need the Alpha fucks him, fast and hard as ever, drilling into his sweet ass while Louis sobs, rocking on the wood. So loud, so sexy, in his ears, intensifying the pleasure with each thrust.

“Goin’ to come on my knot, pup?” he asks gutturally between laboured breaths as his cock throbs, fattening impossibly.

Louis moans brokenly, clenches down on him to the point that his knot expands dangerously.

“Louis, fuck,” another growl as he slams forward, knot locked deep inside him. As his cock jerks wildly, the boy comes, so tight as he spills into him, awash with white-hot pleasure.

Fuck, like this they feel endless, and madly he thinks as long as he has his Omega nobody, nothing, can drag him down.

Without him there is nothing left.

With him there is everything. Anything.

&&

Time escapes him, runs away, and like this he has no interest in the chase. Vision fuzzy, black around the edges, Louis catches his breath, stuffed blissfully with Harry’s knot. Floaty, the boy savors the intense sensation, the fulfillment as purrs work up his raw throat.

“Azza?” he croaks sleepily, a little noise forced from his chest as the Alpha rocks his hips a bit, thick come bulleting.
There is only a rasp in response

“How much do you love me, ‘Arr’eh?”

Hands squeeze his before Harry breathes, “With my entire essence, with all I have left, with all I’ve ever had.”

Tears spear at his eyes before the Omega whispers, “No matter what?”

“No matter what. No matter how insane, how addicted, how fucked up. You’re my number one. My everything.”

Now the endless tears scald his face as a euphoric high steals his senses, “Still believe in forever, Harry. I still believe in forever with you.”

Under the emotional burden Louis doesn’t even hear his frantic affectionate comfort, simply quivers with his soft, hurt noises. Happy. The happiness he’d thought impossible for him after he’d broken under their weight. Bliss that dowses him now, pools in his heart.

Eventually, in the midst of his meltdown, an exhausted sleep rescues him.

&&

Leisurely, the Omega comes to, warm and blissed out. Home. Wrapped up in his Harry like when he was still him. Like he is him now. The thought launches his heart past the clouds.

A smile lights his face, and a hoarse rasp brightens it all the more, “Love that smile. You should smile like that forever.”

“Yours. Only smile like this for you.”

When there isn’t a response the boy opens his eyes to find the Alpha beside him, on his side, just as naked now. As he drinks the sight in heat gnaws at his insides. God, he doesn’t know how Harry could think himself unattractive in the least. Louis hasn’t one complaint (well, the mermaid tattoo he could do without, but). All broad and long and thicker than ever before. “Hi,” the boy says breathlessly, licking his lips as he lifts his stare from his cock, massive in its arousal, fat and long with prominent veins he wants to trace with his tongue and–

“Hey,” he responds throatily, dilated stare hungry. “I was just about to fuck you again.”

A delicious shiver runs up his spine as heat pulses through his veins, warms him. “Oh,” he comments softly. “Well, what’s the hold up?”

“I thought I should shower first.”

The proposition sounds unbelievably nice. The bathroom does as he becomes aware of the insistent press on his bladder. As heat spreads high on his cheekbones, Louis breathes sheepishly, “I need to wee.”

With a wolfish smirk the Alpha sweeps his arm in direction of the bathroom (and Louis realises they’re in his bedroom now, or what used to be his bedroom—he has decided he wants Harry’s bedroom now, and will tell him one day). But he can’t seem to find his limbs just yet. “Then you’ll shower with me?” he asks timidly.

“Yeah,” he agrees slowly. “Go. I’m impatient.”
Satisfied with this answer the Omega restores the last of his strength to stand and sashay (well, more like hobble, because the sharp pain in his bum makes itself known) to the connecting bathroom with some trickling down his thighs.

Hastily, Louis uses it, then starts the water to wash his hands, though he freezes at his reflection. 

*Whoa.*

The person in the mirror looks on top of the world *happy*, expression radiant and timeless. But it’s not that, or the tattoos that stuns him like this. It’s the marks on whatever bare skin he’d maintained. Reds and pinks, purples and blues, *everywhere*. Visible on his jaw, down his neck to his shoulders, his belly and hips. Somehow he’s sure his thighs are no better, but at least, aside from the faded pink bite imprint left on his right wrist, his arms are clear. Curiously, the Omega jabs at the black-and-blue on his right hipbone, and inhales sharply at the delicious twinge.

He’s startled when Harry steps behind him, but the proud expression makes Louis *bubbly*. “’M sorry. I didn’t mean to…”

Louis snickers breathlessly, teases, “You curly haired cunt. How am I to face the public like this? The *cameras*?” There is always pap, picture’s he hadn’t known were taken end up online and Louis doesn’t know how but they catch him at his worst times.

“The public won’t see anything below the neck,” he says darkly, bending forward to bury his face in Louis’ neck. As his lashes flutter shut, “Well my neck is very well a mess too.” With a little ache the Omega realises his neck is love-bitten, but there isn’t the permanent bond he craves.

Opens his mouth to demand why he hasn’t made it official, but Harry hums, “Wanna mark you some more. So it’s there when you leave.” At the mention of leaving Louis’s heart constricts, cold needles piercing him mercilessly.

“Territorial bastard,” Louis whispers, with more pitch to smother the emotions there. “It’s my turn. Gonna mark you so all those little sluts you like so much know better.”

An arm snakes around his waist as the Alpha nips at his ear. “You’re so holy.”

A twisted smile toys with the corners of his mouth. “An absolute *saint*. Reckon you’d like me to be nun.”

The arm constricts so Louis backs up, bottom lip caught between his canines to muffle the little noise that starts up in his chest at the feel of Harry’s cock pressed hot and heavy to his back. “Yeah, I’d like that. Turns me on jus’ thinkin’ ‘bout it.”

“A nun with the devil,” the boy mumbles, delighted as Harry buries his nose in his wayward hair. “How tragic.”

“Wouldn’t say I’m the devil,” the Alpha whispers as steam clouds the atmosphere.

“You are. You seduced me, the innocent.”

A husky laugh sends chills over his body before Harry murmurs quietly, “Not exactly how I remember it.” Without warning he’s spun, a gasp torn from his throat as hands take his bruised hips and hitch him onto the bathroom counter. “What was it you said, pup? Wanna tell me again?”

As his heartbeat sutters, Louis shoves his fingers into Harry’s curls, stretches so their gazes bore, inches apart. “I remember you said a lot, H.”

“Tell me what you said, pup.”
Captured, lost to the inferno in his dark stare, the boy admits breathily, “Stay. I told you to stay.”

Flames dance down his spine, entire body achy with want. “Yeah? What else? Tell me what you want from me.”

As his lashes flutter Louis shivers violently, almost uncontrollable when his large hand takes his jaw, strong and obstinate. “What do you want, pup? I’ll give you anything.” The influential tone coats Louis’ skin, the promise of whatever he wants...

“I just want you,” Louis tells him softly, thrilled by the mere sensation of his breath, warm as it ghosts over his mouth.

“I want to give you so much more. The world.” The intensity in the statement lances through him in pure heat.

Louis wants to prove how melted he is, wants to be gooey and in love like never before, but more so he wants to play with him, tease him.

With an elated giggle, the boy takes his hand from his hip to bite at the fleshy part of his palm, his other hand yanking quite fiercely at his hair. With a hiss Harry lets this happen, jerks his head back so Louis can latch onto his throat, over the attractive jut of his Adams apple, where he sucks softly, whimpering at how his groan vibrates on his lips. With his canines Louis scrapes at his skin, and shoves him so he can slide to his feet and all but skip to the cloudy glass door.

As he steps in he tosses him a mischievous look, “Coming?”

With a fierce, possessive look Harry steps into the steam after him, skin damp and hair wilted under the perspiration.

It’s rather spacey, he notes secondly, but steps under the spray, tipping his head back so his hair soaks.

“Want to fuck you, pup. Want to fuck you real bad right now.”

Soft heat coils low in his belly, and already his body is ready, cock curved and drippy. But he stretches to snatch the shampoo and chirps, adding a touch of annoyance to his tone, “When I’m done, Harry.”

As he scrubs the soapy liquid into his hair a possessive hand flattens on his belly and pushes softly so he stumbles backwards with him until his back’s to the cool tile and soap dribbles dangerously towards his eyes. Careful, the Alpha dabs at the soap before it can burn his eyes, “What if I want it now?”

As his mouth parts, lips wet and swollen, Louis brings his foamy hands over his chest, slides them down the indentations of his abs to stop just above the path of groomed hair, where lower his cock stands to attention, massive and surely too big to fit in his compact body.

The sheer size sends thrills up his spine. That’s what his body craves, needs to be stuffed so full he cannot catch his breath, remember his own name.

“Wait,” he breathes in his most honeyed voice, peering up at him through spiky lashes. “Wanna ride.”

The muscles of his stomach jump under Louis’ hands as his cock jerks.

Louis throbs all over at the timbre in his voice, “Yeah? Going to sit on my cock, pup?”
“I-If I can,” voice all breathy as he eyes the bloody monster suspiciously. “Gonna split me open, H. ‘S no wonder…”

“Finish.” Controlled, confident.

Shaky with anticipation Louis draws out the wait, lets the Alpha watch from the sidelines as he scrubs the shampoo thoroughly, then rinses, conditioning next before taking the bath sponge to lather it with soap, running it’s coarse material over his sensitive skin while Harry steps under the spray, hair straightening out with the water, reaching his collarbone before he runs his hand through it, forces the strands back, out of his face.

Once Louis glistens with suds he steps underneath behind him, lets the hot water loosen his already too loose muscles. When the Alpha grabs for the shampoo, he brightens and decides he can take care of him too.

Snatching the bottle first Louis breathes excitedly, “I’ll do it,” and then stretches up once Harry quirk a brow, but lets his head fall backwards, hair loose and thick. Louis soaps his hands, then lathers his hair, happily scratching and rubbing his scalp as he hums in encouragement. When the Alpha helps him rinse, after the third shampooing, Louis kisses his shoulders, lower over the scars of his back, marveling at the feel under his mouth. How his muscles bunch spellbinds him, turns him on unbelievably as his cock twitches. Desire reels through his veins, the sharp pain scythes everywhere. “H-Haz. It’s comin’ back.”

With a low, possessive sound the Alpha works through washing his body as Louis leans into the tile, panting. Blind in his need the boy whimpers erratically, stumbles to rub against the solid frame of him, wet and hot and so nice on his hypersensitive skin.

An arm is iron, ensnaring his thin waist as Louis is hitched roughly up his body, wrapped in him. As his mouth is claimed in a bruising kiss Louis moans breathily. A gush of slick oozes from his sore flesh as the Omega clings to him, fisting his hair.

“Alpha, Alpha,” mewls tumble from his needy tongue as Louis plants wet kisses along his jawline, latching onto the ticking muscle to suck urgently, feeling his groan vibrate throughout his body in a charge of pleasure.

Somehow the Alpha carries them out of the still running shower. The cool air causes him to press impossibly closer, shivering as he walks them back to the bedroom, dumping him onto the mattress.

It’s wet, Harry’s tongue thrusts into his mouth as his hand fits between his sticky cheeks. At the feel of his hand on his hole, Louis arches sharply, moaning too loud, “yes.”

But then the Alpha takes his slick hand back, and when Louis opens his teary eyes another whimper escapes him as he watches Harry slides his wet all over his cock. Oh, God, need fireworks in his tummy at the promise of having nine inches of cock inside.

Caging him, Harry’s hands grip his cheeks, spread them as the Omega makes “mmm”s, lifted so Harry shifts onto his back and Louis sprawls out of him, mewling into his chest as his achy cock presses into the Alpha’s thigh.

Cruel, he settles his hands on his hips to hike him so Louis sits up, all slack and pliant as a ragdoll for his Alpha. “Go on, pup,” it’s almost a snarl as the boy spreads his legs wide enough that he brackets Harry’s waist, knees on the mattress as he hovers over Harry’s body, slick dripping. Frantic, Louis shuffles down, whimpering pitifully when Harry’s cock slides between his wet rounds.
Startled by the hot press the boy rocks desperately, cock gliding slickly against his puffy, needy hole as the pleasure threatens to—, “Paradise,” the Alpha pierces his trance, and Louis sits up proper to circle him the best he can with his hand, sinking down softly.

Louis has to remind himself to breathe, tense as the head of his cock prods at his hole. Shivers wreck up his spine as he lowers more, eyes rolling under the raw stretch, the searing burn. Until he’s seated on his cock, crying softly as the fat length throbs in his ass, so hot so hot so hot. “Haz, ‘Az, it’s so good. So full.”

Hands planted on his chest Louis circles his hips a bit as he adjusts. But the Alpha makes the deep sound, hands tight on his hips as he stares up at him with those blown pupils.

“No,” Louis whines, clenching down on him purposefully. “No…lemme just…” please you.

As he rocks softly, little shifts that press Harry’s cock tight to his sweet spot, a firestorm is alight in his tummy. In control as he rises up, feels the resistant slick draw before he sinks back down slowly. “Oh,” he keens, heat sweltering over to suffocate him as he works for his orgasm, riding the Alpha’s cock desperately, heart a defending thump thump thump in his ears.

“Pup, tell me. Tell me.”

Bouncing, Louis babbles mindlessly, “Love you, Alpha. Love you. Want to stay with you always. Wanna be spoiled and I want kisses and cuddles and diamonds and to be knotted all the time whenever I want. Want your pups. Want your bond. Want to belong to you.”

The hands on his hips squeeze, intensify the pangs from the bruises that makes Louis moan, tossing his head back and lifting his hips to slam back down with a wet slide, stuffed so full he can feel him in his tummy again, blunt and heavy and—, “Wanna be taken care of, Haz.”

“Yeah, paradise. Give you anything.”

Desperate he swivels his hips, feels the head of his cock rock on his prostate as he gasps, “Alpha. Alpha, please, please gimme…”

Up and down and up and down as the pleasure claims his muscles, and he trembles, unable to breathe as he scratches needily at Harry’s chest. “Come, pup. Want it.”

Just like that the fire erupts with an intensity that stuns his senses as he seizures up, collapsing on his chest, sobbing raggedly.

Growls rip from the Alpha’s chest between them as Louis finds himself pinned to the mattress, horrifically empty as Harry braces over him, hitches his spread thighs so his heels dig into his toned bum. A warm tongue traces his mouth as Harry drives his cock into Louis’s needy hole, forces screams up his throat, muffled by the Alpha’s mouth. “Again. Tell me again.”

Submissive, Louis slurs, “love you love you love you,” in time with Harry’s animal-esque growls. Unable to catch his breath the boy spirals into overstimulation as the Alpha mouths at his neck, thrusts merciless as his cock presses hotly to his prostate with every one. The bed frame rams into the wall as Louis clings to his shoulders, to stay impaled with every brutal motion.

“Goin’ to make me knot so quick, pup,” he breathes throatily.

Anticipation fuels another bout of flames as his cock throbs wantonly at his tummy. “Please, I want it. Alpha, want it, want it. I love you. I love you. God, I love–,” Before the
Omega can finish the Alpha’s cock fattens, slams into his hole and splits him open so abruptly another orgasm shatters him, cock twitching with pitiful spurts of come as Harry’s spills a fountain inside him. “I fuckin’ love you, paradise. Adore you. Need you. You’re not allowed to leave me, understood?”

As the painful fire is soothed by his knot the Omega slumps, mewls and arches his throat in offering. With another low sound the Alpha hides his face in his throat, rocks his hips so his cock sinks that much further. Too blissed out, Louis cannot find his demands for a bond, simply mewls wantonly, for the connection his body craves.

And oh God his mouth starts on the right path. Another storm of need wrecks through him as Louis circles his hips the best he can, mouth parted when Harry hisses, and jerks forward, knot pressed deliciously tight against his nerves. Softly, sucking fresh love-bites into his throat, Harry moves his hips.

The white hot ecstasy rains down on him, but it’s when Harry’s mouth closes over his sensitive skin that the boy blacks out, overwhelmed by the fervor of his dry orgasm, unable to do anything but cling to blissblissbliss.

“How? Paradise, love, come back,” a raspy demand as reality comes together in a rush.

“’Az,” he breathes as Harry lets out another hoarse noise, so much like relief.

“Pup, it…won’t stop,” he tells him frantically as Louis blinks around useless tears. Life sounds so far off, sensation the only intimate, concrete remnants to keep him from floating too far into his daze. “Dunno what to do…”

“Wass wrong, baby?” Louis whispers warmly.

“’S been thirty minutes and my knot hasn’t…I’m still coming.”

At the strained words Louis becomes aware that his cock is still buried deep inside, come brimming him with content. Louis sighs happily, “Am I good, Alpha?”

Louis moans when his cock jerks inside of him, gives him moremoremore than his answer. “Yeah, pup. So perfect. Never been like this…” Behind him the bonding scent scatters his sense, carries his Omega past the stars and sky with bliss.

“Knockin’ me up so proper, Alpha,” he mumbles faraway. “So many pups.” More thick come coats his insides, marks him.

With a stupid smile Louis continues, “Love my Alpha. Can I sleep now?”

“Yeah, pup. Sleep, dream happy dreams.”

Louis promises to.

&&

Dreams don’t last.

When the final flourish of energy wrecks through him it’s 3 A.M. on Tuesday. Drained, Louis sinks down hard on the Alpha’s cock, exhales in shudders as his knot pops and catches. Another orgasm ripples down his spine as water sloshes onto the bathroom tile.

With a raspy groan Harry brings him down so the hot water of their bath splashes his face, mouth
taken in a hot sloppy kiss. Like this he sees sparks, tastes the mints from their toothpaste on his tongue and mewls, lost to all his dreams come true.

Except it’s hours later, curled up in Harry’s arms, that reality strikes him in a cruel stream of clarity. Distress screams in his roiling tummy.

*Oh, no. No, no, no.*

Ice cold terror seizes his veins as the boy hides his face in Harry’s chest. There, he does his best not to wake him, doesn’t need to be interrogated while coming apart at the seams.

Lightheaded, in a desperate attempt to bring himself back to center, to find his equilibrium, Louis focuses on Harry’s steady heartbeat. But with his movements wet oozes from his fucked out hole, and chills form all over, knowing just what that is.

Oh, God, oh God, he’s ruined *everything*. By now he’s ninety nine percent positive, with all the knots he’s had, he’s pregnant. The remaining one percent worthless *hopes* that this might work out. This might just work out because Harry’s *always* wanted babies.

Except he’s told Louis time and time that in order to take care of babies he had to be *better*. And oh God he is *so not better right now*. Well, not to the extent he *needs to be to…to…*.

A little helpless sob crawls up his throat, muffled into Harry’s chest, as he thinks *calm down calm down*. But he *can’t*, because he’d spent his most fertile time soaking up come, and some lucky little one has to have made it to the finish line already.

There are no options when it comes to the pup that’s *depending on him*. The mere word abortion stabs cruel knives of terror into his side. No, he can’t terminate his precious pup, *Harry’s pup*. Louis is cruel, but God damn it Louis would *never* do that to his Alpha, to himself. Just… couldn’t. Couldn’t do that…to them. To the tiny *barely-there future* in his belly.

Adoption. Denial sprouts its roots all in his frazzled brain. No, his pup is *his*, and he couldn’t bear to just give–

With a distraught noise the Alpha holds him unbelievably closer, buries his face in his hair to deflect the night terrors. Through short, erratic breaths the Omega sinks into the embrace, desperate to have all his love while he *can*. Because after tonight he has to *leave*, to *fix this*, now that he’s screwed it all up.

Alpha needs to focus on better, not Louis and the baby that’s coming to life within.

With a cold torrent Louis realises he doesn’t know a thing about pups, only that he’s not harming this one. To raise a pup on his own petrifies him more than anything, fists his heart until tears ooze past his lashes. It’s not how this was meant to *be*. Louis wasn’t meant to be an unmated parent, to…to…to be like this. The loneliness he’s only just broken free of looms in the near distance of his mind as the Omega struggles to breathe, to think beyond the depression.

A mistake–he’d made a fatal mistake.

One he would make over and over because he *wants this*, wants Harry’s pup.

Overwhelmed, Louis holds back the little sobs built in his chest. Twisted, he is *wrong*. Wrong to have done what he did. Wrong to do what he plans to do. Hide this.
But there is no other choice. What he wants most in the world is for Harry to claim his power over drugs, over his past pain, and be happy. Which can’t happen like this, not with this immense baggage.

Nothing has changed. It must be done by the Alpha alone. Louis acted out selfishly to decide Harry’s fate for him. Now he can’t have him, can’t risk his pup or Harry to be happy himself. This has to be reset, rewritten. Right.

Torn, the Omega lets the tears scald his cheeks, and trembles viciously. Too soon Harry’s alert, aware of his distress, but Louis’ mind takes flight, blames the tears on the remnants of his heat.

When the Alpha pins him to his back, fits between his thighs, Louis lets it happen. Lets the Alpha make it better for at least this blessed moment.

Like this, with him, Louis returns to his dreamland.

Dreams don’t last, but they exist, and that is enough to save Harry.

Chapter End Notes

I’d love to hear your guys’ thoughts!

All my love,

Dani xx
Frantic upset sounds steal Harry’s oblivion. Protective, the Alpha bolts upright, bares his canines and searches the sunlit room. Even as the lucent light sears his untrained stare, he doesn’t stop, paranoia ringing in his ears until he finds the room is barren of attackers, of danger at all.

As his heartbeat steadies, he looks down to find Louis plastered to his side, peering up at him with glassy, anxious eyes. Confusion twines his veins. Colour burst behind his lids as he rubs harshly at his eyes, clears his throat to asks, still horribly raspy, “Why do I keep wakin’ up to you in tears?”

Obviously unprepared for this the little creature tenses up, but he tries uselessly, “I wasn’t cryin’.”

“Louis, love, I think by now I know your ‘just-bawled-my-eyes-out’ look.”

“I’m…s-s-sorry,” his voice is painfully small. But truly so repentant that the Alpha just can’t believe he is sorry for the tears, especially not when he continues mindlessly, “I’m sorry, Harry. ’M s-s-s-so sorry! P-Please, please forgive me.”

Frozen, ensnared in an emotional turmoil that hadn’t existed prior, Harry just sits there as the Omega cries. Until the boy’s cries have escalated to wails–he just can’t stand to have him so upset.

Uncontrollable, the Alpha acts on instinct, takes his small, trembly form into his arms and hums in approval when he curls up in his lap. “Hush,” he breathes silkily into his strawberry scented hair. “Don’t be sorry. It’s okay. Whatever it is…its okay. Don’t cry, paradise, don’t cry.” But it doesn’t feel okay, not with how the creature in his arms is acting–like the world is at its ends. Jesus, he’s never witnessed Louis come apart like this, emotional and so…broken.

“Is it…” his throat seizes up at sickness churns in his stomach. “Is it me? What we did? Did I fuck up?”

“No!” it’s shrilly in its sorrow. “No, Haz, no! You…You w-w-w-were perfect to me. So perfect…I just…” but he dissolves into tears, face burrowed in his chest.

Disturbed, confused to the point of desperation, to make this better, the Alpha presses frantically, “Then what is it, paradise? I…don’t understand.”

“I-I’m j-j-just emotional right now,” the boy whimpers feebly into his clavicle. “I’m scared.”

An invisible claw fists his heart as his temples throb. “Don’t be scared. There’s nothin’ to be scared about. I…I’m here, paradise.”

Louis shakes his head, like he’s mistaken. “You’re leavin’,” he realises throatily as panic bullets through his bloodstream. “Aren’t you?”

And he doesn’t even speak, simply nods. Nods like the inevitable won’t crush him.

Vindictive, the past, the demons’ very essence replenishes in his bloodstream, the echoes of
crulety trapped within the endless circuit of his arteries and veins, going around and around his stone-still body. “I’m sorry! I have no choice!” the Omega seems to realise he’s become unresponsive to him. “P-P-Please, don’t be u-upset.”

Like there’s an option for him, like his Alpha hasn’t bonded him. This shouldn’t even surprise him. Louis has never needed him. It’s always been him, the idiot, attached like a leech. He has always needed Louis. Even now…it doesn’t matter. It really is what it is. Like life would transform just because Louis opened up to him, because he opened up just a fissure of the shit in his head all the same. That’s a fantasy he shouldn’t have dared to entertain.

To reclaim his muscles the Alpha shoves a hand through his knotted waves. Christ, he has to get away from him–

Well, that will happen soon enough, won’t it? He’s leaving. Leaving to go home.

Just like his instincts wild out, make him want to fight to make him stay in his bed. But screw that stupid, primeval core of him, screw his Alpha. Right now…he just needs to savor his proximity, his presence. Take care of him. Show him he won’t ever stop.

With a smile he doesn’t feel, Harry takes him around the waist and pins him to the mattress. “Tryin’ to get away from me,” he says with a playful edge, running his fingers down his sides as the boy thrashes, giggling like mad, the sound a little bit of heaven. “Haz, Haz, stop!”

Mesmerized with his movements, how his ribs hint at his skin with his gasping laughter, how his tummy remains bloated with all he’s taken, how he glows with health and vitality from everything Harry’d given him, a resplendent Omega who he loves with all the pieces of himself, shattered or not.

With a boyish laugh he drapes over his little frame, pleased by his relieved laughter, how his breath falters under his weight. “Haz! Haz!” the frantic trill to his voice stuns him. “Get off of me! You’re crushing us!”

To appease him the Alpha braces on his forearms, then watches as the anxiety in his icy stare melts, a paradise in his eyes. “Stay. Stay one more night,” he implores fervently.

Beneath him the little creatures blinks owlishly, then, “I gatta go back, H.”

“This is your home. You make this a home. I…I’m just asking for you to tolerate me one more night. Let me just be with you, just to touch your heart one more time.”

Emotions swim in the brilliant blue’s of his eyes as he stares up at him, mouthed parted pretty enough that he imagines tonguing them open further. Christ, now that he’s had him, he won’t stop wanting into his body. Thinks it’s his to have.

Just like Louis has always been his to cherish and adore and love. Like never before.

“I…” but there’s a bit of resistance in his voice, enough that his Alpha is frenzied to melt into trust.

“Please.” In emphasis he brings his hand up to cup his face so he has to look into his eyes, to see how open he is for him. And he watches those extraordinary eyes become warm pools. “Please. I want to love you. Let me be your Alpha some more.”

Louis exhales shakily, a feeble smile curves his mouth as he nods hastily. “Okay, Haz.”

In his chest his heart stalls as the Alpha whispers, to just hear him say he’ll stay. “Yeah? You’ll stay?”
Timid, the Omega strokes stray strands of hair from his face. “I’ll stay one more night.”

The switch to his entire body has been turned on, an instinctive current inhibits his mind as he smiles with the all too boyish happiness Louis’ unleashed within. “Gonna love you proper.”

Louis bites his lip, though the giggles surface anyway. “So attached. Make me never wanna leave.”

“So don’t,” he can’t help the depthless hope in his voice. Hates himself for it. “Don’t go.”

“You know that’s not possible right now.”

The idea that it might never be possible if the shit in his head wins, if the obscurity eats away at his sanity, conquers his bones. Without him is difficult, but being with him is even worse sometimes.

Reminds him of all the happiness he would have already if he could set his mind right, keep his thoughts intact; reminds him that he shattered them, the sole reason for the ruins in their lives. The happiness he cannot maintain without Louis. But if he spilt his dirty cuts it would only make a mess neither of them can possibly clean up.

Friday Harry comes home to the love of his life, Sunday the love of his life leaves him.

A thin parasitic pain that hotwires his brain, but numbs out as the separation strengthens.

Worth it. Worth the withdrawal pains that come with the anxiety, the suspicious that he won’t come back, that he doesn’t have his paradise to make it bearable.

Because he can do it; he can hold his own against the demonic infestation, has left to repress the voices, lock the monster in his very subconscious (always there but mostly docile, unrecognised), has learnt to distract himself from the starvation pains, the cravings. But it’s only so much time before he’s in fractures, doomed to crumble under any feather-light trigger.

Yet somehow right before it can happen, Louis waltzes back into his life, makes him feel invincible, more than his insanity, to mend his tattered torn pieces enough that he feels brand new, awakened.

“I know,” he says hoarsely. “But I want you to lead me on. I want you to believe otherwise. Just tell me you do. I don’t care that it’s—;” I’m desperate.

“Harry, look at me,” the boy demands in an entirely upset tone, even as he soothes the furrow between his brows. Just because Harry opens his eyes, lost in the bottomless depths of his stormy stare. “I am not playin’ with your emotions just to make you feel some sense of false security. I’m sorry, but I can’t do that to you. But I know, I know with all of me that one day I’ll come home to stay. And then we can finally love each other right, give into this whole soulmate craze and just… be.”

“You’re already my reason to be,” he breathes with a fervor that escalates in his heart. “I just wanna be with you. All the time. Now.”

Crystals drip down his face, a fountain of affection in his shadowy stare. “That’s not fair. Y-Y- You think I want to be apart? I’ve never felt trapped with you. I’ve never been afraid of commitment with you. Jesus Harry, I’ve been here ten years, I’ve never had any intentions of being without you permanently. Never. I still don’t, but we’ve been misplaced, baby. And we won’t just be okay and find our way without…without… I’m so alone, Haz. Lonely as ever. I feel empty, or I did…” oddly a hysterical laugh chimes, “M full now and I probably always will be.
But that doesn’t matter right now. You and those two left feet waltz away with my damn heart. We’ll find our way. I will come home. But I c-can’t until you let me.”

In a collision his emotions become tangled. Guilt, love, relief. Christ, he’s still hurting him, keeping him away because finding himself is a lot more difficult than it should be, recovery a word he hasn’t quite defined.

In this still instance Harry tries to unearth the proper words to say before the boy’s shields are up, before he leaves. But all he has is, “Gonna be better, paradise. I promise I will be better.”

“’M starting to believe it, Hazza. I…trust you. You will get there.” The placid confession turns the rusty cogwheels in his brain before the words erupts in his chest, an enormity of elation.

With a hoarse noise, a sob, a laugh, he circles his slim waist and crushes him to his chest, nose in his nest of fragrant hair. “Won’t let you down, pup. Goin’ to win this time.”

Delicate fingers run through his hair softly before the boy whispers, too much like the child he once knew, “Pinky promise.”

Without hesitance, taking one dainty hand in his, Harry curls their fingers. “I pinky promise.”

“With or without me?” the desperate note to his voice tethers unease in his chest even as he promises, “With…or without you, my love.”

All but joined with him, Louis borrows against his chest, their hands held above them towards the ceiling, the sky. The difference in them thrills him; Louis’s hand tiny, delicate, Harry’s larger, meant to hold onto him, capture him.

A while the boy allows him to savor the proximity, the intimacy, the best silence he’d heard in a while, a hymn between them. But the Alpha swears their hearts have merged, become one, their souls drawn, dark to light.

Too soon the boy noses at his jaw, whispers coyly, “I have a request of you, Alpha.”

“Yes, pup?” he prompts throatily, clasped that much closer as he breathes him in urgently, so he’ll have the scent in his head a while more.

“Tea. I want tea. Need it, actually.”

“We ran out last night,” Harry reminds him, but offers at his stricken noise, “I can just run to the café a few blocks over. It’s not even a fifteen minute drive. If you’d like, paradise.”

“I’d love that,” the boy decides in a tiny, contrite voice. “Now, Alpha.”

A thrill travels up his spine as Harry jerks backwards to peer down at him. “Is that how you request, pup?” He strokes his moist bottom lip, pleased by how his lashes flutter with his little nod. “Now, please, wanker.”

As his gaze darkens the Alpha presses, “What do you want, pup?”

Louis’ stare flickers before focusing on him once more, too dull. “Want to be taken care of. Want my bloody tea.”

With his heart a frantic tattoo, Harry nods and whispers to rid the dull from his eyes, “As you wish.” Even with the insistent alarms in his head to blare ‘don’t, don’t, don’t,’ in warning his Alpha refuses to heed. Rather he calls on a confidence he doesn’t feel, to stand and dress in a
worn pair of black skinnies and a white T before pulling his hair back into a little bun. In his boots, he leans down as Louis stretches up on the mattress, parting the canopy so his little hands are warm on either side of his face, lips parted in an irresistible offering.

Slowly, *careful*, Harry licks into his velvet mouth, whispers huskily, “Can I make love to you first?”

“After,” the boy’s shaky breath is sweet on his tongue.

“Counting on it,” pitifully his voice breaks, but he just inhales his sultry perfume deep into his lungs and plants another tender kiss. “Wait on me.”

Weakly the boy strokes his tongue, a teasing caress that wrenches a groan up his throat, cock twitching against his fly, far too interested already. “Haz, baby, go.”

“Paradise, baby, stay.”

“Well I will have to if I want my tea,” Louis reminds with a delicate smile, another chaste kiss. *I wish I could still wish it was over.*

“All the tea for my love,” he coos sadly, nudging their noses.

With another snicker the Omega slaps playfully at his shoulder. “Shoo! I want my tea.”

Awkward, faltering like a besotted boy, Harry shoves his wallet into his back pocket and makes it to the front door with his heart still in the room. With it unlocked, he starts to force himself out, but a sweet voice halts him, “Wait wait!”

The trouble with this boy is he’s a mystery, puzzles him in every way.

Wrapped in the sheets Louis appears in the hallway, stumbles over the material down the hall to him adorably, Harry’s mobile held in his hand. “You missin’ somethin’?”

With a nervous laugh the Omega tumbles into him, and he catches him around the waist with his heart creeping up his throat. Soft and warm in his arms Louis is the perfect fit for him. With sure fingers Harry takes the sheets, parts them and pulls so the material whispers down his glorious body, pools at their feet.

Hunggrily, the Alpha drinks his beauty in, observes as he makes a little shy noise and circles his belly protectively, self-conscious in ways that shouldn’t exist for him. Someone so lovely, fairylike, but with the masculinity to set it off, is untouchable in his splendor. Ignites the fire in his body as his cock fattens up, like it hasn’t had enough from the last fifteen times, bulging in his trousers. “Much better.”

A delicious rose kisses his cheekbones before he smiles, adorably bashful, and bites his bottom lip.

“You sure I can’t just make love to you now?”

“You don’t tire easy, do you?” *Never with you.*

“I’ve wanted this most of my life, don’t ruin it for me,” he snarls playfully as he snakes his arm around his waist to hitch him so his miniature legs round his waist for support. “Yeah?”

“Yeah,” he confirms huskily, kneading the perky flesh of his ass. “Dreamt about it all the time. Dreamt of having you all my life.”

With a breathy sound, so sexy, the Omega fists his hair. “Waited for you, Alpha. Only wanted
you to have me. I wanted to have you the same. Still do.” *I don’t blame you, love, for running like I did all those years. I’d do the same.*

With a rasp Harry mouths at the sharp line of his scruffy jaw. “I love you. I just love you so damned much, paradise.”

Unable to quit, he spreads his rounds a bit, to dip his fingers when Louis makes a little noise and mumbles, “No no no, ‘Az. Lat’ah. Lat’ah.”

_Fuck._ Cock pounding in protest, Harry mutters as he grazes his skin with his canines, “I hate that word. Later.” God, Dan was right when he’d told him all those bloody years ago that his precious son would lie, steal, cheat him, tear a hole in him that he cannot possibly repair and _he’d still love him._

“You’re so very demanding today,” Louis sighs, yanking so he lifts his head and molds their mouth, shuddering as he tongues his lovely lips apart.

“You let me have. You’re mine. And I take what’s mine.” With that he possesses his sweet mouth, swallows his hot little breaths, tastes his very bright essence as the Omega’s tongue teases his on and on. “Such an Alpha now…” Louis retorts, dreamy and perfect.

“Your Alpha.”

“My demanding Alpha who s-should–oh God, ‘Az–be gettin’ my tea, not trying to g-g-get it in.”

With a vicious shudder Harry stills, nuzzles his jaw and murmurs slowly, “Don’t leave me alone here.”

“I won’t. Now off with ya. Fetch my tea.” When he squirms the Alpha releases him, heart a ticking time bomb in his chest.

As he steps out the door Louis calls in a heartrending trill that freezes his blood, “Make it quick, Harry.”

“I will, paradise. I will.”

Except not quite quick enough. In a rush, without lifting his ducked head to check, thrumming with an all-consuming hope that Louis didn’t do what his subconscious has been roaring about the last fifteen minutes, he enters the security code and staggers into the cool, sex-scented house. Trust. Trust even though the place is alarming in its silence, even though it feels too lifeless again, even though it’s too cold, even though Louis is nowhere to be seen.

“Paradise? Pup,” he calls hoarsely up the stairway, knuckles white with how desperate his hold is on the container of his favourite ice cream, the tea trey trembling riskily.

When there is only silence Harry squeezes his eyes shut, just for a moment, but suddenly finds himself in the kitchen, braced on the counters and eye-to-eye with the derisive ice cream, wafting still brisk air onto his face. “Well,” he laughs bitterly, crazily, taking the ice cream to dump it into the rubbish bin. “So much for that.”

Since he refuses to drink either cup, he tosses both into the sink and has them join the sealed ice cream in the rubbish. “Fuck that,” the blind rage conquers his bones as he kicks the cabinet door in on itself, the wood splintering like his chest. “Fuck this,” he takes the dishes from the sink and hauls them at the opposite wall. “FUCK ME,” a livid roar. Until he’s consumed by it, kicks the shards, steps on them, prays to any God in range that it breaks through and stabs him to just allow some distraction from the emotional hurricane in his chest, wrecking his brain.
Once he’s sweaty, exhausted, with the kitchen and the living room all in ruins, he crumbles to the floor beside the torn down, busted flat screen. Throughout his body his Alpha howls, rattles his bones. “I’m so fucked,” he decides unevenly. “I am so *fucked!*” the veins in his throat throb from the shout, strained and just.

With another snarl Harry stands, storms into the kitchen and just stays there with his lungs disintegrating by the claws of his demons.

A flash of hot pink catches his wild eyes. It’s a sticky note, lopsided on the fridge.

Through tremors the Alpha takes it, blinks back the searing tears and reads the sprawl over and over, ‘Something came up. Sorry I won’t be home when you read this. I’ll text you. Forgive me? I still wait for you. Your paradise xx’

Your paradise. What a fuckin’ joke, a cruel twisted joke. Except the echoes of the pet name itself proves otherwise. No paradise is forever. Paradise is temporary. Wouldn’t be a paradise otherwise.

But he is selfish. So damned selfish to want a paradise all his own. To think Louis would be so inclined to start at paradise and end with *hellhole* because Harry’s sucked his soul, left him hollow.

Because that is what addicts like him do: use and use and use until there is nothing left to take.

With a ragged breath Harry unclenches his fingers and lets the sticky note flutter over the glass shards scattered along the floorboards.

Another distant memory he just can’t escape.

&

Across the table his phone lies screen first—it’s been two wearisome weeks. The promised text hasn’t arrived. And the ugly thought that there was never an intended text in the first place crawls between the creases of his wired brain.

“He’s never comin’ back, mate. Face it,” the voice sneers so loud his eardrums must be ruptured by now. As his stomach churns, the Alpha stares at the eerily still phone. The phone he’s only just allowed himself to put down since the very day he disappeared.

Alone, pathetic, Harry faces the monster another time.

Six white lines spread before him on the marble, hideous, *delicious.*

Anticipation gnaws at his weary bones, neurotransmitters in a frenzied buzz at the promise of what is to come.

With the cold sweat his hope drips, seeps into the floorboards to be devoured by the demons that creep throughout the house.

“Do it,” the disembodied voice insists with threats. Christ, he wishes the shit in his head would just overpower his body already, seize control yet again. Empty him of any residual remorse.

Mouth pooled with saliva, his greedy stare settles on the powder. One or the other, never *neither.* Paradise or his fix, never *neither.*

That’s just how it works.
With a bitter smile, the Alpha shifts, listens to his bones crack funnily as he takes the roll-up between fingers that tremor uncontrollably.

“We’re here when he’s not.”

Well, he’d rather have him.

“Or so you tell yourself,” the voice contradicts, delighted to fuck with his brain. At least it’s honest. At least the monster will *always* be here for him, won’t promise to stay and just fuck off to carry on with its lovely life.

This is what it must feel like to be *used*. Karma at its finest. An eye for an eye. Because the boy had taken what he wanted and happily walked away with all his purchases. Without even a *fleeting look back for the lost fuck he was leaving behind*.

Like Harry’d done over and over and over.

But he’s still a part of *everything he does*, all over his body in these bloody *tattoos*, a scar where his heart once beat.

Numb, his sensible, *operating* brain shuts down in slow memories, one light after the next until all that’s left is a malformed darkness.

Which works best for him—exactly what he needs to settle over the first line, pinch his left nostril, and surrender. Without a seconds hesitance the darkness swallows him whole. There is no one last time when the first snort bullets straight to his toxic brain. Like this he *rides with it, remembers what it is to touch the stars*.

Power settles in his veins. An undefeated power—his natural element. Like this the seams to his frayed mind weave and restore themselves as he twitches under the rupture. As his nerves come to life for the first time in two weeks, *endless days*, Harry breathes in the blessed euphoria. A remedy. All he needs to survive this, to *figure it all out*.

Need—back to that. Vomit crawls up his throat, so he just snorts another line. And another. One more until hooks are razor-sharp pains underneath his skin, stringing him so far above the shit in his head.

Until there are diamonds behind his eyes, torture as they ooze past the corners of his lashes. Until he thinks Louis’ mind is *made of diamonds*. All those diamonds he’s been drawn to since he was a little pup. How beautiful. How *tragic* that his body is shedding the diamonds he’d embedded there. Rejecting beauty he does not deserve.

An unbelievable rush drowns him as his heart pounds in his chest, ready to escape all the same. This is how it was meant to be. Because he is *higher on his own, without him now*.

Keeps it simple, keeps up with life like this. Rides the current of coke.

In a blur. A beautiful blur that locks out the *shit* and sneaks between the hollows of his ribs to hold him like nobody else will at night.

It’s the crash that ruins him. Always does—this time an all-time-high week later, seven relapses down.

Under the deadweight his body calls for *more*, and the monster entices him, but it’s all he can do to snatch his phone (habit) and haul his sorry arse to the nearest guest bedroom. There, the Alpha
collapses on the plush mattress and stares blankly into the darkness.

Somehow, as the delirious jeers ricochet around in his skull, Harry’s mobile slides in his clammy palm. Desperate the intensity does not faze his vision as he keys, ‘do you still believe in forever?’

On fire, twitchy and a mess, the Alpha blacks out. It’s only hours into emotional asphyxiation Harry reads the response, ‘I believe in you.’

Just like that Harry breaks away from the infinite shards of addiction. Dry heaves, “I’m not ruined, I’m not ruined,” into the darkness until he’s not the only one who believes it.

&&

With a lurch Louis almost dunks his head in the toilet as vomit crawls up his throat and into the toilet. With his tummy in knots, the boy braces over the porcelain rim and trembles in wait. As the acidic liquid rips up his throat into the water tears scald down his pale face. With a minute moan, Louis doesn’t fight the inevitable, pukes his insides out and then forces his trembly limbs to function. Once he’s flushed, the boy stands on weak knees and hauls himself to the sink where he brushes viciously at his mouth to rid the stale sour taste, then washes his hands and face.

Miserable, Louis returns to his vacant bed curl up small around the nonexistent curve of his belly and breathes to his little love, “It’ll be okay. It’ll work up. I p-promise.” But oh God it doesn’t feel okay, like it’ll work out, at this very moment.

Dull, his loneliness aches in his chest, a constant chill that threatens to conquer his bones. It’s been a month and one week. A month and one bloody week without him.

And two days into this sickness routine, scrambled trips to the bathroom and meltdowns with nobody to help him, it’s already become too much.

Too much to handle on his own, in this secret forlorn life he’s doomed himself to. Limited to phone calls with his family and friends, their infuriating worries (like they’re the ones pregnant with a cokehead’s pup, unmated and alone) and derisive text messages from naive Daddy-To-Be himself. Texts he can’t bear to respond to without begging for him to take him home and take care of him.

There’s beauty in a storm. There’s so much beauty in a storm, but God damn it not when you’re trapped in the natural disaster itself.

But today is the day he quits thrashing and trying to break away. Today is the day his lifeboat keeps him afloat. Today will present him the official confirmation needed—he’s scheduled to visit the hospital, to learn about his little love in his belly, to just know what he’s up against.


Really, Louis has spent a lot of time compiling a hefty list of questions and concerns. Research only freaks him out--after the headline ‘Rise Rate of Male Omega Miscarriages,’ Louis hadn’t dared try that route over. No, that will only lead him to do something he will regret. What he needs is a confidential professional to just guide him through this lifestyle.

All he knows are the basics: no alcohol, no smoking whatsoever, and eat better.

Which he’s pretty successful in, tossed the temptations in the rubbish almost as soon as he came back. Not one sip of alcohol, not one fag, since before he was home and being knocked up.

All that he hasn’t been able to do: eat better. Louis is a greasy pizza kind of boy. And his little
love is too as that’s *all he wants anymore*. Surely it’s criminal to deny a depressed expecting boy junk food’s simple pleasure.

With a little bite an unbidden thought comes to life: *Harry would motivate him to be the healthy, shove greens down his throat and claim fruits to be dessert, then wake him up at the crack of dawn to start that yoga bullshit and–*

The desperation waver’s his resolve enough that Louis takes his phone out from under his pillow (where he keeps it just in case…) and peers blearily at the screen. Under his Hazza’s name are tons of unreturned texts:

*Come home*
*Did u find the car keys?*
*I can come for you, I want to*
*Don’t ignore me*
*Louis, you’re freaking me out*
*Please, pup*
*I fucked up I’m sorry*
*I’m so sorry for whatever it is I did.*
*I don’t know what else to do, paradise*
*I just need to hear your voice*
*Just a text*
*Is that too much?*
*Of fucking course it’s always too much to ask for anything*
*Whatever. When you’re ready to talk I’m here*
*I’m getting real tired of this shit Louis*

And so on.

At the mere sight the Omega’s vision blurs, an ocean of tears, as he tries to breathe are the emotion that’s ballooned in his throat, types out randomly,

‘I’m sick :(
19:03 A.M.’

The instant response causes him to snivel, nose runny already.

‘What’s wrong? Can I call you?
19:03 A.M.’

Louis worries his bottom lip, then, before he can back out,

‘Tummy. It’s been going on 2 days now. Just puking me guts out. I have an appt today
19:05 A.M.’

The answer is strict instructions that he is to follow. A little trickle of happiness warms him at the description of Harry’s *not-doctors-direction* tells him he still cares, that he’s here.

‘Why r you up so early?
19:15 A.M.’

The time it takes Harry to reply is enough for fatigue to sink into his bones, stitch him to the mattress as he struggles to keep his lids open. Sleep looms, but before it embezzles him, his phone flashes in announcement, somehow cozied to his belly now.

Just from this his heart skips too many beats, but the boy jerks to unlock his phone, and–
Grief splinters at his heart, the pain malevolent and spiky as the breath is knocked from his heavy lungs. Even as the hot tears spill down his face Louis thinks for Harry for my little love for our future until he rubs circles into his belly and hyperventilates into the blankets.

Except when he fumbles to kill his phone a call interrupts. Anxious, the boy doesn’t think, simply answers on impulse. “H-H-Haz,” he hiccups into the phone, strokes his tummy, his little love’s home.

There’s an eerie silence, then, an Alpha’s restless command, “Talk to me.”

“I-I-I f-f-f-feel so alone,” Louis cries brokenly into the phone, his composure shattered. “‘S j-j-j-just me and…and…” our little love, our pup. “‘S j-j-just me. Alone and clueless and tired and…” his voice is lost to patchy breaths.

“I’m still here, paradise,” Harry’s voice is raspy, hurt.

And doesn’t help, only sprinkles salt on his stab wounds because he isn’t here, he doesn’t understand, he’s not better and Louis is worse. “I-k-know!” Louis snivels as he scrubs at his tears, takes frantic gulps, silently apologising to his little love for the lack thereof air. “I know that. B-B-But you don’t understand, you–,”

“So help me understand, Louis,” the Alpha snarls, obviously upset. Louis doesn’t blame him, can’t even shore up the energy to be defensive. Like he honestly can just confess that he’s stolen his choice, he’s…he’s…Twisted, Louis is so repulsive inside. Another demon. And he has the horrific notion that the pup in his womb will be too. As demonic as its parents. But no no no, his precious little love is innocent, faultless. And he pets his tummy in another apology, thinks sincerely, like his little love can possibly hear him, just a month along, I’m sorry, little love. Papa didn’t mean it.

“I never wanted to hurt you,” the boy whispers into the phone, eyes screwed shut. “I n-n-never wanted to leave. B-B-But I need space. I n-n-need to think.”

“Think about us?” an alarmed breath that kills him. “I really fucked up, didn’t I?”

“No, ‘Az,” he mumbles, brain fried from the emotional wreckage. “Was all me this time. I just need to think ‘bout what ‘m going to do.” Then, because he just needs him, to feel his presence, “M really tired, Haz. Gonna fall asleep. W-W-Will you stay on with me even when ‘m asleep?”

There’s a hostile curse, but, “Sleep, paradise. I’m here.”

Warm, with his little to-be-family, complete if only for now, the boy whispers sleepily, accidently, “I wish better was here already.”

Before his mind can process the muffled response sleep devours him.

&&

‘Can I see you?
14:03 P.M.’

With his bottom lip between his canines, Louis’ heart throbs viciously, screams yes yes yes, come see us come see us come see us, but he types back,
I’m at the doctors.
14:04 P.M.

Another not-lie—he is seated in wait of his doctor, uneasy and nervous as he squirms, avoiding eye contact with any and every one to unconsciously cradle his belly.

Despite how he swims in the T-shirt he’d stolen before he left home, the Omega suspects it’s obvious. Because he is a very pretty pregnant boy. With the tell-tale glow that screams baby-on-board. Which doesn’t help the attention whatsoever. Louis just can’t have pigheaded Alphas coming onto him right now, can’t have word breaking that he’s been spotted in a hospital.

It’s difficult enough to avoid the cameras. At one point being papped wasn’t an issue, but with this huge secret in his tummy, and written all over his guilty face…it’s disaster in the making.

The entire situation will prove disastrous.

Already has.

Online school bores him. Confined to his flat without interaction, just him and his little love, is the absolute worst for him. Gives more room for the loneliness, an ache that so often renders him undone.

But returning to his childhood home sounds like a deathtrap. Dan is far too intuitive to stay oblivious, and Jay is far too concerned to not prompt his inevitable breakdown, for him to not come clean about what he’s done.

Ashamed, scared, the boy has secluded himself to his flat, determined to keep both himself and his little love far away from the cruel words that will be spat at them from all directions of society. It’s his mission to protect his little love from any misfortunes, to–

‘Doesn’t matter. Let me be there for you. Im losing my mind thinkin about you sick at the doctors all alone
14:11 P.M.’

Louis rereads these words twelve times, basks in the comfort, the strength his Alphas unknowingly provided him. Through misty eyes the boy replies,

‘I feel better already. Another time. Goin in now xx
14:13 P.M.’

To avoid temptation Louis pockets his phone, and thinks about how his little love is. Thinks happy thoughts rather than the constant fear that his little love is not okay, abnormal or hurt or–

No. No, his little love is happy and warm in his tummy. All nourished and healthy. A beautiful baby girl with her daddy’s pretty jade eyes. His little love is so very loved, has most of his heart already, just like her daddy.

“Louis? We’re ready for you,” the receptionist at the front desk calls cautiously. Thankful that she’s refrained from applying his surname, Louis fumbles to stance, humming with anxiety as a redhead nurse in comforting ice pink (a sign little love is a girl surely) into a spacious white room where she does a mandatory checkup. Louis bristles at the information that he’s gained just a bit of weight; though he’s reminded it’s surely all the junk and his little love.

As he sits on the hospital bed with his feet dangling above the white tile, the nurse double-checks, “And you’re here for an ultrasound, correct?”
A blush settles high on his cheeks as Louis nods, but with a soft smile she nods and takes pity on him, “Dr. Holt will be right with you, my lord.”

With a smile in return Louis doesn’t relax until she’s vanished, the door closed behind her. Lifting his shirt Louis reveals a sliver of his flat belly. “We’re gonna be fine, little love. Gonna learn all about you and take care of you and make sure nothing bad happens to you.” With that he lets his shirt fall, but as the minutes drip by the nerves intensify until he picks up his phone again,

‘What if I’m dying?
14:26 P.M.’

Once more the response is instantaneous,

‘Then we save you. I thought u said u feel better? Have they said somethin? Are you ok, paradise?
14:27 P.M.’

Louis smiles as he can hear exactly how he’d said it. First with steady control that will escalate to concern and suspicion by the time he asks if the doctors told him any news. That he’s still able to do this, still knows him, makes Louis feel like himself, a young boy in love, not just an expecting Omega.

He isn’t able to respond as a rap on the door interrupts. Shoving his phone between his thighs Louis takes a bracing breath as (who must be) Dr. Holt steps inside. An older gentleman, presumably Alpha judging by how he walks, confident and self-assured—in these four walls Holt extends a hand, “Pleased to meet you, Mr.,” he takes a peek at his laptop, then clears his throat and snatches his hand back, “My lord. It’s an absolute honor to serve as your physician.”

Oh, no.

Distress screams in his belly, but Louis plasters a polite smile and murmurs, “Louis is fine, sir. I trust this is confidential as the pact claims?” Just to make sure he didn’t spend two weeks arranging dreary paperwork and agreements to be deceived and outed.

With an almost bland smile, Holt nods, “Of course. I’m under treaty and oath, my–Louis. Be at ease. We will handle this with our best care.”

Be at ease—impossible, but it’s worth a shot. “I trust so, sir.”

“Right well,” the Alpha makes it to the high-tech machinery that looks quite daunting and sits at a stool with the laptop on the counter. “Let’s begin, shall we?”

&&

With his brain in a whirlwind of information, Louis leaves the hospital in a daze with a black-and-white print out caught in his hands. Unable to think around the beautiful disaster in his chest the boy functions on intuition, ducks his head and pretends to be an ordinary person who just came from an ordinary checkup. Like someone up above knows he just needs a moment to compose himself, Louis makes it to his car without interruption, and sits in the driver’s seat with his forehead to the steering wheel, evening his frantic breaths.

Thoughtless, the boy brings his arms round his flat belly, as if to protect his little love from himself.

The photo in his lap feels too heavy, like lead, demands his attention even as he shakes his head weakly. Evidence that he is more than himself now, that a little someone will be coming to life for
the next nine months. Might be.

Faint, in trembles, Louis swallows a sob as Holt’s words echo in his head, “We do offer abortions. Not recommended but I am obligated to inform you of the option. If in five weeks there is an abnormal result it’s requested that you consider it a plausible option. Male pregnancy is a complicated ordeal, and in most cases a risk to the parents life. I do not mean to discourage you. I do believe how young you are will work in your favor.” Over and over the word abortion appears in red hues until he’s in vicious tears, hunched over the wheel as his throat throbs with every uncontrollable weep.

God, his little love is counting on him to do the right thing. But he just doesn’t know what the right decision even is.

To terminate sounds so wrong, his previously dormant paternal instinct screams against even entertaining the idea. But he has no choice, he has to. This time he cannot be selfish, this time he has to think about his little love and Harry.

End his little love’s imminent suffering if there is something seriously wrong. Blades sever his veins.

Please his Alpha by just... and then going home to reclaim his life the way it’s meant to be. Just him and his Alpha. Little love a distant memory.

Another sob edges up his throat, tastes like hell as he bawls, and rubs his tummy. No, he can’t do it. Too selfish, too in love with the barely-there pup in his belly, too in love with the Alpha he doesn’t have any more. Too in love. Always too in love. Because that is who he is, Louis loves hard, and Louis loves forever without fault, without reason.

And he couldn’t bear to lose another precious thing in his life, couldn’t bear to take away another precious choice.

If he thought life was complicated before...the entire world has tilted on its axis and revolves around two of the most beautiful entities.

In his pocket vibrations introduce a call, but Louis can’t find his limbs, cold and numb in his havoc. But when it doesn’t stop, his frayed nerves spark with white hot anger–he doesn’t have time to talk, doesn’t have time to press pause and pretend this isn’t happening. Teeth clenched, he jerkily removes his mobile and answers blindly, “What.”

“Are you crying?” Harry’s voice is a bucket of ice water dowsing him in terror as his throat seizes up, but another feeble noise forms nonetheless. “Paradise...What happened? What did they say? Talk to me.”

But all Louis can form is pitiful whimpers, which escalates the situation, summons Alpha Harry. “Louis, talk to me or so help me God I will track you down and make you wish you had listened.” With his voice in that timbre, thousands of octaves too deep, the Omega shakes with the force of his tears, mumbles, “I’m fine. I’m fine.”

In a sense it’s true--his body is better than fine, adjusting to all these exquisite hormones his little love calls for. But oh God that’s really all that’s fine with him. Doesn’t even matter in comparison to the emotional and mental damage he’s subjected himself to.

“No, you’re not,” a controlled breath as Louis hiccups uncontrollably, nods like Harry can see him. “Don’t lie to me. Don’t act like you aren’t mine. Like I don’t know you. Tell me the truth.”

“’M n-n-not dying,” he giggles madly, knocking his forehead to the wheel as he rocks himself
back and forth, imagines Harry doing so instead. Imagines he’s being bandaged in warm strength, healed by the touch he craves so very bad right now. When there is an all-too-serious growl in warning Louis tries to do better than jokes, “I’m just…overwhelmed. Very overwhelmed. I-I think I’m having an anxiety attack.”

Silence swarms, then, “Where are you?”

At the mere idea of seeing him the boulder on his chest eases, but Louis shakes his head weakly, scrubs at his face and mumbles, “Don’t start, Harry.”

“Don’t start? Are you fucking kidding me right now? This is such a twisted joke,” the Alpha spits with a hostility that has Louis clutching his tummy with more life. Just the unstable temper to his voice seems a threat to the little life in his tummy. Right now Louis does not feel guilty, because as far as he is concerned Harry is a danger to his pup. “I am so tired of this bullshit, Louis. I am so fucking tired of being ignored. I am so fucking tired of being ignored. I am so fucking tired of being ignored. I am so fucking tired of being ignored. I am so tired of living without you. And I am tired of feeling like I’m fucking crazy!” The force in the shout shakes him to the very fragile core, and Louis takes a deep breath before, “I’m not havin’ this conversation over the phone.”

There’s a bitter laugh that knots fresh cables of anxiety in his chest. “Oh, I’m sorry, I must’ve misunderstood. So you’re not hiding from me?”

“I’m not–,” he tries feebly, only to be interrupted.

“No. No, it’s cool. It’s fucking fine. I’ll just come to you so we can have this conversation face to face. Does that work for you, paradise? ‘Cause it’s always about you, what you want, how you want it, whenever, wherever. Don’t worry your pretty little head, love.” Oh, no, no, no.

The critical promise in his fierce voice sends arctic shards of ice through his veins, solidifying his blood as he struggles to breathe, croaks, “Please, stop.”

“Not likely, pup. I’m so done bein’ your bitch. I’m done with this better bullshit. And I am so over being powerless. You manipulated me. You fucked with my head like it was a toy! Guess what, pup? You lose. You haven’t seen angry yet.”

“A-Are you threatening me?” Louis sputters, enraged with his stupid Omega’s reaction to Harry’s anger, shimmering with twisted joy at what he’s done. Like this is an accomplishment.

“Oh, no,” a smoky laugh that sends chills up his spine as Louis chews on his bottom lip, blood a tinge on his tongue. “I’m just making you a promise. ‘S sure been a while, I hope your love for promises hasn’t changed.”

“I–,” his tongue is too heavy in his mouth.

“Oh, shit, I’ve been talkin’ to you more than five minutes. I should go, hate to disrupt your busy life any more than I already have,” a belligerent lie–God, if there is one thing this Alpha loves to do, it’s disrupt his very being.

“Wait–,”

“Don’t worry, paradise, we’ll have tons of time to talk soon enough. I look forward to it.” And the line goes dead. Just like that. No hesitance, and after what feels like an eternity, no call back. In a numb state of desperation, Louis dials the one person he can think to hold his secrets with no judgment.

“Looooouuuuiss! Are you done hidin’ away in your little cave? I’ve missed ya so!”
An unstable wreck, a broken arrow, Louis confesses between gasps, “I’m…pregnant, Niall.”

There’s not a beat of silence. “You two didn’t waste any time, did ya? Jesus. Seen this comin’, I did!”

Even losers get lucky sometimes, surely.

&&

Under the black lights Louis is sprawled out on his back with his hands intertwined at his belly. As the music pulses through the four walls, the boy pinpoints his happy place and stays there with his pathetic Haz&Paradise playlist. This song is conveniently fitting between them right now–Ocean of Noise.

A shrilly laugh simmers in his tummy, energized by the five cups of tea he’s downed and his little love. But once the song fades into Fix You, the happiness in his laugh drips onto the hideous carpet (he wishes he had the motivation to rip it out and replace it with wood) and the sound becomes jagged gasps as the searing tears trip past his lashes. For just this moment in time Louis despises Coldplay, despises that he can’t promise Harry he’ll learn from his mistakes, because when it’s all said and done he’d do it all the same exact way. He will never regret his decisions.

Not because it’d save Harry, not because he’d have his little love, not even because they might not be here, in this wasteland, wandering and miserable. Really, he doesn’t know why, but he reckons it has to do with his faith that what was meant was meant. And there is no outdoing fate.

Jesus, the two of them should take a bow—for taking everything from each other, for playing their parts so well. Because their show is coming to an end, the curtains seconds from closing.

Which of them would play the victim Louis isn’t quite so sure. Of course his pride tells him Harry.

Harry Styles, the broken cokehead, fragile as ash, stubborn as gravity.

Louis Tomlinson, the naïve optimist, shatterproof glass, easily manipulated naturally by his love for an addict.

They’ve always been more than perfect to and for each other. Able to breathe best in each other’s toxins—air just could never compensate. A thousand times too heavy the melancholy sits on his chest.

Out of control, too in love in the worst ways, the boy removes his phone from his pocket, kills the music, and does what he does best: seek comfort in his Alpha. But it’s only when there’s an impassive, “I’m busy,” that Louis’ lungs threaten to crumble under the weight.

In his tiniest voice, “Still angry?”

“Livid.”

“C-Can we take a break from a-all of this? I just want to be your best friend for the last time.”

Already, his lungs are corrupted, and it’s only a matter of time the truth is revealed and his life-force becomes grey and desolate.

A heavy, ragged breath, then, crossly, “That’s not how this works. We can’t just…pretend to be
people we aren’t.”

“Why not?” the boy asks with the little fight left in him, “We used to do so all the time. ‘Member? Under the blankets during sleepovers? Get under the blankets, and I’ll do the same, and then we can just...be.”

“No, Louis, I’m in the middle of something and–,”

“Please,” a hopeless whisper.

There is no response so long Louis’s vision blurs around the edges from his inability to breathe around his defeat, but then there are distant rustles, then over the ringing in his ears Harry’s voice, ominous and flat, sounds, “Get in bed then.”

With a gulping breath of much needed oxygen the Omega stands on weak knees and scrambles into his cold bed, wormed underneath the blankets. “Okay...I-I’m here.”

There’s a sardonic snort that makes his lashes damp, but, “Who’s this?”

“This is Menace-the-Mean-Monkey. Who’s this?”

“Alliteration, nice,” there’s a thoughtful note to his voice. “This is Sorry-Sorrows-the-Snake.”


“I’d say the same, Menace-the-Mean-Monkey. What have you been up to?” At the opportunity of easy conversation, Louis’ heart flutters.

“Been drinkin’ lots ah tea. Drunk on tea.”

“No wine?” A curious breath that mocks Louis, echoes of secrecy.

Loss is a shadow over him. “No wine tonight, Sorry-Sorrow. Tea is reliable.”

“Of course,” Harry whispers, in agreement like Louis knew he’d be. “Tell me about yourself, Mean-Monkey-Menace.”

“S Menace-the-Mean–Monkey to you Sorry-Snake-Sorrow,” the boy teases, and once there’s only a prompting silence, “I’m a menace to everyone. Especially those I love the most. I don’t know how to just...be good. I don’t know when to shut or open my mouth. So I say too much or too little. I have no balance u-unless I’m with m-my A-Alpha. I fly too high when I’m with him, but he never seems to be high enough. I don’t know to do, Sorry-Sorrow. I don’t know what it is to come down, but he’s always in a crash. A-And I don’t what t-t-to think about that. W-What about you, Sorry-Snake-Sorrows.”

“S Sorry-Sorrows-the-Snake to you Mean-Monkey-Menace,” is the unsteady response that almost makes him smile. “I’m always sorry about anything I ever do. Yet I still try to hold onto the silly things. Horrible shit. I never learn. I’m in a perpetual state of mourning. Mourning my losses. I feel like I have so bloody many. I’m nothing unless I’m with my Omega. But he left me. And I don’t blame him. I know this shit isn’t supposed to be simple or easy, but Christ, it’s taken all my will to make changes in my life. I liked my life the way it was because I had what I always needed. My paradise,” his voice cracks even in a mere breath. Louis feels like screaming his lungs raw. “I think my spirit animal is a snake. Manipulative, cold, just fuckin’ wrong. I don’t remember what it is to live without using something or somebody to help get me by. I’m surrounded by a steady foundation, but just in over my head. I don’t know how to be high enough when I’m trapped underneath all this...shit in my head. I don’t know how to just be.” Oh, Haz...
Louis feels like he’s dividing, falling apart, with his darkness too slight to hold back all the white love he reaps for this beautiful disaster. Louis’ head spins with ensnared thoughts, speaks through bated breaths, “Any advice?”

“I—,” he falters, clears his throat, “You see beauty in everything but yourself. You need someone who makes you feel beautiful. And if that isn’t me—your Alpha, then you need to save yourself from any more abuse. Run as fast as you can because he’s going to try to catch you. If it’s not that then maybe you need to look back on the past sometimes, to remember who you are. What you’ve done. How happy you’ve made people with just a simple hello. A sweet look. Anything. Maybe you need to think a bit more. Or maybe just not think at all. Just think screw everyone else, this is what it is and that’s that. Are you referring to his feelings for you, when you talk about being high?”

And suddenly it’s not like he’s drowning, unable to breath, it’s like he’s caught in the eye of the storm, breathless and steady as ever. Like this, Louis only whispers, “Yes.”

“I think everyone’s got something no one else can do or see or know. I think he just wants you to know that all he has, needs, wants, is you. Reckless, a menace, bad and beautiful and just everything everyone else is not. I think you’re his number one. You make him feel alive, on fine. And it’s without you that he’s always in a crash. I…He doesn’t want your love to lose the will to live before he’s had a chance to be your Alpha, to take care of you. And I really just think…with you he feels like how you feel when you’re listening to love songs. Timeless.”

With his heart in rapid flutters, the words cascade through him, wash away any hints of ruin, and leaves him spellbound. “I…” but he cannot find words that aren’t I love you I love you I love you.

“Advice for me?”

Mindless, the boy just lets his thoughts flow, a waterfall from his lips, “Stop giving a damn about what you did, start thinking about what you really want to do, what’s going to make you happy. What’s in the past is in the past. ‘M not sayin’ forget, that’d be impossible, but don’t live in the past. You just need let bygones be bygones. Don’t let anyone have all control over you. Not even your paradise. I’m goin’ to say now you’re not a reptile. I think you’re warm, right, learnt to use any situation to your advantage. Trained. But I don’t think you ever meant to hurt anyone but yourself. And that’s where you went wrong. You can’t just hurt yourself without expecting to hurt everyone who loves you. And a lot of people love you. So you just need to… Step outside the steady foundation. Say fuck it, don’t cage yourself. You control you. And maybe you’ll always need help with your demons, maybe it’s a permanent thing…but that’s okay. Because everything gets better eventually. You just have to have faith in you.”

There’s an unsteady breath of relief Louis mirrors.

“Why are we living life this way?” A raw fury heats the question.

“I don’t think we were intended by fate. I think we just sort of happened. I think we were meant to be best friends and that’s it. But we just…fell in love in all the wrong ways. Other people couldn’t fit us right. Now, because we didn’t stop when we should’ve, because we couldn’t let go, we have to prove that fate was mistaken.”

“That’s some fairytale bullshit, Louis.”

“You broke character,” the boy says just because. Because he can’t bear to face his insatiable fury. Just wants to stay like this, calm, okay.

“I’ve relapsed seven times since you left me.”
Dread pours over him as his hand clamps over his mouth to stifle his shattered noise. Protective, Louis flattens his free hand on his pudgy belly, and shakes his head wildly.

“You just can’t love an addict, can you, paradise?” An acidic chuckle that sends him into mental hypothermia, “See the plot twist is you’re my addiction all on your own. I will always be an addict. Goodnight, pup.” Just like that Louis is abandoned to his devastation, his cruel thoughts.

_I will always love an addict._

It’s a veritable avowal, one tattooed to his heart, branded to his brain, scored into his frail skin. All the proof is in his tummy.

_I will always love an addict._

Louis can feel his heartbeat taking him down, and for the moment he’ll sleep alright.

&&

In flight the wrong always does feel right—more so than it ever should.

A volcano simmers slowly in his chest, the remorse prompting its inevitable eruption. The anger is red hot magma seeping from his very pores. A fire of confidence disabling his pride as Harry saunters into Parliaments educational branch. Just in time for class exchange.

The mosaic floors under his steps do not tremble with a mental malfunction. The gargantuan structure does not waver. Pillars grounded, walls inert. In this split moment the blur of bodies dissolve, salt in the electrical waters of his very fucked mind.

He can almost see himself trudging through the halls in all the stages of his life spent here. A twelve year old aiming to be an Alpha as supreme as his father, a twelve year old who only seemed to remember he was a child when a ten year old was prattling in his ear and provoking him. Onto fifteen, with almost the same cherub face, marking straight into lines of excruciating fires and taking more bullets in efforts of shielding that same sublime little boy. Seventeen with multiple gunshot wounds that refused to heal, leaving bloody trails only that same boy seemed to see, slipping up constantly. Up until nineteen, greeting the monster and dragging his feet through these halls, high and _happy_, with an angel behind him, trying to show him right—too bad he just couldn’t see it.

Oddly enough it’s the silence that brings him back to reality. A silence he’s conjured up with his presence. Under the attention his skin crawls. Horror, curiosity, fear, _hunger_.

Yeah, of course every innocent Council student wants such excitement, a walk on the dark side. He wishes he could find his voice; tell them that once they’re out of the light they’re fucking lost. They’ll wish they knew where the fuck they were going.

Artificial light just ain’t enough. Real undiluted sunshine is the way to out of the dark. His just so happened to be Louis, but _fuck if it was real to him_.

“It wasn’t. _If it was real to him he’d still be here, _” the voice tells him with a delighted edge.

The glare that darkens his stare is meant for the monster in his head, but obviously misled the cattle cringes.

Madly, the Alpha thinks it’d be _fucking funny_ to repeat the scene he’d set all those years ago. Right before he’d dropped out. Even now the sight of Louis’s horrified expression is engraved in
his head, the exact moment he knew he’d lost his mind, coming here with a gun. The moment society came to accept the same, detaining him despite Louis’s panicked protests because, “he wasn’t going to hurt anyone!” and “do you know who you’re touching! Leave him alone!” until he’d been escorted straight to the penitentiary.

Sickened with the recollection, he’s in motion, trudging up the wide stairway to the rotunda and through the corridors until he’s met with Guidance. Stuck, he stands there with his hand on the knob until someone opens the door and shuffles him backwards, “Oh! I’m sorry!” A familiar face stares back at him, Alana–she looks the same, all round attractive features and inky curls. “Harry? You’re back?” Seems not all has changed. Seems he is still himself. Or so he appears so.

“Sorta,” he mutters, blinking like an idiot as the female Omega beams. Charming. Alana is a charming girl, sought after by most Council Alphas. It’s obvious why.

“Wow! Stoked! How are you, babe? It’s been forever.”

A smile touches his mouth, stuns him into silence though this doesn’t faze Alana, who has never been attuned to others, looping their arms and tugging him. “C’mon! Let me refresh your memory,” she teases with a suggestive look. Not flirtatious, but innocent in her attempts to help. Much like Louis, Alana is too interested in helping strays.

Which must be the reason Harry goes with her–, “So what’s been up? You just disappeared? I reckon it has somethin’ to do with…what’s ‘is name again?”

Just like that the Alpha stiffens, but she knocks into him, “You know I’m joking! I’m not insulting your boy, Styles.”

Your boy.

“He’s not mine,” he blurts blandly, more to himself than Alana, though of course she hears him. More startled than Harry anticipated her head whirs in his direction, and wide blue eyes regard him with a compassion he doesn’t deserve.

No matter how he wills a reaction, staring into her blue’s much the same, there is none. No urge to wash his soul, to drown, to be. The shape, the shade, the essence, behind her gaze could never compete with paradises’. “No?” she tries for nonchalance. “You’ll find someone else. You’re a catch.” Mental instability is a catch? Before he can respond, she’s wrapped herself around him, slim arms around his waist, head buried in his chest. Of course she’s soft, she’s warm, and she’s entirely platonic. Yet it’s still different.

There is no response from his Alpha, just a low sigh that echoes louder than any growl. So it’s true, an Alpha only bonds once. Impotent in every way for anyone else.

But the sensation of another figure, small and kind, comforts him enough that he slowly returns the embrace, circling her waist and–, “I would ask but I don’t want to intrude. I’ll just tell it like I saw it. I saw soulmates. That kind of bond is said to be eternal, innit?” Yeah right.

“Myth.”

“Always the pessimist.”

“Realist. I’ve lea–” but Harry doesn’t have the chance to finish because someone jabs at his shoulder, demands with a seething edge, “What the fuck is this?”

Growling under his breath, the Alpha breaks the hug to turn to Niall, staring blankly as the Irish boy stabs him in the chest repeatedly with his index, snarling, “What do you think you’re doing
right now?”

“Where is he?”

“You’re asking me after–,”

“I…uh I’ll go. Call me,” Alana interjects quietly, sparing him an apologetic look (it’s not personal, she has a reputation to maintain. There is no reason for her involvement in this anyway) before she blends into the still audience.

“Listen, can we do this somewhere a bit more private?”

“No, fine right ‘ere. What are you doing here, Harry?” Niall asks through clenched teeth. Irritation spikes in his bloodstream as his jaw works. “I don’t have to answer to you, Niall. I did nothing wrong.”

“Except rub all up on Alana, who’s been after your title since you could talk.” Just barely reigning his temper, Harry answers tightly, “It was a friendly hug.”

“Oh, and what do you think Louis will have to say about this friendly hug?” *Fuck if I know.*

“It doesn’t matter,” he bites back, holding his gaze with the stark warning in his eyes.

An appalled expression crosses the lean Omega’s features before his face turns crimson with disgust. Like he’s committed the damnedest crime, like he’s so fucking involved in his life. “Don’t look at me like I am so fucked up. I didn’t do shit wrong, Niall. You don’t know me. You don’t know shit.”

“I don’t know shit? I know I’m done with this bullshit. This has been going on ten years too long. It’s time you got your shit together. *Everyone babies you!* Like you can do nothing for yourself. *Especially Louis.* And it’s bullshit! You’re not a fuckin’ pup! You don’t even act like one! But you let this happen! You let Louis make decisions for you! What the fuck is wrong with you?”

There is nothing but Niall, with his loud fucking Irish mouth. Canines bare, the Alpha snarls, “I’m not a pup, but I am not a fucking God either, Niall. Shove your opinions up your bloody arse ‘cause they mean *shit to me.* All that matters to me right now is being better for someone who decided not to be here to help! What the fuck am I supposed to do? Force him? Please, since you know it all, *why don’t you fucking tell me*?”

Under the force of his anger Niall flinches, but unlike the person he defends so obstinately, refuses to back down. “And still you try to have everyone else make the decision for you! Jesus, what kind of Alpha are you?”

The blow to his pride is enough to fill his lungs with the black ash marking the volcano’s eruption. “One that doesn’t give a fuck about anyone but my *Omega.*” In seconds Harry’s turned on his heels and stormed away with the volcano wrecking tremors through his body.

Without a struggle he fades into the background, an Alpha bound to have what’s *his.*

&&

A little relieved gasp escapes him as the morning sickness leaves him a trembling mess.
Arms like limp noodles Louis almost cannot manage to turn on the tap to the claw foot tub. It’s some miracle that he even sheds his clothes before sinking into the filling bath, warmth caressing his goose bump ridden skin. With a pleased sigh Louis lies there, submerged from head to tone as he holds his breath, listens to his heartbeat slow under the soothing rush of water in his ears.

Too soon he jerks upright, gasping sweet air as his arm rounds his too round belly. Stupid, that was stupid. Little love needs air. Over and over Louis thinks this under his breaths are even, until he’s regained control of his limbs.

Methodic the Omega washes his skin with care, three times over, then does a quick scrub of his hair before stepping out. Unlike last night he does not almost trip and go into near cardiac arrest, this morning he is especially careful as he towel dries, pattering about on the carpet to his bedroom.

For no reason other than he wants to feel pretty, Louis rummages through his knickers, and pale pink ends up in his hands. Through tears and a hotwired heart the Omega wiggles into the lacy garment, pleased that the boyshort’s still hug his bum like they’re supposed to, though when he looks at his belly a new spell is cast.

Seven weeks—only seven weeks, but the roundness of his tummy appears too perfected. Nearing the curve that only pregnancy calls for. The swell isn’t quite so obvious, it’s subtle and soft-spoken. Careful with his little love, Louis carries his fingertips over the firm, curiously tough round. Smiles like he’s won the world because in these moments he has. “Good morning, little love. Gonna be a good day, innit?” he whispers to his, Harry’s, pup, then rubs a soft circle, wishing he could just kiss his tummy, but he’s not that bendable. It’s just so tempting, and–

Disrupting, his alarm blares and Louis jumps a bit, mumbles, “Shut up,” but doesn’t dismiss it just in case he gets caught up again.

In record time he’s finished dressing, daring to wear a shirt that hugs his tummy just a bit, squeezing into black tights and slipping into scuffed Vans before snatching his phone from the pillows and at last dismissing the irritating alarm.

At the mirror Louis bats at his damp fringe, but quickly becomes irritated and retrieves his keys to step outside the flat, locking it behind him.

Humming, the Omega makes it to his car, opens the driver’s side and huffs at the coffee cups in the holders, taking them in either hand (they’re still full because Louis decided after the first sip it was quite disgusting) and turns to make it towards the rubbish bins at the–

Frozen, Louis stares at the black Range Rover. It’s parked across the street, and seemingly unoccupied. Nerves claim him as his heart pounds in his chest. In this state Louis can’t help but pass the rubbish bins to double check, to ease his panic as he crouches to peer at the right side of the vehicle, where the paint should be etched with –

“Paint job,” a deep rasp explains from beside him.

With a startled gasp the Omega lurches backwards, effectively dropping the cups so coffee splatters and stains the ground, his feet. Adrenaline is hot in his veins as Louis braces on the car for support, knees weak and trembly. Around the wild beat of his heart the Omega hears nothing, but his vision is crystal clear as he dares to lift his stare from the set of leather boots that must’ve cost a fortune, up the length of his legs, black skintight and ripped at the knees. Up his long torso in a patterned coffee coloured top (ironic) reveals the heads of the swallows and the necklaces (already he itches to wear them, just because they’re Harry’s). And his face. Of course that’s the difficult part. To actually see him in all his glory, features striking with all his frizzy curls framing
his face.

A split second is all the time needed for Louis to know, to panic like never before. The stark rage lurks in his unnervingly vibrant stare. Under the force of emotion Louis’ brain catches fire. “H-How?” the breath leaves his parted lips. “I n-n-never…I…How?” God, he’d had his files secured like the Pentagon.

With a twist of his mouth Harry leans on the car, crosses his arms (Louis tries his best not to notice the bulge of his biceps, but it’s not fair) and stares straight ahead, in thought. “I tracked your phone.”

Louis gapes as his heart plummets straight to his belly. “How could you just….do that?”

Looking over, the Alpha smiles, a plastered expression he’s seen one too many times in the past. “No, how could you,” his voice breaks, cracks, shatters, but there is no sign that he’s noticed, that he felt it, instead his smile widens.

Ice sears his veins, terror crowding his throat as he swallows.

“How could you just….do that?”

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“I, ah, I have somewhere to be.” Agitated, Louis’ arms circle his baby bump, to shield his little love from his or her mental daddy. Mercifully, this action does not seem to catch his attention.

There is no hesitance, no consideration, and no reaction that he’s heard at all. Around his panic, backing up in fumbling steps, Louis presses, so weak with his Omega’s want, “I need s-s-space. I n-n-need to just breathe. I n-n-need…I know you’re upset–,”

With an enraged growl the Alpha captures him around the waist and Louis is too stunned by the sudden movement to even react before he’s pinned to the car. Too stunned by the sensation of Harry’s body against his, lean and solid and achingly Alpha. Too stunned by his scent wrecking through his insides, intoxicating him like never before (is that okay for his little love?).

Crowded. Trapped. Louis wants to kiss him. Wants to stretch up and pour his love into the contact and whisper the sweetest apologies at the shattered blaze to his stare, the bleak hurt almost devoured by his anger. “Upset?” his voice is raw with rage. “That doesn’t cut it, paradise.”

Louis almost shrinks from the Alpha in his voice, but squares his shoulders and shoves at his shoulders. A hand takes his fast, his numb hand that only flares with sensation when Harry brings it to his mouth, runs his lips over his knuckles, then smiles before backing away in three steps.

The lack thereof resistance might be the scariest part. “I’ll lead the way, paradise.”
“W-We’re not goin’ inside,” the boy protests but in a confident stride Harry’s started for the flat, holding up one hand and jangling his keys.

In a cold rush Louis looks down at his hands, as if the keys that are obviously with Harry might be in his hands still. Never has he felt so powerless with him, so out of control.

Through furious breaths, the Omega jogs over to where he walks through the drive and hisses, “You’re trespassing.”

“Am I? You livin’ with another Alpha now?”

At the accusation in his tone Louis falters, the hilt of that dagger protruding from his heart. With more Omega in his voice, Louis snivels, “H-How could you say that?”

Without a glance Harry sniffs, long and hard, in answer, then stops at the bright red front door, and effortlessly unlocking the locks. The blood drains from his face as the Alpha storms inside, and slowly he follows, but it’s like an investigation. Rudely, he searches the entire flat, storming and inhaling and when he finds nothing he pins him with a demanding look, “He just visits then? Is that it, paradise?”

Louis closes the door softly behind him, whispers, “I don’t have anyone but you.”

“You don’t even have me,” he sneers as Louis locks the doors, and rests his forehead on the jamb, hiding his belly and avoiding his stare.

“Then why are you here?” his voice quivers.

“Go in the room.”

Chills run up his spine but Louis whispers, “What? Came here to fuck me? Just wanted to make me take another knot like some desperate whore and then leave?”

There’s a harsh laugh. “Don’t twist this shit on me. I didn’t leave you to begin with. I never would have.”

But the Omega refuses to give in, knows once he’s in that bedroom, he’s doomed, so he whispers in his most feeble voice, “I didn’t wanna leave…I didn’t want to, but I w-w-was scared, and I was upset because….” I’m pregnant. “Because you didn’t bond me.” Somewhat true. Louis is still quite upset over that.

“You could have talked to me. You chose not to. Get in the room.” At the steady demand heat coils in his belly, traitorous Omega body, easily enticed hormones, wash over him as he leans a bit on the door. “I d-didn’t want you to feel obligated to bond me.”

“I already bonded you.”

Louis shivers, then clarifies weakly, “I mean the bite. The bonding bite.”

“You’ve been mine for ten years don’t try to tell me you thought I didn’t want you when I was knotting you and pumping come into your too fertile body.”

“You were all out of control Alpha! You animals can’t control yourselves.”

“Don’t fucking go there, Louis. I was prepared to leave. You told me to stay. And I did because I wanted it. Me. Not my Alpha.”
“You n-never wanted me before,” the boy snivels on a last resort of pity. “I-It was always your Alpha attracted to my Omega. That’s it. You never–,”

A low growl reverberates off the walls as Louis’ eardrums tremble, but he’s jerked around by a heavy hand on his hip and pressed to the door. “Pup,” the Alpha drawls, tight to him, even his baby bump. “Smell me.”

Lashes damp Louis snivels, and bites his lip against a whimper at the distinct scent, dark and Alpha, screaming ownership, seeping into the Omega’s pores. “What do you smell, paradise?”

“Y-You,” Louis snivels as a hand cups his jaw.

"Look at me.”

Unable to stem his wanton Omega, Louis obeys and lifts his damp lashes. Just like that he’s trapped in the mossy plains of Harry’s alight scare, burning with the intensity. "I wish I could have stopped it. I wish I had the choice of which Omega I bonded. I wish I’d had control over us. It was always your choice, never mine.”

Darts, sharp and cruel, pierce his fragile heart as the circumstances of his life become a distant memory. In this moment Louis is not wrong, and he lashes back. Baring his little canines the Omega shoves at him with as much strength as he possesses. Obviously no expecting this Harry stumbles backwards, but before he can get far Louis backhands him so hard his body jerks and staggers. Dull, his hand stings, but that's the least of his pain. "You want a fuckin' choice?" he shrills at the top of his working lungs. Slowly, the Alpha looks at him with wild, blown eyes, flared nostrils and blood smeared on his mouth. A proper demon. "You've always had the choices! Louis or the drugs? Louis or the whores? Louis or anything else? And every fucking time, Harry, every fucking time you chose anything else! You never chose me to begin with! You chose to fuck me! That is all I deserve, yeah? You had your fucking priorities straight! And now I have mine so don't you dare...I have more than myself to think of! And it's funny, you can leave right now! Get the fuck out! I don't need you, Harry! But I will always have you!"

Furious, Louis stems his traitorous tears, chest heaving with his erratic breaths. Without warning the Alpha starts for him, footsteps creating earthquakes as panic reels through him in every direction.

With his fight drained, flight pitches in and Louis bolts for the kitchen. Just before Harry can grab him, Louis spins and puts the island between them, heartbeat creeping up his throat as their gazes bore. “Don’t run from me. I’m not leaving. I am not fucking letting go. If I leave you’re coming with me.”

Louis’ heart clenches, turns itself inside out. “You should. We’re toxic to each other.”

“I. Need. You.”


“I’ve always needed you. You said I didn’t. You assumed I didn’t. Because I fucked up. I know I fucked up. I’m telling you right now I fucked up! And I’m sorry. God damn it, paradise, I am so sorry! I’m sorry I hurt you time and time again. I’m sorry I didn’t give it my all. I’m sorry I didn’t try hard enough. I’m sorry I wasn’t there. I’m sorry I tried to make everything else more important! I’m sorry I didn’t believe in you. I’m sorry I didn’t fucking tell you! But starting now I won’t stop telling you.” The fierce sincerity in his voice is reflected in his wild stare.
Like never before Louis craves to see into his heart, all the cracks and broken parts, the shadows
in the light. For his little love the Omega tries to keep his emotions banked and at bay, needs more
than words. “H-H-How many relapses since last?”

“None,” the Alpha answers seriously, another flare of sincerity to his eyes. “Not since the first two
weeks. I…I…Never again. I swear to you. I will never do it again.”

“I can’t believe you. I can’t, I’m sorry,” Louis whispers with his heart threatening to crumble
under the weight of his devastation. Before Harry can respond the boy launches himself in the
opposite direction, out of the kitchen and down the hall, towards his bedroom on instinct.

A thrill runs down his spine at the approaching footsteps. Anticipating this, Louis bolts, grateful to
his balance for keeping him upright rather than tumbling to the floor. Even so the Omega doesn’t
make it. Taken around the waist by an iron band that gives him no room for escape. Easily, he’s
pinned to the wall, panting as Harry shouts, “God damn it, Louis, don’t run from me!” A fist
shoves through the drywall right beside his head but before there is any serious damage the Alpha
drops his head and takes his hand back with little crunches in protest from the wall. With a
heartrending sound Harry whispers raggedly, “You believe in everything but me…I don’t know
what else I can do to make you understand I can’t live sanely without you.”

Panting, Louis lets his head fall back to the wall with a dull thud he doesn’t feel around the
tornado of emotion. Desire yearns low low low in his belly as Harry struggles to reign his temper.
Christ, but Louis is just as bad, so turned on by the dominant anger he’s summoned in his Alpha.
“Don’t run from me ever again,” a controlled command. “I’m going to let go, but if you fucking
run…Don’t run, paradise.”

In surrender the boy nods shallowly, like he’s not thrilled for the chase, like he’s not going to clash
with a volcano the second he’s swept up in his own tornado. The second Harry’s retreated, Louis
licks his lips, peers through thick lashes as he runs a shaky hand through his unruly waves.

Mindless, Louis rides with his anger, tears towards his room, and makes it. Well, sorta. Again an
arm wrenches him around in the doorway, so he faces him with a little yelp, struggling (because
he’s gained weight and must be too heavy) though it’s futile. With a demanding growl he’s
hitched up Harry’s body, whimpering breathlessly as his large hands splay on his bum, squeezing
his flesh like he owns him.

“Tried to play nice,” Harry says through animalistic growls, the sounds flooding him with an
indescribable heat. Closing his legs around Harry’s waist, the Omega mumbles as hot tears ooze
past his lashes. “’M sorry. ’M sorry, Alpha.”

“What. What are you sorry for,” Harry demands, nosing up his throat and growling so fiercely the
vibrations touch every fragment of his body. “Who ’ave you been with, pup?”

Without permission the boy tosses his head backwards, hands tight on the broad of his shoulders,
anchoring them. So needy, the levees burst, and, “’M sorry for bein’ bad. ’M s-s-sorry for
breaking my promise and leavin’.”

“You are so bad,” Harry breathes hotly into his jaw, the bonding scent wrecking through him. “A
bad boy. Drive me mad.”

In a blur Louis is carried over to the bed though Harry sits at the edge, easily maneuvering so he is
splayed out in his lap, gasping into the sheets. Lithe fingers sneak underneath the waistline of his
tights. Trapped in the spandex material his cock throbs, leaking already as Louis whimpers,
perking his ass out for his Alpha, already so wet for him. “Gonna let me have you, pup?”
Mewling, Louis nods wildly into the sheets, grasping the material in both hands.

“Answer me, paradise.”

“Yes,” the boy pants, need whorled in his belly, “Yes, Alpha.”

“Mmm,” a smoky hum that causes him to tussle impatiently. A hand bears low on his back, and Louis whimpers, jerking his hips so the friction on his cock urges the pleasure so much closer.

“Hold still, pup.” Pup. At the word Louis becomes all too aware that his baby bump is pressed tight to Harry´s thighs.

Feverish emotion wells in his heart and spills into his veins. Except then the Alpha is urging his hips up with one hand on his hip, pealing the tights down to reveal his ass, creamy in his lacy panties. A groan rips through the room, painting his skin in a self-conscious flush. “So sexy, pup. Criminal to be so pretty. Who’s this for? Were you goin’ to see whoever’s been scenting you?”

At the stark upset in his Alpha’s voice Louis wants to scream, scream his lungs out in defeat. Except the truth is lodged in his throat. “Aven’t been with anyone, Alpha. Nobody else. Just you. Only you.” A hand slaps his ass, hard and heavy enough that tears spring to his eyes, a pitchy, “Ah,” tumbling from his wet lips.

“Your scent says somethin’ else,” Harry’s words are raspy, and Louis tries to peer up through blurry eyes but is dazed into pliancy when his hand slaps again, biting at his flesh. “Is this even real to you, pup? Was this ever real?”

In this moment Louis hates him, hates that he knows just how to loosen his tongue and get him to pour his soul out to him when he wouldn’t otherwise. “Yes.”

A large hand strokes his sore flesh as Harry hums, tracing the frilly trim. “Wrong. It was real to me.” Obviously aiming to punish him Harry lifts his hand from his stingy ass, but he hisses as anticipation winds in his tummy, “Don’t you dare punish me for my feelings!”

In a nanosecond Harry’s demeanor has altered, scarily composed as Louis pants, craning his neck to look at him with his damp fringe in his eyes. Gentle, his hand, hot and heavy, palms at his aching flesh as Louis moans brokenly, flesh in flames.

“Tell me, then. Pup, tell me how you feel.” One hand fondles his right cheek, squeezes and kneads as his fingers delve between his rounds, lace grazing his fluttering hole. “Uuh,” the whine is torn from his lungs as the boy tries to hike his hips, throbbing with sensation. “You’re my boy, hmm? Right?” Unstable, demanding.

“Yeah,” the boy assures him breathily, “Yeah, your boy.”

“So talk to me, pup,” a ragged breath as Harry slowly tugs the panties down to bunch where the rounds of his ass meet his thighs. “Wanna know what’s goin’ on in that twisted mind.”


“Why?” Fingers dip between his ass, the rough pads dragging over his throbbing flesh as Louis mews, fresh bouts of need tormenting him. “Why Louis?” Another blow.

Sobs wreck through him as the Omega trembles, “B-B-Because I need you to be bett’ah for us!”
Growls, hungry and pleased, ring in his sensitive ears as two fingers sink into his tiny hole. Subjected to the intrusion his flesh weeps, burning and drenched, as Louis writhers.

“So pretty, pup. So perfect. Gonna take care of you,” so raw the heat comes together with an intensity that leaves him clawing at the sheets.

Little mewls form in his throat as Harry builds a searing rhythm with his fingers. Driving into him over and over, prodding mercilessly at his prostate until the energy in his belly comes apart in a vivid rush. A scream comes from somewhere in his lungs, muffled by the sheets as his cock pulses with his orgasm, pleasure adding to the pregnant glow that’s coated his skin.

Caught in the sensation, the Omega only mewls when Harry tugs his fingers away from his clenched up hole. Without warning Louis is pinned to his back, thighs spread as the Alpha settles over him, heavy and hot. With bruising intensity Harry’s mouth closes over his. Eager, the boy parts his mouth, moans breathily when Harry’s tongue dominates, teasing him until Louis fists his waves.

“Please,” he begs shamelessly, desperate to be caught on his knot, trapped and achingly full.

A low groan sends shivers up his spine as Harry drags his mouth, wet and practiced, along his jaw, sucking viciously. Sensation alight in his bloodstream Louis pants as his mouth travels deliciously, “Yes. Yes. Make love to me, Alpha, make love to me.”

In a fluid movement Harry sits up on his knees between his legs, shrugs out of his shirt. Louis stares with his heart an erratic drum in his ears, all wiry muscle, inked and scarred and– Canines bared, the Alpha takes the hem of his shirt and rucks the material up before the Omega can protest.

Paralyzed, Louis watches through round eyes as Harry’s wild stare flickers down to his belly. Blinks in time to catch Harry recoiling, tumbling right over the edge of the mattress and onto the floor with a chilling thud. Alarmed, the Omega bolts upright, and crawls to the edge and peers down nervously.

Sprawled out on the carpet the Alpha is motionless, not facing him with his arms at his sides, legs bent awkwardly. “H-Haz?” Louis whispers, leaning forward just a bit. “Y-You okay, baby?”

Traitorous, his Omega ditches him, scurrying into his minds darkest corner. Faced with the consequences of his actions, Louis almost wishes there was such a thing as mind over matter. Without a doubt he would will himself to evaporate in his thin air this very moment.

Awash with terror Louis’ arm circles his belly, opening his mouth to speak again when Harry seems to reawaken, jerking upright to rasp, “Paradise, I think you’re pregnant.”

Louis diverts his gaze, snivels as anxiety bathes him, “J-J-Just a bit.”

Tension builds with the painful silence until Louis dares to glance up at him. Locked on him, fury smolders in Harry’s blown stare. Around him the world falls apart, dread pouring in arctic acceptance. “You don’t have to stay,” Louis tells him, barbwire constricting around his heart. “I d-d-don’t expect you to…Y-You need to focus on you, and that’s okay, I won’t–,”

A menacing growl tears through the room, silencing him. Cringing, Louis doesn’t try to stop his tears from spilling down his paper white cheeks. “I-I’m s-s-sorry.” Dismay lines his tight throat, “I n-n-nev’ah m-m-meant to–,”

“Fuck. You.” Two words. A wrecking ball to the chest. Frantic, Louis hugs himself in attempts to save his fragile heart from its inevitable collapse. “You lied to me.”
You’ve lied to me plenty,” Louis mumbles because he can’t control his bloody mouth.

“Fuck. You.”

“You’ve obviously fucked me already.” Oh, no, stop stop stop a tiny frightened voice blares in his head. But oh God the boy can’t, doesn’t know what’s wrong with him, doesn’t know why he is provoking Harry like this. His brain seems to have run away from him. Leaving him to this tornado of emotion, out of control and lost.

“Don’t fucking mouth me,” the threat is palpable.

A nervous habit, Louis strokes circles into his tummy, yanking the blankets to hide his little love. “Why change the habit of a lifetime?”

“I could throttle you right now.”

“Wouldn’t be the first time. Well, first time awake I suppose,” Louis says quietly.

“So that’s it, huh?” Venom laces his every slow word. “All this to just get back at me? Let’s see just how many times Harry can fuck up? A game. All good fun.”

Louis struggles to breathe around the sobs wrecking up his throat, “N-N-No. I-I-I-,”

“Shut up. Shut the hell up, Louis or I will make you.”

A senseless retort creeps up his throat, but Harry just, “You must love watching me fall apart without you. You must love that you complete me. Just as fucked up. You love that you are the only addiction I can’t deny. Look at me when I’m talking to you!”

Helpless to the vicious command the Omega obeys, unable to truly see him as his eyes steadily stream scalding emotion, and unable to truly express these emotions because his mouth is cavern of sorrow. “God, what the fuck am I to you? When the fuck did this happen?” As his nose drips Louis tries to form the words in his lungs, but only pitiful snivels come to. “I have tried over and over and over! But I am tired of being someone I’m not for you! I am so tired telling myself everything’s okay. Because it’s not! Nothing is okay unless I….” the words lapse with heaving breaths, then, “This is me, Louis. THIS IS ME! I am fucked up, I am broken, and I’m a fucking mess! But I finally fucking found someone!

“To be honest I didn’t come here to make you cry. I didn’t come here to even listen to anything you said. ‘Cause I’m done being the silent one with all the apologies. I didn’t come here to get you into bed. I didn’t even come here to beg you to come home. I c-c-came here,” with rapid blinks Louis sees with agonizing clarity how he’s hurt him. In his chest his heart implodes, excruciating and wrong, as Harry stands there with his hand shoved in his unruly curls, bloodshot stare shattered with stray tears, “I j-just came here to tell you I found someone. Hoped you’d see him too, b-b-but apparently not even just me is enough. I came here to tell you I’m ready to move on if that’s what I have to do to make you happy. And even though I will move on it doesn’t mean I don’t still love you, because oh fuck I do, you’ll always have my heart…but I f-f-found someone. And it did take everything I have, took you away...I just wanted you to know that. B-B-But I didn’t expect...I didn’t expect...any of this.”


Gentle, an unbearably large hand cups the right side of his face. Under the force of Harry’s touch, the Omega comes apart at the seams, aware that he doesn’t deserve comfort because this is his fault. Desperate, Louis brings his hands up to Harry’s wrist, clings to him as his body trembles
uncontrollably with the regret railing through him. “You know I hate it when you cry,” an unsteady breath. Louis only squeezes his eyes shut, scalding tears oozing past his lashes. “Breathe, paradise, breathe.”

Somehow the Omega listens, gulping breaths around his broken noises. “H-H-Harry, I-I-I,” he tries uselessly as Harry simply quiets him, “Just breathe. We have time to talk. I’m not leaving. Just breathe.”

Somewhere in this disaster Louis’ lets his Alpha win, and doesn’t feel like the loser.

&&

As the magma in his veins cools, Harry gathers his feeble, pregnant Omega in his arms, sits cross-legged on the bed and holds him around the waist as his heart-rending sobs are muffled into his shoulder.

Pregnant. With his pup.

At the mere thought heat rips up his spine–nearly burying the circumstances of their current impasse. Another devastating noise rings in his ears as Louis clings to him, “I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry.” Oh, baby, I am too.

Except, no, he is over apologizing to this boy. Because fuck, words like sorry mean nothing compared to the actions that prove it. Voice lost, Harry buries his nose in Louis’ feathery hair, and inhales softly. Restrains himself from recoiling, the scent nothing like what he’s come to live on, much too rainy, fresh and entirely too neutral. Except even now the scent of the boy’s need lingers, teasing him.

Emotions scattered, distorted and overwhelming, the Alpha screws his eyes shut and returns to the time he’d first caught the distinct scent of Louis’ desire.

Wired, the Alpha waits for the lit up manor to blend into the night, an ominous sensation streaking through him at the shadows cast to his peripheral vision. Shadows that stalk him every so often–maliciously screwing with the threads of his sanity. Grounding his teeth Harry remains motionless, propped on the manor’s exterior, adjacent to the glass bridge stretching some measure in guidance to the third house.

Coked up, time escapes him until, with a blink, the Alpha realizes its lights out, obscurity all that remains to show for the ostentatious fortress Louis resides.

Summoned, a little silhouette appears before him. Before his vision can adjust an achingly soft body steals his attention. Stretched on his tiptoes the Omega’s slim arms circle his neck, a soft kiss planted on his ticking jaw, “You’re so good to me. I love you.”

A frenzied heat lances through his veins but Harry chains his Alpha to circle his pudgy waist. “Tell me.” Of course Louis must know he wants an explanation for his frantic call to come and get him at nearly midnight.

“Grounded. Fightin’ with M-Mum again,” the boy mumbles, breath warm on his jaw. The sensation sets him on edge, makes him want more. That’s never what he needs. “Take me away, Haz.” Lately the Omega seems to be more trouble than anything else, running so fucking hot and rarely ever cold. An unbroken hurricane of emotion. But surely that’s to be expected of a teenage
Humming low in his throat Harry breathes, “Sneaking out? Bad boy.” This comment earns him a little giggle as Louis shoves at his shoulder, “Oh shut up,” giggling like he isn’t completely serious. For the Omega’s inability to make distinctions between his teasing and his Alpha bullshit, he has never been so grateful.

With a playful growl Harry takes him around the waist, so he’s facing away from him, head on his shoulder. “Shouldn’t let Alphas lure you into the night, paradise.” Oddly, a little shiver runs through his little body before Louis smiles up at him, “Whatta ya goin’ to do, Harry? Ravish me?” The soft lilt to his reedy voice is all it takes for his thoughts to stray places they shouldn’t, trousers too tight with how fat his cock becomes.

“I parked across the field. Start walking,” he orders, staring straight ahead as Louis ‘umph’s, grumbles adorably, “You’re no fun,” but mercifully obeys, such a good boy for him. Christ, if he’d thought his heart couldn’t beat any quicker, he was wrong. So fucking wrong. Right now its seconds from running away from him as they stumble through the field, Louis’ giggles spurring on his lack thereof grace, caught up in the pretty sound, how the night seems as happy to see the light as Harry.

Twenty minutes too long leave them as they arrive at the car. Taking his dainty hand Harry leads him to the passenger side, opens the door as Louis snivels haughtily, “I can open my own damn door.” And fuck he’s sure he can, but he lives on the shy looks the boy gifts him with as he settles in, lives on taking care of him in any little way he’s allowed.

On a whim, the Alpha starts to the drive, steadies his gaze on the road and sings to his song, belting the high notes when Louis makes fun of him, “Sing it, Britney!” Shame doesn’t exist with Louis, and he’d do anything to make him laugh when he’s upset (because he is. No matter the smile, the jokes, Louis is very secure in his determination to seem untouchable, made of steel. That he isn’t, that he is, is all the beauty in Harry’s twisted head).

Like this Harry does his best to ignore him. Ignore the symptoms of Louis-Love. Ignores how his heart races with emotion he cannot comprehend at this point. Ignores the dull hum in his veins, conjured by his presence. Ignores the notion that this is meant.

The problem is Louis isn’t meant for him. Not in this life, anyway. It’s damn hard to get that through to his bloody Alpha.

Out by the pier on the outskirts of London, Harry kills the engine, and asks quietly, “Care for a stroll?”

“Why yes, fine Sir,” the boy purrs in a rather perfected posh accent, mirroring that of his Mother’s.

Tossing him a wolfish grin Harry says, “Wait,” and leaves the car to round the left side of the car, opening the door and taking his extended hand, running his mouth over his knuckles. “Mind if I court you?”

In his seat Louis’ eyes round adorably, sapphire in the night. Anxiety is cast to them, and Harry swallows around his regret to explain, “For the night. Just wanna make you feel bett’ah.”

Licking his pretty lips, the boy nods, and with a thrill of anticipation the Alpha shows him out, holding his damp hand firmly. “’S goin’ around school that,” Louis mumbles with a feeble note to his voice, mouth to his arm, “you’re courting Alana Atkins.”
Tension grasps his shoulders as he forces himself to keep a steady pace, asking quietly, “Mmm. And?”

“Is it true?”

“I suppose. I haven’t explicitly asked to court her, but the intentions are clear. I want to come home to someone.” I want to come home to you.

Easily spurred Louis yanks his hand back, and hugs himself, looking down at his feet as cords of confusion twine around Harry’s heart. “Fine,” the boy mutters with a childish note. “If you’re goin’ out with someone new then I’m going out with someone too. I won’t feel sorry for me.”

Enraged, his Alpha claws at his chest, but Harry shakes his head, takes him around the waist and brings him close despite his resistance. “Won’t change anything, paradise. You’re my favourite everything.”

Louis lifts his face, fringe a mess in his vivid eyes. Sass rewritten on his expression. “You think it won’t change once you’ve bonded someone? You’ve seen bonded Alphas. They’re up their mates’ arses. You’ll forget all ’bout me.” Impossible.

“You’re mine, though,” Harry presses quietly, stroking his hair from his face. “Couldn’t forget.”

How could I? When I close my eyes I’m always somewhere with you.

Seemingly lost in thought Louis doesn’t respond in time, but their gazes cling. The tempest in his stare fucks with his head, makes him feel just as lost, just as violently infatuated, just as possessive. Except suddenly the rain is comes down in fierce pelts and Harry takes him by the arm, yanking him through the howling winds and excessive rain to the car. Inside, Harry laughs roughly at the sight of him, a flushed out puppy, shivering and glaring with murder. “Awe, pup, cold?”

With another throaty laugh, Harry fiddles with the heat, turns it on its highest, then leans over the back to his duffle bags, rumpages through the clothes until he finds his winter coat, shaking it out before draping the heavy material over his shoulders, watching as he shoves his arms in and pushes up the sleeves enough to reveal his dainty hands.

Without reason the atmosphere thickens, a sadness crawling down his throat to settle heavy in his chest. And in the same moment Louis crawls over the separation into his lap, the contact tight and too good as his luscious bum nestles his crotch. Jaw working Harry wills his cock to stay uninterested, focuses on the distraught expression on Louis’ beautiful face as he lays him down, reclines the seat and relaxes, hands fisting his hair as his mouth brushes his ear. “I hate my life. I am so ungrateful I want to be normal, I want to breathe without an old Alpha trying to ask for my hand in mating, I want to breathe without people following me, without cameras, I want to breathe without being monitored by body guards, without being monitored by society.  I want you to stay home,” the boy whispers tremblingly. “Hold onto me. If you ever decide to leave me for someone else I’ll go. I’ll go. I will.”

“Who’re you convincing?” he manages around how constricted his throat is, staring at the ceiling of the car. Instinctively, Harry circles his soft waist, “I wish I could make that happen for you. I wish I could make it so you’re not in the spotlight. But I can’t. And the others? They’re just temporary highs. Everyone else is just a temporary high.”

Squirming, the boy tries to sit up, but Harry holds him fast, “I’m always somewhere with you when I close my eyes.” In my heart I’m always somewhere with you.

Louis snivels, mouth wet on his jaw now. “W-W-Why do you put up with me? You don’t with anybody else.” I know.
With an unsteady breath, “Because you’re this sublime creature that looks at me with those fucking blue eyes that drive me insane. All of you drives me insane in ways that shouldn’t make me feel like I’m on cloud nine or some shit. You’re beautiful. Inside you’re just so…beautiful. Your soul is made of stars and your heart is pure gold. I’m attracted to your beauty like anyone else.”

Soft, warm against him, Louis whispers, “It makes me very happy when you tell me stuff like that.”

“Why.”

“Because you’re my best mate. I wanna be beautiful and sublime and just perfect to you. For you. I wanna be what you want. Give you what you want.” Christ does this boy know the definition of best mate? Because surely this isn’t it. Surely best mates don’t…

“Babies,” the word is yanked from his vocals when the boy squirms just enough. “Wanna see you all round and glowing with pups.”

“You want me to be pregnant with someone’s pup for you,” he gasps with an upset note.

“My pup,” he corrects stupidly.

“Oh,” Louis whimpers. A sound he’s never heard from him before. Soft and helpless. A sound that drives fire torches through him. “Oh, God, Haz, you’re a freak.”

“I know. Can’t help it. I’m a bit fucked.”

Louis doesn’t respond, nuzzles his throat and squirms. Squirms like he always does because he’s incapable of holding still more than one minute. So the Alpha says nothing all the time, focuses on steadying his breath. In and out, in and out, in and…

Fragrance blooms everywhere, unlike anything he’s smelt before. Delicious, sweet, intoxicating. A growl starts low in his throat, but Louis giggles, with a nervous breathy chime, “Whoa, boy, what’s the–,”

“You wet, pup?”

Louis tenses up, but Harry whispers, “’S okay. I won’t say anything. Just tell me.”

“Yes,” a breathy confirmation as the Alpha closes in his eyes and nods slowly, just savors this, him. Because that’s what Harry does. Savors and savors and savors so when he finally finds who he’s looking for…Harry’s taken enough to live on without him.

“I didn’t know what to do!” Strangled sobs steals his attention. “I w-w-was so scared, Alpha! I just w-w-wanted you to be better. B-B-But I d-d-didn’t want to make everything worse! I never meant to hurt you! T-T-Then the doctors’ said I might want to consider abortion! I d-d-didn’t know what to do, Haz. A-A-And I couldn’t! I’m so sorry I can’t!”

The enormity of his paradises’ misery gouges punishing daggers far beyond his heart, straight to his shattered soul. Torment—the boy in his lap is torment. A torment he is bound to, craves. Suffering at its very best. In control, his Alpha snarls, disgusted with this entire bit.

With the utmost care Harry takes his arm from around his waist to palm at his supple hips, meant to bear pups. Bearing his pup.

With his heart a frantic gun, an automatic rifle firing rounds every which way, the Alpha urges
him to face him. It’s effortless with how lost Louis is to hysteria, trembling like his soul’s seconds from escaping his precious body. All but glued to him the Omega circles his waist with his miniature legs and tries to bury his face in Harry’s throat, but before he can Harry cups his throat gently, thumbs at his wild pulse point and whispers, “Paradise, don’t hide from me anymore.”

Hiccupping, Louis nods wildly, arms wound around his swollen tummy. A true bonded Alpha, the pup coming to life in his belly runs his blood cold. Sense returns to him with arctic clarity—it’s no secret that male Omega childbirth is dangerous. A risk to the fathers’ life. Torn, his Alpha lashes out against him. Any bonded Alpha knows to be careful, knows to seek professional security before trying for children. And he didn’t.

Emotion storms in his chest. Frantic, the Alpha focuses on Louis, alive and healthy, but so very hurt. Ethereal in this…condition, features pale in his distress with tears skating down his face. “Paradise…” terror steals his composure, “What did they say? What did the doctor tell you?”

“I-I-It was too early on! They c-couldn’t tell me m-m-much!” the boy reacts to Harry’s panic. “S-Said it’s g-goin’ to be especially d-d-difficult ‘cause it’s my f-f-first pregnancy. A-And if the bl-bloodwork returns a-abnormal t-t-then a-abortion m-m-might be best.”

In an eruption of panic, “Oh, Christ, oh Christ. I…I….No. No. We can’t…It’s a threat to you. We can’t, paradise. We can’t, we can’t, oh Christ we can’t. We need to…We need to get it out of you.”

It’s only when Louis shrinks away from him that Harry realizes he’s dug their graves. Like he’s the enemy, Louis hugs his exposed baby bump, and bares his little canines with a violent expression of betrayal that crushes him. “W-W-What are you saying, Haz?”

“I need you to be okay,” the Alpha begs hoarsely, reasons with him. “I can’t lose you again. Please. Please, paradise. Don’t do this. Don’t give this the chance to take you away from me. I promise we can try again when we know–,”

“I…” the broken expression is enough to ruin him, and he wants to relocate his limbs, drop to his knees and beg him to listen. “This? This is a new life in my belly, Harry. I can’t believe you right now! H-How can you just be okay with ending our baby’s life?”

Worried like the Alpha flinches, but his instinctive need to save him is boundless. “I’m not okay! I am not okay, but I know what is more important! There’s a chance that baby could end your life! And I can’t take that chance!”

“Well it’s not your choice to make,” Louis cries with more strength. “You’ve got some nerve to talk to me about abortion! This is my body so don’t think you get to force shit! I am not ending this new life in my belly. Regardless if I’m your mate this new life here I’m going to love it! ”

Venomous tears blur his gaze, wavering the room around him. “I just love you. I love you,” the words are torn from his throat. “I’d g-give anything to keep you with me. I’d sacrifice anything and everything to keep you safe. And I don’t know what I’ll do if…if…this takes…” but he can’t finish. Can’t say it. Can’t stand it. An emotional outbreak threatens to steal his senses, but Harry just says thickly, “Paradise, I need to not think for a while or I might lose my mind. I need you to trust me. C’mere, and let me feel you. Just want to listen to your heartbeat.”

An achingly nervous look crosses his features but Harry shakes his head wearily, “No, love. I’m not goin’ to plot against our pup. Just want to be close to you. Want…to be close to both of you.”

Resistance leaves his fragile body as Louis snivels, but nods madly and crawls until Harry can grab ahold of him. With more care than even necessary (slow as to not startle him) the Alpha
shoves the blankets out of the way to lay him down. Vulnerable, Louis tries to curl up on his side but Harry settles beside him, torn between the desire to drown in his sublime eyes and get carried away in the rhythm of his precious heartbeat.

But…really there isn’t much a choice with Louis staring back at him with those mesmerizing eyes. It’s the proximity he’s always needed. Hesitant, Harry takes his dainty hand, watching his lashes flutter just a bit as their fingers tangle. Silent apologies swim in his gaze—an agonized scream is lodged in his throat because it’s wrong. He should never apologize for loving the baby in his belly enough to risk his own life for it. But oh God Harry would risk his own life to save him from himself, loves him enough to sacrifice what he’s wanted all his life.

With his free hand Harry reaches out to the little baby bump but Louis tugs the blankets over his body before he can, and squeezes his hand with violent vigor, warning him. Regret rails through him as his Alpha snarls, just wanting to feel his pup, to just connect to it.

Even though the rejection ruins him, Harry respects his limits, respects his caution, and just lies there, lost in his tempest eyes.

Paradise.

Overloaded, at the first opportunity his brains’ activity fades with sleep; paradise is all the stays with him.

&&

Frantic, the Alpha bolts upright, thoughts in a whirlwind of where is he where is he when it becomes apparent that Louis is not with him. On his feet, Harry staggers through the dimly lit room—bare of personality with clothes in a disarray on the offensive carpet. Twitchy, desperate to have him in his sights so he can’t ever leave again, terrified that he’s already left, Harry storms out of the bedroom, down the hall and nearly collapses with relief. In the opening of the hall Harry can see into the entryway of the neighboring kitchen.

Fluttering about the open space Louis is uncharacteristically quiet, pausing before the electric-top stove to fiddle with the kettle. Instinctive, Harry stalks forward to wind an arm round the slim of his waist, being a bit to hook his chin on the frail of his shoulder. “Paradise,” with sleep his voice is raspy, guttural.

Against him the Omega is achingly tense. “Hi. Sleep okay?”

Emotion rattles his bones as Harry breathes, “Come back to bed.”

“But my tea…” the poor boy sounds torn as Harry feels.

Nosing up his slender neck the Alpha absorbs Louis’ shiver to hum, “’S a bit late for you to be drinkin’ tea, innit? You’ll be bouncing on the walls all night.”

Leaning into him now the Omega brings his arm up to fist his curls softly. “You slept the day away and–,”

“Can’t sleep without you,” Harry reminds, teasing the curve of his ear with his mouth.

“And,” the boy continues like he hadn’t spoken, “I’ll need the energy to keep up with you the rest
of the night.” A thrill runs up his spine, but is clouded by his Alpha clawing at his chest, nagging at him.

“No tea tonight. I won’t deprive you of your sleep, paradise.”

“But I’m too antsy to sleep,” the boy protests petulantly. “Besides I slept a few hours with you. You just always look so tired, and I couldn’t wake you ‘cause if one of us is sleep deprived it’s you. Anyway, I didn’t do much while you were asleep. I was just on my laptop watching footie. So I’ve had lots ah rest.” Wriggling, Louis twists to face him, tracing the heavy bruises underneath his eyes. Too pleased with his touch to care that Louis’ aware of his failure, Harry noses at thin his wrist, inhales the fresh scent, welcoming it’s reason.

“So,” the boy drags out the word with an entirely too pleased grin, stealing his hand away. “I win!” And thrashes out of his unsuspecting hold to prance around the kitchen in just Harry’s missing T-shirt, lifting his arms and hopping as he singsongs in that pitchy, lovely voice of his, “Who wins? Louis wins! Louis always wins!”

Leaning on the island Harry tries to suppress his Alpha’s escalating anxiety, watching him rave around sharp corners and objects without any care in the world. With his heart in his throat Harry doesn’t say a word, just smiles weakly when Louis pokes his tongue out and skips back towards him. “I always get my way.”

Catching him around the waist again the Alpha reels him in. So willing, Louis presses impossibly close, resting his head on his shoulder with only dainty palm over the fitful beat of his heart. “Only because I get my way too.”

“Mmm?” the boy mumbles softly into his skin.

“Just…I try to do what’s right by you even when I don’t want what’s right. And by purposefully defying me you just give me what I’ve wanted the entire time.”

“Why do you do that?” the puzzled tone assures him that he’s not quite as split open as he feels.

“Because,” he says quietly, staring blankly at the kettle. “You always win. You’ve always loved to win at any and everything. And I’ve always loved to let you win.”

Louis giggles, shaking his head a bit. “You’re a low-key sap, Styles. And arrogant enough to actually think you let me win. Ha! Cute.” At the obvious tease in his voice his Alpha comes to life, prowling under his skin as his hand sneaks underneath the hem of his T-shirt, fingertips skimming the swell of his luscious ass as Louis exhales raggedly. Much the same Harry’s breath catches in his throat at how achingly bare his flesh is, how vulnerable he is for him. Spurred by nearly two months without touching him Harry runs his fingertips up the curve of his spine, stroking his frail shoulders, and–

A drawn out whistle pierces his allure as Louis jumps, then, “Tea to the rescue!”

Jaw clenched the Alpha retracts his hand to cross both his arms and watch impatiently as Louis fixes his cuppa. Pausing, the Omega pins him with those brilliant cerulean eyes, “Want some?” Before he can decline, “I mean there’s water and apple juice and I do believe there’s some whiskey in there from when Niall visited the other day.”

“Why was Niall here with whiskey?” he asks tightly, irritation gnawing at his bones.

Sipping at his tea Louis shrugs.

With a steadying breath Harry goes to the fridge, removes the (basically empty) whiskey flask and
a water bottle, inwardly cringing at how empty it is. It’s not like Louis doesn’t have the money to buy his own groceries (hell he’s willing to reckon the freezer is packed with frozen foods), but the boy just isn’t…one to be healthy, and eat right. Which fuck that’s never been a problem, but surely now there must be nutritional supplements his body needs and—

Deciding to look into that as soon as possible Harry closes the fridge, pours the whiskey into the sink and tosses the bottle in recycle before retrieving his water and gulping the liquid in easy swallows. “You need to eat,” he mutters once he’s downed the bottle. Across from him Louis sips at his tea, slowly, savoring. Seemingly reasonless a stunning smile plays with his mouth before a little giggle spills between them.

“Am I funny to you?” he asks quietly, unable to help the smile that’s claimed his mouth in response.

“Not really,” Louis whispers impishly into his teacup, then, once he’s swallowed, “We are going to fight a lot because I could hardly tolerate your Alpha ways when we were just friends. It’s goin’ to be ten times worse now, isn’t it? This whole protective Alpha bother.”

“A thousand times worse,” he warns darkly, crossing his arms. “Fight or no fight you’re going to do what you have to do to secure your health.” The resentful quality to his next words aren’t intentional, “And it’s health.”

“Harry,” Louis bristles, all but chucking his teacup in the sink. “It’s quite upsetting when you refer to our pup as an it.”

Dread knots in his chest as Harry shoves his hand through his messy mop of curls. “It’s going to hurt you.”

“You’ve hurt me, too,” the boy reminds, and though the considerate gleam to his eyes tells him it’s not meant as malicious, the truth still fucking damages him. Pain spears at his chest but Louis only continues, “Doesn’t mean you’re evil. Just like you didn’t mean to hurt me, this pup doesn’t mean to hurt me.”

“There was never a chance I’d take your life.” A weak fucking point, and Louis noticeably thinks the same, narrowing his eyes. When the Alpha only glowers, the boy sighs with a glaringly hurt expression, “I’d like to go to bed now.”

Without permission Louis walks away, towards the bedroom, with Harry trailing him, closing the door inaudibly as the boy scuttles underneath the blankets and curls up. As his tiny broken snivels ricochet in his head Harry realizes this is so fucking wrong.

Like always, he is selfish. So selfish in his hellish terror. This has to stop. Christ, this time he can’t let his selfish fears ruin Louis’s opportunity for the happiness he’s always dreamt of. Won’t let this be another almost happened, another could’ve been.

Christ, this constant fear is draining, doesn’t have any power over him when Harry thinks about how much he’s always wanted this. Always wanted to have this, pups with Louis. A family even. Perhaps not quite so early, not when he’s just able to hold his own…but God damn it Harry will be better for Louis, for the baby in his paradises’ belly. The circumstances only strengthen his resolve, ground him.

Somehow the Alpha finds himself on his knees right before the edge Louis’s curled closest to. Whispers, “Paradise.”

There’s a tiny hiccup, the Omega peeks through an opening in the blankets.
In shambles, tears sear his eyes as Harry jumps the gun, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry I didn’t assure you from the beginning that I want you. And I want this. I want the pup in your belly. I want this more than anything in the world.” Big beautiful blue eyes are fountains of emotion, gazing at him, “I’m just scared. I wish I wasn’t. I wish I could tell you all those magic words you need to hear right now. But I can’t. I’m scared that in four month’s that pup is going to be brought to life and something will go wrong. Because this doesn’t happen to me. Good things like this don’t tend to stay. I’m terrified that I’m goin’ to fall in love with this pup like I never stop falling in love with you and then…and then…” Air refuses to follow the path to his lungs as Harry rests his head on the mattress and focuses on this, now, them. Once the vertigo has vanished with the black on the edges of his vision, Harry lifts his head to hold his damp stare, “I’m sorry, paradise. But I am better. I will be the very best I can for you, for our pup. I want to take care of you. I want to take care of our pup. And if you let me, I’ll never stop. With all I have I will love you. I will never give you reason to doubt me again. I will never let this go. I will be here for every second of every day and I will do all I can to make you happy. If you let me…I’ll never stop. Until my last breath, paradise. Until my very last.”

Crying viciously now Louis bolts upright, hugging his small bump. Anxious, Harry rises to a shaky stance, says thickly, “I once told you my worst fear was that I’d never amount to the prestige of my dad, that I wouldn’t be enough. I was wrong. My worst fear’s always been you. I wasn’t lying when I told you why I call you paradise. But the first time I said it I didn’t think any of that. I thought it’s going to really kill me when I don’t have this boy anymore. I thought he is the best place to go when I forget who I am. I thought he is the best place to go when I want to forget who I am. And I thought this is temporary. The thought of never being enough for my dad was nothing compared to the thought of you being temporary. I didn’t want to be enough for anyone but you, always. Because you’re my one and only, Louis. This is me, who I found. This is Harry. And I’m asking you to let me come home to you. Let me come home to you for the rest of my life. Please…be mine. Stay. Be my permanent paradise.”

Exposed, begging, the Alpha stems his tears when Louis shakes his head. Prepared, crestfallen, for the inevitable rejection because he’s fucked up too many times, hurt him past the point of forgiveness. And oh God he doesn’t know what he’s to do without him, what–

In an abrupt rush a little body is launched at him, and on instinct Harry catches him, clings to him as Louis plants wet kisses along his features, sniveling around broken breaths, “I love you. I love you I love you I love you. Yes. Every time yes.”

This must be what ruined truly feels like. Attached, overwhelmed with joy, Harry buries his face in the boy’s neck, unable to care that he’s bawling because nothing can touch him in this moment. No addiction. No monster. No demon. It’s just him, holding onto the boy he won’t ever misplace again. It’s just him, holding onto his only paradise, holding onto the precious pup coming to life between them in paradise.

Dainty hands softly run through his waves, smoothing his hair in silent comfort until he’s rasping, voice raw, “’M sorry, fuck. You just don’t know how happy you’ve made me. Never been so happy.”

“I think I have an idea,” the boy sniffles gently, stroking. “You still have to apologize to our little love.”

“Can I?” he asks in a frenzied desperation to meet his pup, to feel.

“Be gentle,” the boy whispers timidly as Harry dares to look at him. Much the same Louis looks achingly timid, with his bottom lip caught between his canines, cheeks rosy from crying (or he just assumes) and his cerulean gaze glazed over like newly cut glass. Softly, the Alpha leans forward to place a chaste, reassuring kiss to his sweet mouth, all the while walking them back to the bed.
Spreading his petite figure on the mattress as gently as possible Harry breaks the contact to rock back on his heels. Chewing nervously at his bottom lip again Louis holds his gaze, tugging the blankets over his waist to give him the go-ahead, “I...Okay.”

Through wired nerves Harry takes the hem of his T-shirt in tremulous fingers, carrying the thin material up to reveal the small bump that’s curved his once smooth tummy. Reverence sprouts in his lungs, nearly cures him of his nostalgia because Christ there can’t be anything wrong with this. With Louis like this—swelling with so much more life. Radiance is alight over his golden skin. “Ditch the shirt.” Obedient, the boy shrugs out of the offensive material, bare and beautiful.

Thoughtlessly, he grazes the firm swell of his belly, snatching his hand back when Louis inhales sharply. Edgy, Harry tears his gaze away from Louis’ tummy to his wide eyes, brimming with emotion, yanking at his heartstrings. “Sorry,” the boy mumbles, delicious pink dusting his sharp cheeks. “Forget this isn’t a secret anymore. Nobody’s touched little love before. Well, aside from me, but I don’t really count. I mean it’s my, well your pup and—”

“Our pup,” Harry corrects with an overwhelming excitement, the words shoving him straight into the daddy-to-be abyss.

Words failing him the Alpha lowers his stare to the little bump once again. Unbidden, tears spread in his eyes, blur his vision until he’s cursing raggedly, scrubbing at his face, dazed. “Boy or girl?”

Louis giggles with a delighted chime, “Baby, I’m not even eight weeks along. Next week is two months. Even so we won’t know for a while. And anyway, aren’t you supposed to be the pregnancy expert?”

Hesitant, Harry caresses the precious bump, awash with love. “I want to know what your paternal instinct is tellin’ you,” he clarifies gruffly, circling his naval with his thumb. “And I still have a lot of learning to do.”

“Oh,” the boy says breathily. “I dunno that this paternal instinct stuff is entirely reliable but….girl. Little love is a girl.”

“You’ll choose her over me,” the realization crawls up his throat and spills into the space between them. Ashamed, Harry refuses to meet Louis’ affectionate stare, simply regards his tummy sadly, where their tiny invader is safe and warm.

“I won’t have to choose anyone over anyone,” the Omega tells him, stretching his arm so his delicate hand curls along the left side of his face. Affection he does not deserve, but needs nonetheless. “No choice to be made. I’m yours. And little love is ours.”

Love is an all-encompassing noose around his neck as Harry bows his head, noses at the boys’ belly, and whispers fervently, “’S daddy, little love. I...I can’t wait to meet you. But while you’re in there I’m goin’ to make sure your lovely papa is okay, and you’re okay.” In silent promise Harry plants tender kisses along the firm, achingly fragile, swell of his belly, until Louis breathes petulantely, “’S not fair that you get to kiss little love and I don’t.”

Sympathetic, Harry smiles into the gentle curve of his belly, murmuring into his skin, “Your day will come, paradise.” Please, God, don’t take him away again.

Without warning the boy sits up, effectively forcing him vertical by snatching his curls until he’s groaning, pulling his soft petite body into his lap and kissing him with a bruising intensity, ignoring the sting from where his lip’s been split to tongue him into submission, tasting the sugary contours of his eager mouth. “Alpha, please,” the Omega mewls, tearing away to mouth at his jaw, “Please, fuck me.”
Soft, wet, the boy sucks little marks jaw until Harry’s cock is pounding against his zipper. Christ, he just wants to lose himself inside of him, wants to wreck him for all the shit he’s put him through. Wants to love him for all the shit he’s put up with.

Somehow his hand ends up in his messy hair, forcing him to look at him and fuck he looks so desperate for it, all dewy eyes, swollen lips, and rosy cheeks. Admiring, Harry winces when Louis’ fingertips trace his lip, and the boy whispers, “I’m sorry. I…I shouldn’t have cuffed you.”

“No. You shouldn’t have. I would never lay a conscious hand on you. And I expect the same respect. Angry? Walk away. Talk to me. Rant. Rave. I don’t care. But don’t play with fire.” Thoroughly scolded, the boy unleashes the force of his knot-me eyes, chewing on his already bitten raw lips. “Punish me. Fuck me until I don’t know anything but my Alpha.”

Taking his wrist between sure fingers Harry grazes his jaw with his canines, tasting his skin as his cock throbs with his heartbeat, more than ready. “Yeah. How do you want it, pup?”

So responsive, the Omega tilts his head, “However...you want it, Alpha. Just please fuck me.”

“I just want my cock in you all the time. Any way I can have it, pup,” he says raggedly as Louis gives him a little needy noise, rocking slowly in his lap. “Alpha, Alpha, please bond me. Want to be yours.”

Anticipation bullets through his veins as Harry forces himself to think beyond his Alpha, “Not tonight. I need permission. You’re an Omega of worth. I won’t disrespect you like that.”

A little giggle prompts his playful growl as Louis’ nails score down his chest. A feral wildfire starts in his veins as the Alpha pins him on his back, spreading his creamy thighs to fit between them. “Haz, I’m already pregnant ‘membah?”

A low growl rips up his throat as his hips jerk on their own accord. “Yeah, but I don’t want to make this any worse.”

Tension seizes his body before, in such a tiny, insecure voice, “Y-You’re not happy…”

Groaning, Harry retreats a bit to gaze down at him, “You know that’s not what I’m saying. I’m so fucking happy. This…is everything I’ve ever dreamt of. And I’m so ready to take you home, then run up and down Parliament shouting it like the madman I am. I’m ready to do what I have to do to ensure my place as an heir to the Council. I’m ready to be someone again and spend all my life with you. But it doesn’t mean I’m not scared as fuck of your father. I think he’s going to kill me.”

Melted, pliable, Louis strokes his face, grinning from ear to ear. “Well, he can’t kill you if you bond me.”

“Fuck I love you,” Harry growls, kissing him languidly until Louis fists his curls, mewling, “Haz, please. I need it. Where’s my Alpha?” Adorably, his bottom lip juts.

Need rains down on him, but, “We never made love.”

Irritation bites at him when Louis rolls his eyes, “Romantic bullshit.”

“You think I can make you scream when I’m being gentle? When ‘m making love?”

Louis blows out an entirely too annoyed breath, petulant and demanding. “That is not what I’m saying. I feel like screaming right now. Fuck me. Fuck me. Fuck me!”

But his Alpha’s risen to the challenge. Gentle, his canines lock are the boy’s jutting bottom lip,
sucking as Louis mewls, nails biting at his shoulders as his hand fits between them, fingers skating over his tight little nipples. Just like that the Omega’s arches, and fuck the sound he gives him is so sexy, so needy. In punishment Harry pinches hard, listening to those noises as his cock presses hard to his hip. With a little pop the Alpha scrapes his bottom lip and grazes his jaw, “I still want to mark you. No matt’ah how pregnant, no matt’ah what bond, no matt’ah what scent, I don’t want you to forget who takes care of you.”

“Territorial bastard,” Louis gasps, eyes screwed shut.

“You’re mine,” he says quietly, sucking fiercely at his throat, “You’ve always been mine.” And fuck control, Christ what he wants is to get his cock inside of him.

Whimpering, the Omega run his nails down the rippling muscles of his back, kicking his head back into the pillows. “Oh, God, Haz.”

“I tried so hard to not want you, to keep from bonding you, but,” delicious red is left in wake of his mouth as he brushes his special skin to start as his clavicle, even when the boy mumbles, “please, no, want to be yours,” because he wants him a screaming mess for it. Growls tear up his throat as he forces him onto his belly, mouth dry as Louis bows his back, face in the mattress, perky ass in the air, begging for it.

Starved, Harry grabs his wet, chunky thighs, spreads them wide to lean down, nosing at his perky flesh, inhaling the delicious fragrance of his slick. Spreading his rounds Harry groans, cock fattening impossibly at the sight of his wet tiny hole. Glistening. “Fuck, pup. You’re so wet.” And buries his face where he wants to be all the time, between his full cheeks, tonguing at his fluttering hole, until the boy is withering, sobs muffled by the blankets. Delicious on his tongue, Harry keeps him open with one hand, bringing the next up to his balls, squeezing softly as Louis seizes up, hips lurching into the bed as his orgasm prompts another gush of slick, messy and so fucking good.

Driving two fingers into his clenched up hole, Harry growls, kneeling his ass again, whispering hoarsely around his vicious cries, “So good, pup. Such a good boy for me.” Circling his fingers, spreading him, Harry hums, “Yeah. So pretty. Gonna wreck you.” Merciless, desperate to make him desperate for his cock, Harry rubs his prostate, slippery and warm. “Want you to feel it for days.” In a trance Harry bends to mouth at his sticky, trembling thighs, wanting to sink his canines but opting to draw bruises, shuddering as Louis’ broken moans become pitchy. Three fingers is never enough, but fuck, he wants to overwhelm him, split him open.

“Come, pup. Come on my fingers,” as his fingers just barely brush his sweet spot. Powerless to the Alpha timbre in his voice, to the sensation he’s giving him, the Omega convulses, “Alpha,” clasped around his fingers as his little body slumps.

Satisfied, Harry takes his fingers back, growling at his little mewl in protest to slap his already handprint flushed ass. On fire, the Alpha fumbles with his fly, but manages, shoving his trousers down his thighs, prodding at his hole as pleasure wrecks up his spine. “Want it, pup?”

“Yes,” the boy slurs sleepily. “Alpha, please...I need it. I need it. I need–,”

Out of control Harry forces the head of his cock into his unbelievably tight entrance, grabbing his hips and growling, “take me,” before shoving forward, driving his cock as deep as possible into his sweet body. Ecstasy. Hot around his throbbing cock, Louis clenches up, whimpers, “Gimme, gimme,” until he’s plunging into his hole in brutal thrusts, unable to control the raging need to own him. To claim him. Blind, the Alpha flattens his hand on his swollen, come painted belly, urges him onto his knees to mouth at his exposed, love bitten throat, aiming for that special place.
“Mine,” feral as his cock swells at the base, buried inside of him. “Pup, tell me. Tell me.”

Orgasm ridden Louis just, “Yes. Bond me. ‘M yours. ‘M yours, Alpha. I love–,”

And he can’t stop, baring his canines to close them around his throat, sinking into his silky skin. And he’s draped over him, drenched with white hot pleasure as his ears ring, locked as he knots with an intensity he hadn’t thought existed. Euphoria no drug could conjure.

In the distance Harry can hear Louis scream, feels his cock throbbing as his come paints the boys insides, but somehow there is nothing physical to be found but the metallic taste of blood as his head spins uncontrollably, discovering just why there is all the hype over bonding.

Surreal–pure, untouched force bleeding into every fiber of his being.

All the shattered shards of his soul come together, multi-faceted light fastened to them. Perfectly imperfect. Pain doesn’t live in this sacred place. Bliss. This is paradise–Louis’ soul, the universe trapped within him, in union with his. Shatterproof. Beautiful as he’d always known it’d be. It’s basic and elemental as his breath, his blood, their soul.

And the earth doesn’t spin, life doesn’t exist outside of this, outside of his paradise. Everything in the world has grounded to a halt, everything but this connection.

There is nothing missing, lost, broken, his soul glorying in his delicacy, his perfection.

It’s his. This. For the rest of his life. Heart, soul, mind, body, tethered in an eternal promise. One that can’t come undone, unbreakable.

&&

An all too familiar sensation wrings his insides, stealing his idyllic recreation. Gagging, Louis struggles to sit up, solid Alpha weight pinning him to the mattress. Sore, achy, the Omega shoves weakly at Harry’s shoulders, unable to speak with vomit creeping up his throat.

Frantic, Louis thrashes, tears threading down his flushed faces as the nausea escalates.

It’s just when he’s going to lose the battle that a hoarse groan is muffled into his working throat. “Paradise…” a sleep-addled rasp.

“Bathroom,” the boy manages to gasp, clamping his damp hand over his traitorous mouth.

In record time Harry’s freed him, and the Omega scrambles out of the achingly warm bed to bolt down the hall to the bathroom, doubled over the toilet as at last the sick rushes up his throat. Vulnerable, Louis gags against the sickness, tears oozing down his face.

Startled, Louis shrinks as Harry crouches beside him. “No, get out!”

Of course Harry doesn’t listen, bringing one calming hand up to his shaking shoulders, stroking as another wave of morning sickness claims him. Unfazed, the Alpha comforts him, grounds him for the very first time these episodes began to plague his mornings. And oh God it’s so relieving, so lovely. Everything he’s ever longed for. But… “P-P-Please…leave.”

“Hush,” the Alpha whispers, smoothing his sweat damp hair. “Relax. ‘M not leaving. Just let it happen.” Horrified to be seen like this, to let Harry, who’s already so askance against his sudden pregnancy see him like this, Louis weeps around vomit and saliva, but listens, humiliated enough
Merciful, it’s over as swiftly as it arrived (probably because Louis hadn’t fed his little love much yesterday—guilt flares at the realization), the nausea drifting. Exhaustion claims his limbs as Louis gasps, “I-I’m okay. It’s not little love’s fault! My b-b-body just is gettin’ used to this. I’m s-s-so–,” but his Alpha is having none of this. “Enough.” Stealing his breath Harry’s jade gaze softens unbelievably. “There’s nothing to be ashamed of. Don’t apologise for being pregnant and ill.”

“B-B-But ‘m s-s-so gross,” the boy hiccups, tears scalding his pasty cheeks. “I-I,”

“Oh, love, no,” it’s so affectionate as Harry reaches over to flush down the evidence of his morning sickness, circling his waist to carry his weight as they stand. “None of that, Louis. Literally no. You’re so strong. But so fragile. This happens…Your body is adjusting and it’s beautiful. You’re so bloody beautiful. There’s nothing gross about this…I don’t want to hear that again.” Swamped with endless love the Omega lets Harry support him, sniffling into his shoulder as he’s set on the counter, the cold nipping at his still heated bum. With tender fingers Harry wipes the stray tears, kissing his forehead chastely. “Goin’ to run you a bubble bath. And you’re goin’ to let me take care of you.”

Eager, Louis nods, and through sluggish movements manages to brush his teeth and rid his mouth of the vile aftertaste. As the claw foot tub fills with water Harry joins him, opening the medicine cabinet with no issue to retrieve the spare toothbrush, keeping it in his foamy mouth as he halts the tap.

Once he’s finished the Alpha snakes an arm around his waist, the mere contact calming him like nothing else as he carries him to the tub, slowly lowering him into the hot, fizzy water (just right. Emotion swells in his throat—oh, Haz). As the residual ache in his tummy diminishes, the delicious ache in his muscles intensifies and Louis hums, peering up at him through thick lashes. “Lessgo, Hazza.”

A dubious look crosses his features. “I don’t think there’s room.”

Pouting, Louis scoots to the very end of the tub with his knees to his chest. “Please. I need touch.” I need to remember I’m still me.

“Stubborn.” It’s said with such an endeared look that the boy can’t remember what it is to be unwanted. With an air of confidence Harry sheds his trackies, providing such an impressive view of his cock, soft but still so unreasonably large. A flush blooms over his cheeks as Louis diverts his stare, furious with himself, like Harry could see him as fuck material after his little episode. But oh God he’s so content with what his Alpha’s given him already. So much. Everything—all he’s dreamt of. The special skin at the junction of his throat throbs sorely. Marking his completion, his fulfillment. There is nothing missing, the lonely hollow in his chest has vanished entirely. Intoxicated by the sensation, the blood in his veins sings, overjoyed to his very core. Alive, a part of his Alpha’s life-force, a vital gift. Easily, Harry climbs in behind, the water rising as he sits, pulling the boy against his chest. With a pleased sigh Louis watches hazily as Harry places his long legs over his, knees bent and ankles level with his as he pulls his feet apart, opening Louis’ legs.

Awhile a comfortable silence spreads, Harry’s nose in his hair. “I just realized I quite like to sleep,” his voice is all syrupy, like when he’s falling asleep.

Louis smiles fondly, opens his mouth to respond but Harry adds, “With you. I quite like to sleep with you.”
“Sleep lat’ah,” the boy dismisses, squirming so water laps at his chin. “Bathe now.”

“Mmm. Game plan. Bath, then—”

“Sex?” Louis chirps hopefully, with a teasing nip to his collarbone.

“Food,” the Alpha corrects, seemingly amused.

“No,” the boy denies, scowling. “Sex, food, sleep.”

“And I don’t tire easily.”

“I win!” Louis giggles, thoroughly pleased with his brilliance.

“Only ’cause I want it,” in seconds his voice descends a thousand octaves.

“Prove it.”

“Soon.” It’s a promise; one Louis won’t let him break.

&&

“A-Absolutely not,” Louis tries to catch his breath around the residual pleasure sending shocks through his entire body. Clutching the bulges of his biceps, the boy struggles to think beyond how achingly good Harry’s fucking him, splitting him open with every sharp thrust.

“Harry, don’t stop, nev’ah stop,” Louis mumbles deliriously around his growls. Swamped by the fervor in his belly the boy is all sensation, full in sweet, violent ways.

“Goin’ to tell everyone,” Harry snarls, gripping his hips and hitching him so his cock drives unbelievably deep. “You’re mine. I won. I touched you in ways they couldn’t ever.”

Overwhelmed, floaty from his last orgasms, Louis nods wildly. “A-Absolutely,” a giggle simmers in his already too hot belly as Harry smirks sloppily, “But first family.”

“No,” Louis whimpers, unable to really remember why he’s so terrified of the idea.

More determined than ever the Alpha pounds into him, delicious pain and pleasure and just love. “Why? Why are you set on hiding this from the people that matter most? They’ll be crushed,” a drawn out groan interrupts as Louis clenches around his cock, purposefully, “when the media tells them instead of us.”

“’Cause I care about what they think!” Louis hates his inability to be quiet in bed. But his Omega is wrecked, chanting anything for Alpha anything anything anything. “And I hate that you’ll be the target! They will be so d-d-damned—fuck, Haz—callous towards you. They nev’ah see you for you. ‘S always your addiction or your faults or anything less than perfect!”

“I don’t care, paradise, I don’t,” Harry’s rhythm slows, prompting an upset sound from him, “Their opinions don’t matter when you’re looking at me like I’m a bloody prince.”

“Princess,” Louis mumbles stupidly, “I rescued you.” Somehow the Alpha’s mouth is on his, breathing him in before, “Yeah. Yeah, my paradise prince. Glad we’re in agreement for once.”

Rucked up the mattress Louis tastes his mouth, wants to taste all the light left to his soul. But it’s too late when Harry’s pounding him into the mattress, relentlessly stabbing at his sensitive bundle of nerves, spreading white hot ecstasy through his veins. A scream is torn from somewhere in his lungs as his body seizes up, giving up control, coming with bursts of light behind his eyes.
Sobbing, in an eternal spiral, Louis comes dry seconds behind the first orgasm once Harry’s
knotted him, pulsing into his already taken body, sinking his teeth into the best spot on his body.

Nonexistent Louis knows nothing but his Harry, their soul an eternal promise.

&&

“Paradise,” his voice calls to him once an eternity has left him spent. “Please, give me an
indication that I didn’t hurt you.” Anxiety creeps into his voice, enough that Louis slurs, “So
cocky.” Vision in a worrying blur the Omega can momentarily only make out the smug
expression on Harry’s beautiful face.

“Welcome back,” the pleased tone makes Louis want to pinch his stupidly sensitive nipples, but
sadly his limbs are nowhere to be found.

“I despise you,” the boy’s throat sorely protests. “Not the best fuck I’ve had.” Absolutely the best.

Cheeky, Harry smiles, pupils blown as his hips press forward just a bit. A helpless whimper leaves
him as his knot tugs in the best ways. “You’re in denial, pup.”

Creamy on the inside, Louis clenches around his throbbing cock, watching as his mouth parts a
bit. “Okay…that sounds fake, but okay.”

With an unbelievably boyish laugh Harry whispers, “Too much time on Tumblr I’d say.”

“You try bein’ knocked up and alone basically every waking moment for two months. Gatta pass
time somehow. But now,” a mischievous smile stretches his mouth, “I have my Alpha to give me
all the attention and love and sex and time and diamonds I want.”

Curls in his face Harry smiles slowly, that boyish ‘that’s-right’ grin, “Damn right. Luckiest Alpha
in the world. I cannot wait. We’re going to take a room on the third floor because it’s safest. And
we’ll make little love a connecting room, but let’s keep a bassinet in our room too. I’d like that. I
think that’s what we’ll do ‘cause I think I’ll lose my mind with worry if I can’t feel her gentle
presence. And then you won’t have to go far when she’s hungry in the middle of the night, or I
won’t have to go far, if you’d rather not–,”

Dazed by Harry’s enthusiasm, Louis says, voice quivering with the tears spreading in his eyes,
“Haz, babe, slow down.”

“But I just…I’m tryin’ to convince myself you’ll still be here...” the vulnerable panic in his voice
does it. In seconds Louis dissolves in ridiculous tears, ashamed at how much been he’s crying
lately, in front of people (just two nights ago Niall and Josh visited and snuggled on his sofa all
throughout ‘I Am Legend’ and Louis bawled like a babe because the loneliness had been too
much. Niall, knowing he can’t stand to let others see him so helpless–because he isn’t damn it–
took him into the room and held him until he got it together), but this…this is his Harry. And hell
Louis doesn’t care because he’s never been anything less to Harry, who’s already bared his heart,
his soul, his being, to Louis much the same. Alphas don’t cry often, but Harry’s held so many
tears in, and Louis would gladly hold him in his arms forever while he wept. Because there’s so
much beauty in Harry shedding his steel armor. Only for him.

“I’m goin’ to be okay, baby,” Louis whispers into his damp curls, barely feeling the sting as Harry
leaves his body to curl up in his arms, bundling in the blankets and resting his head on his chest. “I
promise I am going to be here to raise our little love. I promise I promise I promise.”

“Pinky promise,” the Alpha rasps, lifting his hand and holding his pinky out to him. Louis doesn’t
hesitate, wraps them and kisses his hair, “I pinky promise. I will always win for you.” With his
very being the Omega wills it to be true.

An entire week Harry indulges in his paradise—refuses to leave the confinement of the Omega’s flat, refuses to share him with the outside world. Just needs to remember this, them. An entire week Harry worships him like he hadn’t been able to before.

Does those little things Louis adores so much—because for all his extravagancy Louis remembers the simplistic actions, words, and times. Christ, Harry adores this, adores when he brings up memories Harry can’t even think to think of, “remember that time Grimmy interviewed us on our unusual friendship and you told the whole Council student body that you were in love with me? I think I about swooned,” or “Or the meal I cooked for you?” or “I saved every birthday card you sent me when you were away,” or “your grunge photographer stage, I loved those pictures,” until Harry thinks there is no way he could have ever bonded any other Omega. Not when there is this boy, this rich little brat with a heart of pure gold.

In this week Harry tries to prove that he can do this, care for him in the ways he’s always longed for. Grasps the concept that they’re going to be parents in seven months. A fumbling, inexperienced daddy at 22, but a damned good daddy nonetheless. Swears on every star he’s going to love this pup nearly as much as he loves Louis. Late at night Harry talks to his little love when his Omega is asleep, fucked out and unaware. Nostalgic, and so ready to grow with his little love, for them, for himself.

Worries evade him, until it’s time to actually sleep. Somehow, despite his mind’s blaring protests, his body’s decided it’s no longer exhausted to the extreme, which means his brain manages to force the night terrors to the surface. All too real. All too horrifying. Anything in range, breathing and human, is threatened. It’s too much when he wakes up in hoarse shouts, the past lodged in his brain. And oh God it’s too much when his mind thinks Louis is the enemy, when his body immediately wants to strike against an attack that isn’t coming. When the Omega is looking at him with scared, pleading eyes, clutching his tummy like he’s as afraid of what Harry’s capable of.

And so Harry either lays awake, guarding them, or migrates to the sofa, managing to catch two hours of rest before sneaking back to bed (before Louis wakes up). Except the Omega figures out his pre-cautionary measures midway through the week, unusually early to lock himself in the bathroom, muffling the gags until Harry is standing outside the door, “Lou, love, please, let me in.”

“Go fuck yourself;” Louis calls back with such an upset note that Harry calls on his control to stay calm.

“What’s wrong, Louis? Aside from the obvious.”

“You ditched me. I-I-I woke up alone and t-t-thought you abandoned us,” the boy mumbles before the deafening sounds of his sickness float from the otherside.

“You should know better,” Harry says matter-of-fact, leaning on the jam as his body feels too heavy. “I would never… I’m fucking offended.”

“Go… be offended somewhere else, dickhead,” Louis hisses around splashes.

“You’re being ridiculous,” the Alpha snarls, temper flaring because what the fuck, what does it take to please him? Christ, he’s just exhausted, hasn’t slept in fourteen hours, seconds from succumbing to his body’s fatigue, wanting to stich his eyes open to make sure Louis’s not alone even when they’re in a minor row. “Look, I’m not sorry for trying to protect you, and our little
love, from my demons. I’m tired, Lou. I don’t want to fight, can barely keep my eyes open, and—,” the door opens and Harry falls into the bathroom, Louis squealing but evading just in time.

Balancing himself on the wall, Harry regards him through droopy eyes. Louis’ expression melts, “Go to bed, Harry.”

“I can’t sleep without you near me.”

A troubled look clouds his features before he sighs softly, but moves to brush his mouth hastily, then linking their arms and dragging him into the bedroom. Anxiety rails through him as Harry mutters, “No. Just go, paradise. I—,” Louis only drapes an arm around his waist, “I hate to see you like this. Please, Harry. Sleep.”

Disgustingly weak Harry surrenders to the darkness. It’s so many hours before Harry comes to, sluggish, but able to function. Blearily, the Alpha finds Louis seated Indian-style beside him, with an entirely too guilty expression. Looking down Harry sees why—a plate is balanced on his knees, greasy slices of pizza piled. “I’m weak,” Louis moans plaintively, “I know I shouldn’t have but I ordered pizza and I am so happy and hungry and God damn it I am eating this pizza, Harry.”

Unable to help his smile Harry croaks, teasing him, “Could’ve ordered veggie toppings.”

With an entirely revolted look, the boy bites into the pizza, groaning with such delight. “‘S good. ‘S good for my soul,” he mumbles around mouthfuls, then pauses, a pretty pink dusting his sharp cheeks, “’M sorry, ‘m a little pig.”

“Keep goin’. I love knowing your belly’s full.” In his pants his cock twitches at the mere thought, his Alpha just as pleased with his response once Louis smiles shyly, and goes back to his greasy pizza. Too soon it’s over with three slices of pizza, Louis sprawling out, “That was the best meal of me life.”

“Heeey,” Harry says, shimmying up the bed to nose at the swell of his already so rounded belly. “You don’t enjoy my food.”

Louis frowns adorably, “No! Baby, that’s not what I meant. I love—,”

Barking out pleased laughter, Harry manages, “Paradise, I was only teasin’ you.” Planting an apologetic kiss to his tummy, Harry absorbs his shiver. “Little Love is already so…” Louis narrows his eyes, but Harry finishes regardless, “big.”

“In other words I’m already so fat,” Louis mumbles.

“Pregnant,” Harry reminds wisely. “You’re goin’ to gain weight, baby. You’re carrying another life in your tummy.”

“I guess,” the boy allows, stroking his belly with an ‘in-love’ expression. “I hope she’s comfy in there. I hope I can make enough room. She really is a bit big for only eight weeks. Should I be worried? I probably have a lot of the water stuff. What’s that called? Or maybe she’s just big like her daddy and—,” without warning Louis gasps, sits up and folds.

In his veins his blood freezes as terror fists his heart, “Paradise. What’s wrong? Are you okay?”

“I’m okay, Haz. Just nauseous. I think ‘m gonna be sick.”

With a somewhat relieved breath (they can handle this, this isn’t…life threatening) Harry carries him swiftly into the bathroom, cradles him as Louis whines, “C-C-Can I just purge already? I hate this. Why when I finally get my pizza? It’s so shitty, it’s –,” seems not even his body can resist his
desire as he doubles over the toilet and vomits violently. “I’m sorry, paradise,” the Alpha breathes, stroking his shoulders as moans echo into the toilet, “I wish I could help. I don’t know how to help.”

“Just stay with me.”

And so he does. Always will.

&&

It’s just when they’re about to leave the flat that Harry’s phone begins to chime, ringing from his back pocket as he’s shoving Louis’ luggage into the boot of his Range Rover. “I got it,” Louis chirps, fishing it out of his pocket before, “Hi. This is Tommo, Harry’s–Mum?”

Shocked, the Alpha faces him with a quizzical expression, watching as Louis’ brows furrow. There’s the distinct sound of Jay’s voice as Louis blanches. “I…I’ve been busy. I’m sorry to have worried you, mum. But I’m fine, w-w-with Harry. We…um…made up.” Yikes. Surely Jay will not be happy to find out Louis’ given him yet another chance. Then again Harry doesn’t care, because he’s greedy, and he’s already claimed what’s his. There is nothing, nobody that can tear them apart now. Not even themselves. An enriched thought.

A helpless look crosses his pretty features as he bats at his fringe. Snatching the phone Harry accesses speaker in time to hear Jay’s outraged, motherly voice, ”I don’t care how busy! You best call me. We have been worried sick over your disappearance! Your father especially. I hope you know what you’re doing. I love Harry, I do, Lou he’s like my own, but after all that’s happened…” Exactly.

Louis wrings in hands nervously, spares him a wide-eyed apologetic look. “Yes, mother. I will call papa as soon as I get home. I’m really sorry. And I love him, mum. He’s it for me.”

“Are you alright, baby? This isn’t like you. You haven’t visited in months. I’m very concerned,” her tone softens considerably as the Omega gives him another helpless look.

“Hi, Jay. It’s Harry. It’s nice to hear from you.”

“Harry, it’s nice to know I can count on you to pick up the phone,” Jay says firmly. “Next time I’d appreciate some consideration. And next time you’d best remind my son to call me or face my wrath.”

Though the Omega winces, burying his face in Harry’s arm, the Alpha is unmoved, replies with sympathy for the boys obviously alarmed mother, knowing just what it means to be panicked over losing Louis. “I will, ma’am. I’m very sorry. But I assure you Louis’ perfectly fine.” Sort of.

“You two have a lot of explaining to do,” Jay claims curtly. “Your parents are absolutely worried, Harry. And they’ve tried calling as well,” fuck, that’s right, he’d forgotten to return those calls. “We’re hosting dinner Sunday. Just our family, as well as yours. I expect the two of you here at exactly noon. Understood?”

Louis’ horrified sound is muffled into his shoulder as Harry swallows thickly, “Yes, ma’am.”

“Swell. Be safe. Despite your carelessness I miss you both terribly. Please tell Louis I love him. And I love you, Harry. I need to take Daisy to practice now, but I’ll ring again tomorrow.” Shocked by the abrupt affection Harry rudely hangs up without another word, tugs Louis into an achingly tight embrace and simply stands there. Since when has Louis’ mum loved him? Since
when has anyone but paradise missed him?

It’s not until Louis speaks that Harry realizes he’s spoken out loud, “See! I t-t-told you! You’re so loved, Haz. We’ve all missed you. ‘S not just me. It’s our family, too. Our friends. Poor Liam’s always asking how you’re doing. I know they care. They’re just a bit pissed. They’ll come around. Everyone’s at fault in some way. They didn’t reach out to you either. Like everything else it’s in the past.”

Emotion balloons in his throat. “But it happened, Lou. How can you just ignored the fact that–,”

“But it happened, baby. Yes, it happened. But what’s done is done.” What’s done is done? What’s done is…done. “Yeah, exactly. The now is what matt’ahs most. Nothin’ can be undone. You’re better than what happens. No, you deserve what’s happening now. Nothing will ever change what happened, but you can change what’s happenin’. Everything else? It is what it is.”

An overwhelming sense of relief settles over his shoulders–temporary, but enough to give him the now. Bring him back to them. Their bond. Their pup. Their life. Together.

Nosing at his feathery hair, Harry whispers, “I want to focus on our happiness…”

“But,” Louis prompts in the same barely audible voice.

“But I can only handle focusing on better right now…”

“‘S okay. Happiness helps bett’ah.” But the Alpha can’t really delve into the meanings, too on edge as is. So instead the silence settles, until Louis mumbles, “Take me home, Haz.”

Christ, Harry is so ready to. And this time he’s staying.

The mere fact in that thought steals his breath, hums in his veins and electrifies his mind.

“No leaving this time…” just to be sure, just to hear him, confident and sincere, for the first time in so damned long. “Eternal.”

“Eternal,” Harry confirms gently, thinking bent, not broken. Bent in this swift moment. Broken without him. That’s okay. For once between them it’s okay. It’s okay for Louis to love him for who he was, who he is. An addict, broken any time else, ash in the wind.

Just once, like this, he’s not broken. Lost, bent, a mental mess, but not broken.

&&

“I’m so sick,” Louis whimpers, very pleased with how believable it is (all miserably and feeble), especially now that he’s pregnant. See, he’s constructed the perfect plan to get out dinner with their family. It’s not necessarily deception as he’s still experiencing morning, afternoon, night, sickness, random episodes, scheduled ones too. Just it’s not so very terrible that he’s incapable of functioning, but what Harry doesn’t know, can’t hurt him. Knowing this the boy sets his plan in motion two days prior to the meet, “Haz, ’s hurting.”

Okay, so Louis can’t meet Harry’s terrified, achingly concerned stare, dampening his eyes with thoughts of separation (Louis can bawl in the showers for hours over the mere thought). “Do I need to take you to emergency, paradise?” Controlled, prepared. “Talk to me, pup.”

Louis shakes his head feebly, “No. I just need to rest a while.”

“Are you sure? Please, Lou, don’t make light of your pain. I need to make sure you’re okay,”
disturbing, Harry’s voice breaks as he palms at Louis’ achy hipbone (the pregnancy having nothing to do with that soreness, rather Harry, the animal), “And I can’t do that if you’re being secretive or…silent…or…” the poor Alpha stumbles over his words, miffed.

“Baby,” Louis says in a tiny voice, “I promise it’s n-not an emergency I just need rest.”

Seemingly torn, Harry runs his hand down his face and scrubs at his eyes. “I don’t want to freak out but I’m freaking out and I think I’m going on a jog.”

Anxiety knots in his chest as the scrambles upright and fists his hair, “No! You can’t l-l-leave me in my death bed!”

Tension grasps Harry’s figure before, without warning, detaching him in a fluid motion. A sociopathic expression claims his beautiful face, “Don’t say shit like that. Ever again.” And he’s storming out, without a backwards glance, leaving him just like that.

Downstairs the slam of the front door ricochets through every crevasse of the house, of his soul. Alone, Louis hugs his baby bump, strokes as angry tears flare in his eyes, “Well fuck daddy then,” the Omega snarls, regretting the words instantly because his body doesn’t need this stress, doesn’t need Harry’s tantrums.

Between little, traitorous tears and petting his belly the boy must fall asleep because then he’s surrounded by darkness, hazy. “M sorry I’m so sensitive,” Harry’s rasp does not startle him, subconsciously already aware of his presence. “I’m sorry I stormed out like that. I needed…to…to remember that there is no enemy. I’m such a shitty father already. Don’t hate me. I just think our pup is the enemy. I’m so sorry.”

Louis crawls over to where he’s stretched out on his back, staring up at the ceiling. Not the least bit nervous Louis straddles him, settles down with his ear to his heart, listening to its melody. Tangling their fingers, the Omega sits up again, holds his hurt, vivid stare as he brings their hands underneath his top and on his belly. “You love us.”

Lowering his lids Harry whispers, “I love you.”

“Your baby,” the boy breathes silkily as the Alpha untangles their hands to flatten his own on his belly. The touch is so hesitate, so tender, that Louis nearly bursts with love, knowing with every fiber of his elastic being his Harry won’t hurt their little love. Not now, not ever. “Our pup. I pray every night she looks like you. So you see what you created.”

A soft smile stretches his mouth. “We created. And I want her to have your eyes. I wouldn’t mind to see me in her too, though.” Idly his hand caresses, cleanly with his care. “To know I could actually help create a precious tiny pup…oh Christ I love her. I love her, but not as much I love you.”

Even as his heart strangles him Louis understands. Understands not because he’s unable to love them equally, because he does, but because this is bonded Alpha mentalities. It’s impossible to have an Alpha value anything over his or her Omega. Impossible…Omega first. Pup second. Everything else irrelevant. Louis has always found this to make no sense, watched countless documentaries that scientifically explained why the animal qualities differed from the Homo sapiens and the Homo erectus. Because it’d been a nagging question when he was younger, and courted constantly. Seems, unlike actual animals, the main concern to reproduce no matter what the cost, Alpha’s believe the mate is most important, able to be bred constantly and provide them more offspring that one pup taking their Omega’s life and in the process the Alpha’s bonded essence. Louis understands. Primary evolution. “B-But…you love her, don’t you? You’ll protect us, her, won’t you, Haz? You’ll always take care of her?”
“Yes. I’ll guard my loves with my life…I love her, Louis. I’ll always protect her like I’ll protect you. But…” Shame showers his words, “You’re first. In my heart.”

Louis wants to weep. Give until he’s numb. Because his Omega needs to be first in his heart, like any other. But, “She can be first in our heart. Our special bond.”

Slowly, Harry nods, then breathes hoarsely, “Yeah. There, in our heart, she’s first. She can have my life. But she can’t have yours. ‘M sorry I won’t choose her if worse comes to worst.”

“No choice,” Louis whispers, wanting to scream save her save her save her, because oh God he won’t want to live after that. Couldn’t stand to know… “You won’t have to choose. I’m goin’ to be okay. We’re goin’ to be lovely parents. You’re on discipline. I get to have all the fun.”

“Ha!” the Alpha barks that endearing cackle, leaning forward in a position that must be hard on his already bad back, to plant a kiss to his belly. “Well I get to spoil her. Time out, then anything she wants.”

Melting, Louis is lost to the visuals Harry creates; painting pictures of their future.

And oh God does it look like paradise.

&&

See, Louis is quite clever, absolutely fooled him at first. But, to Harry this boy is an open book, and it’s not so hard to see right through his little act. Because he lives to watch him play his mind games, Harry pretends to believe him, when he’s whining over his ‘sickness’ Harry plays stupid, like there is no red flags when Louis demands to be knotted at every opportunity, exaggerates his pain only to be fine the second Harry mentions actual hospital care, energized like never before (singing in the showers, engaging in mates play, dancing until he’s flushed beautifully and exhausted, talkative as ever–the thing is the rare times Louis is sick, the boy is an distant, unresponsive bundle in the blankets).

Let’s this go on until Sunday morning arrives. Buzzing, Harry cooks more than two people need, headphones blaring in his ears. Afterwards, the Alpha finds his Zen outside in laid out blankets, practicing yoga and glaring at their neighbor, drilling holes into his back with his hungry stare. At ease Harry reenters the house to peek into their bedroom, rolling his eyes at how Louis’ little figure is absolutely still–even in sleep the Omega is unable to stay still, tossing and turning the whole night through.

As to not ‘disturb’ his ‘sleep’ the Alpha uses the guest bathroom to shower. Does so without interruption, towel drying his lengthy waves, combing through the damp mane until it’s decent, curling at his shoulders. The satisfaction doesn’t last. The man in the reflection still looks like wreckage; those fucking bruises underneath his empty stare mock him like nothing else, the slight gaunt to his cheekbones not complimenting his cause at all.

Desire wounds in his chest–fuck it’d be nice to see the mental, emotional shifts, progress, glued to his appearance. But no. There is no indications of these monumental changes.

“Still the same sick fuck,” a voice he’s not heard since bonding taunts, razorblades leaving his veins dry of contentment. ‘A snort or two might help.’ The neglected addict within aches with starvation–Harry hopes in time he’ll starve to death.

A dark entity snakes around his throat, an inescapable noose. “Leave me alone,” Harry’s voice sounds strangled. Go figure.
‘We are you. And we aren’t goin’ anywhere. Only one way to get rid of us...’ Snorting up. Saliva pools in his mouth. Disgusted, the Alpha balls his hands into fists, and glares at the demons lurking in his stare.

Rage blinds him. Somehow the mirror is shattered. Knuckles bloodied. With the largest piece of filtered glass Harry looks into the reflection. Catches Louis’ reflection all the same. Stomach churning Harry drops the piece into the sink and turns to face him. “Bad day?” the boy’s voice is an unsteady breath.

Blankly, Harry says, “Somethin’ like that.” Bad mind. Thoroughly fucked up.

With an achingly gentle expression Louis’ gaze flickers to his bloodied hand. Steady in his elegant approach, Louis takes his wrist, “Oh, baby. Please, don’t be so reckless. Wear gloves next time you’re smashing mirrors.” Like that’s nothing fucking unstable, like its normal.

Grateful, Harry only manages, “You aren’t...afraid?”

In seconds Louis lifts his gaze, dancing with the sweetest acceptance. “Of course not. You won’t hurt us.” Once the Alpha only stares in complete adoration, rose dusts his sharp cheeks, “Where’s the first aid? Let’s patch this up.” Having grown up the eldest the Omega seems to be quite acquainted with disinfecting, tweezing glass shards (which might have to do with the time Lottie stepped on that bottle), and patching up with gauze and tape. Once the stingy care is over Louis kisses his bandaged knuckles. “All set.”

“I...thank you. I...” Words fail him. So he tips his face and kisses him, expressing his gratitude with soft strokes and heavy breaths, tearing away to plant chaste kisses over his features. Louis giggles, “Rescued my princess yet again.”

Christ, it’s like he’s superior, the shit in his head...vanished. Just like that.

“My hero,” he says in a shrilly voice, latching onto his throat, listening to his stunned, pretty gasp as his mouth works on his delicious skin. “You make me bet’ah,” he breathes hotly, nipping at ear until Louis’s purring, wanting again. “You make me bett’ah, haz.” The boy’s mouth works on his delicious skin. “Haz,” Louis gasps, nails raking down his back as his muscles bunch, hands splayed on the backs of his chunky thighs so he’s wrapped around him, anchoring them as Harry’s mouth claims his again. “I want to please you, Alpha.”

Growls rip up his throat as the breathy mewl excites the fire in his veins. “Yeah. I want to watch you finger yourself. That’s goin’ to fuckin’ please me.”

“Right now right now,” Louis whimpers eagerly, nodding wildly as Harry sets him on the mattress, groaning at how beautiful he is in the soft morning light, so needy already with his pretty cock flushed between his legs. Without permission the boy folds up on his knees, reach around to sneak his fingers between his perky cheeks, whimpering as Harry’s stare latches onto his ass. Such a lovely view, longing winds in his stomach as his cock fattens impossibly. “Go ahead, baby.” Forcing his stare to where his face is in the mattress, glossy stare focused on the bulging outline of his cock in his pants. “Yeah. Goin’ to be inside of you.”

Mouth round Louis moans, so loud, so fucking loud. “Go on, pup. So sexy. So fuckin’ pretty.”

Gripping the perky globes of his ass, Harry kneads, aware of his rushed rhythm, the intoxicating scent so thick in his nose that he just has to watch. Spreading his ass, the Alpha growls, watching two little digits sink into his puffy, soaked hole. “Haz,” the boy whimpers, jabbing relentlessly, circling as to stretch his hole more. “Haz, ‘m ready, just please.”
“I want you to come on your fingers,” Harry orders sharply, “Finish up, pup. Give me what I want.”

So very eager Louis pace quickens, his little “uh, uh, uh,”’s escalating with every thrust. Flushed almost red Louis’ hole flutters, impaled on his knuckle deep fingers as the boy convulses, moaning softly into the sheets. And fuck Harry’s cock is throbbing, needs to be inside, tugging his pants down to grip where his knots forming at the base, growing as Louis’ fingers leave, the sight of his gaping whole stretched not nearly enough, but clenching around nothing as the boy begs, “Put it in, Haz, put it in.”

Shoving into his hot, tight entrance Harry groans around the sudden clench as Louis cries deliriously, “Too much. Hurts so good…”

Unwilling to make the stretch worse, Harry stills, tweaks at his hard little nipples, pleased by his involuntary motion, hips jerking into the mattress, forcing his cock to drag slickly. Pleasure wrecks up his spine. “I’m sorry. I’m sorry, need to just… ” before he manages to finish he’s slamming into him, the friction on his cock sending him to heights he’s never been. Nothing exists but the hot sensation, fucking into him, his little body jostled by the force. Pure instinct, Harry leaves his body to force him onto his back, lifting his legs so they’re on his shoulders. Drawing into his already fucked out hole Harry rams into him, watches him claw at the sheets, tossing his head back and forth.

“Am I hittin’ that spot, pup?” he asks between choppy breaths, hips working on their own accord, chasing his pleasure as Louis moans, “Oh, oh, oh, baby, yes, baby, please.” Stare locked on the round of his belly Harry is consumed by the heat, snarling, “Who did that to you, paradise?”

“You. You, Alpha.” Always needing some control the heels of his feet dig into his shoulder blades, holding him.

“What’d I do, pup?” his thrusts lose pace, balls tense, on fire as his knot expands.

“Knocked me up, ‘Aaz. Bred me,” Louis mewls, clenched down on his cock as pleasure flares hot everywhere, knot splitting him open as the boy trembles. Coming jets from his jerking cock, everything.

Unhooking his legs the Alpha situates them gingerly as possible, on his back to keep from crushing his precious cargo, Louis sprawled out on his chest, impaled on his knot. “Christ,” he says once he’s caught his breath. “You’re…” but he can’t find an exact word to describe his worship. Even perfect sounds pale.

Seemingly lost to his orgasm Louis just gasps, post-orgasm shudders the only indication that he’s here.

It’s when he’s on the clouds of contentment that the Omega lifts his face, smiling dopily. “Hey,” his voice is significantly coarse.

“Feelin’ bet’ah I reckon,” Harry comments flippantly, watching the heat spread on his face before he’s back to nosing at his chest. “’S always bet’ah when my body’s distracted by pleasure. When I lay with you. Always comes back though.”

With an entirely amused grin the Alpha asks, “So you’ve not been dramatizing your…condition?”

Tensing, the boy clenched around his steadily throbbing cock, tripping up his breath. “Why would you even ask that?” So outraged, like Harry’s absurd to even think so.

“I’m not as stupid as I seem sometimes, Louis.” Irritation spikes his heart rate. “I don’t know how
you could think I can’t tell the difference between when you’re actually sick and when you’re taking the piss.”

Trapped, Louis snivels, “I am not taking the piss. Sometimes it’s not so bad! But when I’m up too long it is.”

“So you can’t go to dinner tonight?” Harry asks tightly.

“No,” Louis says in that tiny upset voice. “I just don’t feel up to it. My body’s frail.” The sex says something else.

“And this is how I know you’re not quite so sick. You wouldn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings by not showing up due to any nonlife threatening, harmless sickness. Especially when it’s your family.”

“I’m pregnant and sick. Get off my case,” the boy says weakly, seeming to figure Harry’s memorized his every facet.

“Alright. You can be pregnant and sick at dinner. Conversation closed.”

By now his knots gone down enough that Louis rolls away, and Harry hisses, not expecting the abrupt loss. “I’m not going. Conversation closed closed.” Clutching a pillow Louis avoids his stare until Harry sighs heavily, “Alright. Well I’m going to get ready then.”

Just like that Louis’ gaze settles on him, all crocodile tears and wobbly bottom lip. “You’re leaving me?”

“I’m going to visit my family,” Harry corrects, unfazed. “You are choosing to stay. Be home by tomorrow morning.”

“You’re staying the night?” the boy demands, bratty and adorable.

“No,” the Alpha says simply, rising from the bed and jacking his pants up again.

“Then where will you be all bloody night?” There’s an anxious, scared note to his shrilly voice.

“Reckon you think ‘m going to get high,” Harry say with a bitter bite. Seems trust still isn’t there. The jarring silence does nothing but intensify his sensitivity.

“You know that’s not true,” Louis snivels. “I…I…don’t want you goin’ out with any Omegas, is all. You don’t need to g-go out with any Omegas…I’m pregnant. That’s not exactly attractive. And every Omega you hang about is just…stellar. And…yeah. That’s what I thought.”

Ice water dowses him at the insecurity in his voice as his hands wring on his pregnant belly. “Paradise,” Harry breathes, horrified, crawling back into bed. “Paradise, no, no, no.”

Louis shakes his head. “’S stupid. I’m just bein’…ridiculous. But you always say I’m bad with commitment, but your longest relationship was two months and you’re bad with commitment. I’m pregnant. Who’s goin’ to want me or even want to fuck me? You’re perfect as ever. Every unmated Omega with eyes will want to fuck you. I-I-I’m not sayin’ you’d cheat on me. Of course n-n-not. But…I don’t want you to see somethin’ bett’ah than me.”

The words wrench at his shot to hell heart. “…” his throat is too tight, but, fuck, “You’re my soulmate. Everything I need, want. Not one Omega is better than mine. So strong, lovely, brilliant. I see nothing but you. I’ve only ever seen you, since I was twelve I saw you, who you are. ’S always been you, Louis.”
Louis chews on his bottom lip, then smiles shyly. “’M not coming home tonight either.”
Possessive, his Alpha rouses, but Louis continues, “I want to stay the night with our family so.”
“Okay,” Harry says unsteadily. “They’re going to fawn once the surprise wears.”
A brilliant smile lights his features. “The best part! They’ll treat me like an absolute king!”
“They already do,” the Alpha reminds dryly.
“Not like this. This…” mischief gleams in his eyes, “will be like never before.”

&B

Buzzing, Louis fidget through the too lengthy ride, blasts his playlist until Harry lowers the volume, petulantly raising the volume again, though Harry just lowers it again. They go back and forth until Louis huffs and kills the music, sulking. “You’re so annoying. Why did I let this happen?”

“Because we are meant,” Harry says distractedly, extremely focused on the road no matter how Louis baits him into play.

“Says every Alpha ever,” Louis snorts, patting his thigh. “Don’t feel too special.”

With an all too charming grin the Alpha dares to reach over and pat his belly softly. “No other Alpha gets to say Louis Tomlinson is carrying their pup so I feel pretty damn special.”

A blush spreads high on his cheeks when Harry carries his hand back to the steering wheel. “Technically I knocked meself up,” Louis chirps. “Reckon you wouldn’t have knocked me up willingly.”

“I was damned willing to knot you,” the Alpha says simply.

“No regrets?” the boy asks, voice quivering ridiculously as he strokes his belly.

“No regrets,” Harry confirms without hesitation. Louis’ heart flutters in disconcertingly as his insides become soupy. Silent, Louis admires his features, his reactions, him, the little left of their trip. All too soon Harry’s brought the car to the ostentatious gates, typing the pin and waiting for the gates to come apart.

Just like that the nerves return as Louis focuses on evening his breaths. This is it. This is it. Once they stop its some measures from the grand entrance. With a groan Harry kills the engine and Louis watches him open the glove compartment and palm a gun, a bloody gun. But before he can react he’s hopped from the Range Rover to help him, but Louis’ already in action, opening the door and stepping on the smooth ground.

“Wait for me,” Harry barks, grabbing for his arm.
Louis pins him with a level stare. “Haz, if you keep treating me like a wineglass, I’m going to go nuts over the next seven months.”

“Listen, paradise, I don’t want you tripping. Those shoes are heeled.”

“Oh, for fucksakes…”

Without comment Harry shuts the car door, kissing him breathless, then putting his arm around Louis’ waist, leading him up the front walkway of the manor. Louis is all too aware of his darting
“Haz,” Louis halts, watching him trip up with a dark expression. “I want you to put the gun away.”

“When we’re in the house.”

“We’re not going to be jumped here,” Louis reasons with him. “This place is wired.”

“If you think I’m taking even the slightest chance with you and my pup, you are out of your mind.”

Since his first step out of their house Harry’s been overbearing as hell, but Louis understands he can’t help it. This is a bonded Alpha. With his pregnant Omega. There are few things on the planet more aggressive or dangerous. Probably hurricanes and tornado’s, Louis thinks vaguely.

And so Louis doesn’t argue with him, wants to stay blissfully bonded, covering the hard hand on his waist with one of his own. “I reckon you should be careful what you ask for.”

“What do you mean?” Somehow Louis ends up in front of him as they come up to the door, blocking Louis with his body. Under his breath Harry mutters, “Fuckin’ daylight. Makes us so conspicuous.”

Louis giggles, “Well I’ve always wanted you for a bonded Alpha.”

A chaste kiss is planted on his neck. “Well, you have your wish. I’m deep bonded. Way deep bonded. Deep, deep, ultra–,” as he leans forward to hit the brass knuckles (why not the doorbell?) his body is in full contact with his. Louis purrs, rubbing against him happily as he tenses up.

Before the Alpha can speak, one of the grand Oak wood doors flies open. Bodies swarm. Questions are shot at them. Overwhelmed, Louis whimpers, blinking wildly, wanting–Harry’s voice interrupts the chaos, “Right here, Lou.”

It’s much easier to concentrate on what’s happening with Harry a charged force beside him. Greeting him so enthusiastically are the girls, suddenly taller than last meet. Pressing kisses to their foreheads Louis laughs nervously, hugging them back with the same enthusiasm before they focus on the main attraction, Harry. Watching him, interacting with them, smiling so hard his dimples are on full force, butterflies stretch their wings in his belly.

“Louis William,” it’s his mum’s voice as he’s gathered in her embrace, sinking into her happily. Somehow everything is okay, right when he’s reconnected with Jay, who’s kissing his cheeks. “Oh, baby, you look…you look so lovely.”

A chill runs up his spine but he’s in a shirt too many times big on even Harry, swimming in it, the outline of his belly not quite so noticeable. It’s the glow. Must be. Louis clings to her, inhales her familiar fragrance and rasps, “Mum.”

“‘S been too long. Never stay away so long.”

Louis promises, but silently thinks if Papa don’t disown me. Uneasy knots form in his pregnant belly. Once he’s released, his hands start towards his baby belly, but decides against the habit. For now Louis won’t bring attention to little love. In the doorway Dan stands with his arms crosses, an entirely impassive expression on his face. Belly in knots Louis scurries up to him. “Hi, Papa.”

“I haven’t seen my son in nearly three months and all I get is a hi?” Dan asks, hurt stark in his stare. Forgetting his fear the Omega hugs him, feeling like a little boy when Dan returns the

“Yeah,” it’s said gruffly, “You best be sorry. No call, no text, no sight. Where did you disappear to?”

“I was in hibernation,” Louis says flippantly, breaking the embrace. “Where’s–oh.” Harry’s been wrapped up in his parents’ arms, Ann is cooing to him, Des talking so silently Louis cannot hear the words, but watches Harry pat his back, lifting his face to reveal bloodshot eyes, locked on Louis’ even as his Alpha mouths, ‘okay?’

Louis smiles softly, giving him thumbs up and watching the relief light his stare as he drops his head to his mum’s shoulder. “How cute,” Lottie comments beside him. “Bout time that boy was bathed in love.”

Louis leans into Lottie’s side. “Yeah. I love when Harry’s loved.”

“You just love my brother too much,” Gemma pipes, taking Dan’s place as the older Alpha storms up to Harry. Louis’ breath catches in horror, but Dan all but shoves Des out of the way (Anne following her mate, in heart-rending tears) takes Harry into an obviously awkward embrace. “Let’s give them some privacy,” Jay decides quietly, even when Louis glares, reluctant to leave Harry even a moment with his very protective father. Des effectively distracts him, until Louis is talking animatedly, following Harry’s father into the house, outrageously excited to hear they’ve added sports to the Council’s educational branch. Hugging his belly Louis is carried away in the noise, greeting Doris and Ernest in their bouncers. Laughing madly at the idea that his siblings will be very closely aged to his pup. Somehow his mirth breaks the ice as everyone settles in the sitting room. Tangled conversations are lost as Louis is immersed in his siblings, Daisy in his lap, Phoebe petting him. “Lou,” Daisy says with such seriousness that Louis’ attention is claimed. “Harry touched your belly, di’nt he?”

Ice rains down on him. Nobody notices as Louis whispers, “What do you mean, Dais?”

Daisy smiles, surely too smug for a little girl. “Mummy says pups are made when an Alpha touches an Omega’s belly. So obviously Harry touched your belly ’cause…” her stare darts to his horribly obvious baby bump. Blushing, Louis says, “’S a secret right now, Dais. I’m goin’ to surprise Mummy and Papa. But later.”

With an adorably determined expression his younger sister nods firmly. “I’ll be waitin’.”

An entirely too in love Omega he’s spellbound the second Harry barrels through the entrance. A fountain of smiles in his eyes Louis stands up and walks (runs) over to him, ignoring their audience to link his arms around Harry’s neck and stretch to kiss him. Sighing into his mouth Louis’ head spins. “Paradise,” Harry breathes, yanking him so close his baby bump is tight against him. “You okay? Where’s my dad?”

Harry nuzzles his hair. “My SIG was confiscated. He’s in the process of locking it away.”

“Thank God,” Louis says, twirling his fingers in his silky hair. “It was quite unnecessary. Were you two actually civil?”

“You could say that, yeah,” Harry says slowly, not very convincing so Louis pulls back to examine him, relieved to see there aren’t any– “Ahem,” someone clears their throats and Louis jumps, unused to company outside of his Alphas. When the Omega risks a glance over his shoulder all eyes are on them.
Jay looks extremely proud, Des looks oddly smug, Anne looks quizzical, Lottie and Gemma amused. Outside of the adults the children are uninterested, amongst themselves.

“I think it’s kip time!” Jay announces, standing to head for the twins. “I just need someone to check on the kitchen—”

“We can put them to sleep, Jay,” Harry interjects, looking at his mum hesitantly.

With an oddly touched look Jay nods, “That would be lovely, H. Thank you.”

Louis’ heart just might beat right out of his chest when Harry smiles shyly. Taking his hand Harry drags him over to the twins, and, like an absolute pro, frees the bouncer to gather Doris, smiling at the tiny toddler. Gingerly, Louis takes Ernest, and all but squeals, leading them out and towards the nursery. “Can we have scads of pups?” Harry asks quietly, looking down at Doris in wonder.

Louis giggles, all girlishly and in love, “Well let’s see how this one goes first, yeah?”

With an entirely too roughish grin Harry mocks, ‘Sh. You’re goin’ to ruin the surprise.”

The nursery is charming, but not anything like Louis’ plans for theirs. Much too pastel, Doris’ cradle located on the far baby blue wall, Ernest’s located of the far rosy wall. Which is quite interesting, Louis approves, focused on softly swaying with an already settled Doris, mesmerized by the droopy blue eyes, quite like his own. An obviously dominant trait. Louis is sure Harry’s getting his wish. Speaking of, Harry is rocking gently, singing some lullaby Louis’ not heard before, the most beautiful scene as he looks up fleetingly, smiling like he’s won something.

Ernest is settled in his cradle first, and Louis follows second with Doris, careful as to not wake her. Once they’re outside Louis’ high-fived, whisper-shrieking, “Oh my God that was…I’m buzzing!” Harry’s grinning so wide Louis’ cheeks ache for him, but he’s being kissed, gentle and loving and nothing is wrong in the world. Nothing.

&&

Everything is wrong in the world. Everything. Well, almost everything. Across the table Harry’s playing with his food, like he does when he’s nervous, and Louis is fidgeting, rubbing his belly, like he does when he’s nervous. Everyone else does not seem to notice.

“Louis, love, are you feelin’ alright? You haven’t touched your food,” Anne comments, peering at him through mossy coloured concerned eyes.

Nervously, Louis chuckles, “’M fine, Anne,” but no he is not fine–the food smells. It’s heavy in the air. Spreading nausea through him. Tastes delicious. Smells dreadful. And oh God he does not want to be here right now, wishes he could get some fresh air, but now everyone is staring with horrid concern and just.

Louis starts on the food, chewing even as his stomach rolls, swallowing and gritting his teeth as every piece of meat, veggie, starch, plummets into his gut.

“Louis,” Harry’s voice startles him. “Stop. You’re going make yourself sick.” Talk about timing. In that second Louis shoves away from the table with the mush he’d forced down climbing up his throat. Blindly, the Omega stumbles through the kitchen where the staff continue to bustle and outside onto the back courtyard where the vomit gushes out onto the pristine deck. A hand smooths his fringe from his face. “It’s okay, love. It’s okay.”

And when the nausea has faded and there is only evidence Louis shivers, leaning on him. “I’m sorry. ’M sorry I just couldn’t…It smelt so hideous in there.” Just remembering the boy gags,
tummy empty enough that only dry heaves follow.

“Well I thought it smelt lovely,” Jay’s voice is abruptly too close. Anxiety knots in his chest as Louis clings to Harry, hiding his baby bump. “We’re pregnant, Jay,” Harry says without missing one beat.

“Finally. I was waiting for one of you to come out with it,” his Mum exclaims when Louis’ ready to be struck by lightning. Against him Harry’s relaxed. “You knew?” Louis is not relaxed. Louis is freaking out.

“Of course I knew! Mother’s intuition, Louis,” his Mum chides until Louis is biting Harry’s shoulder in reproach. “Also you’re showing quite a bit, baby. Plus the makeup is wearing, the bond is quite noticeable. I demand details! But first Anne is practically itching to have our suspicions confirmed so go on and make the announcement.”

“Mum knows?” Harry asks, mirroring his previous disbelief. Louis almost giggles when Jay sighs impatiently, “Harry, Mother’s intuition.”

Groaning, the Alpha mutters, “We are so obvious.”

“No, actually I am sure neither fathers have any clue.” Inconsiderately, Jay muses. “But they will soon enough! I would hate to…slip up before you’ve properly announced the big revelation.”

Horrified, Louis whines, bites again at the mention. “Well I suppose we should get to it then. Jay, can I have a moment with Louis?”

“Do hurry! I need details,” his Mum emphasizes her point but goes back into the house.

“Paradise, it’s okay,” the Alpha says softly, toying with the hairs at the nape of his neck. “Relax, love.”

“How can I relax?” Louis erupts, shoving him away and storming away. Of course Harry follows. “I am pregnant, Harry! Do you get that?”

“Well, I hope I do,” Harry grumbles, “Or this might be a bit weird.”

Louis only groans, put out.

“Louis,” the Alpha’s persuasive voice is on its highest level, compelling him to listen even as he continues down the slope towards their swing set. “Come on, love. It’s not quite so bad. I mean we have Jay on our side.”

With an entirely childish huff the Omega sits on his swing and immediately starts to hitch himself up into the air. “I don’t know why I’m so freaked out,” Louis admits reluctantly once he’s in the air. Harry looks extremely edgy, all twitchy and agitated. Louis wants to hug him. Instead he slows his pace until he’s not almost lurching towards the concrete. “I just….I am not ashamed of us, you, our pup. But I’m a bit ashamed of myself. Because I know this wasn’t supposed to happen, you didn’t want this. Everyone will certainly blame you, because the Alpha’s are supposed to be in charge. But I don’t want you to play like you were so hyped to do this. I don’t want you to have to play pretend for my sake.”

There. With the truth out Louis breathes so much easier. Especially when Harry laughs outright. “You’re so silly, love. You’re my fuckin’ wish come true, and you are gifting me by having my baby. Sure this was unexpected but the best things in life aren’t planned. There is no blame for pregnancy unless it’s unwanted. There’s just assumptions. Which fuck I want them to think I was so fuckin’ for knocking you up ASAP. We’re not exactly early with our upbringing. I am so hyped
to do this now. I’m not pretending. I never will be. Not about you. This. Us.”

“Why are you so sweet to me?” When I least expect it. God, it’s so genuine, the best things in life are unexpected.

“Because ’m stupid in love with you. I see no wrong in you. Some people might say you’re a controversy. I wish I could say so too sometimes ’cause it’d sure help me understand your thought process. You always surprise me. And it’s always fuckin’ amazing.” Harry settles on his swing, and takes his hand once Louis’ slowed enough. With a shy smile Louis squeezes his hand. “I’m sorry I ever doubted you. But I will never give up on you. I didn’t then, I won’t now.”

Harry’s beautiful face lights up, and Louis feels like he’s diamonds, made of them surely. “Let’s go ‘cause a riot.”

Louis smiles wickedly. “Our new chapter.”

Well, the hook is always an amazing part, Louis thinks. Running into the first floor living room Louis opens his arms wide, voice booming, “I am two months pregnant!”

Any weight lifts from his shoulders. Sweet freedom. A stunned silence falls upon the entire room.

“With my pup,” Harry adds smugly, (un)helpful as ever.

Just like that noise erupts, elated cheers and relieved coos. “Bout time!” Lottie cries as Gemma giggles, “You took long enough!” as Jay fires questions, and Anne dissolves into tears (emotional, like someone he knows).

There is no reaction from Dan or Des. Frozen where they are hunched over a game of poker. While their surprise fades Louis is pulled into warm embraces, kisses planted on his hair and so many affectionate “congratulations, I am so happy for you.”’s until Louis is brimming with the same delight.

Beside him Harry’s carried close, awed coo’s lingering in the room as Louis’ stare flickers to where his father and father-in-law are in some silent conversation. They’re more engrossed in each other, Des’ hand on Dan’s shoulder, which what? Louis scurries over to them, clearing his throat softly.

Startled the two turn to face him. Red faced. Dan with an intense distress, Des with an intense approval. Louis shrinks from his papa while Des stands to wrap him in the best hug all night. “I called this, I did. Thank you for believing in my son even when I couldn’t. I will always be indebted to you. I…Thank you,” his voice shakes like never before. “Your strength outshines that of most Alphas, Louis. You empower us all. I am so proud. You’ve always been my son. But now I hope to see it finalized.”

Touched, Louis holds on a bit too long, blinking back tears. “I will always believe in him. I think Haz deserves the same praise for his accomplishments. There are very many. I hope one day you feel proud of him. Because I always will.”

“One day,” Des breathes, ending the embrace. And that’s enough for now. With only his father to face Louis swallows, stutters, “P-Papa?”

“I knew this was bound to happen. Just…I still want to kill him.”

Louis flinches at the raw rage in his voice, then lifts his chin. “Don’t ruin this for us. He’s happy. I am happy. Can’t you just be happy for us?”
Dan gives no visible reaction. “I can’t understand, Boobear. I can’t understand how you can *love him even now.*”

“Because,” Louis says softly, looking over at where Harry’s caught up in Des. “He’s not perfect. And he doesn’t pretend to be. Because he touched my heart…Bruised me quite a bit. But…hearts are meant to withstand touch. Nobody else can ever touch my heart like him. I’m sorry you don’t see what I’ve always seen. But, papa, I don’t really give any fucks. I love him.”

Dan sighs in surrender, “I encouraged this tenacity didn’t I?”

“You encouraged me to *stay true to my beliefs. And I believe in him.*”

“I still want to kill the bastard for getting my twenty year old *heir* pregnant before mating you like a proper Alpha would,” his father glowers at him. Louis smiles weakly, “Trust me…he’s the innocent.”

“I don’t want to know. I just want to be ignorant on this whole bit and give him an earful.”

“I deserve the earful, not him.”

“Oh this doesn’t concern you, Louis,” his father rudely dismisses him, stalking up to where Harry’s talking to Gemma. Louis follows, sighing as Dan demands, “So, are you going to mate my son now that you’ve knocked him up?” Everyone but Louis gasps. “Or do I have to express my extreme anger that I was not asked *permission.*”

“You’d have said no anyway,” Lottie says dryly, which Louis can’t help but snicker at even under this tense charge.

Harry is so rigid, ignoring Dan to come over to him, protectively drawing him to his side. It’s obvious he’s itching to bare his canines, but he only hisses a bit. “I am going to mate him, my lord. But I will not see him insulted. If you can manage to treat him how he *deserves* we might invite you to the ceremony. Otherwise, you’re off the list.”

And there goes any hope of peace.

So close…

Louis sighs, lightheaded enough with nerves that he settles on the sofa and pulls up his shirt to pet his little love as the two do what they must. Seems he’s not the only one. Jay, Des and Anne try to diffuse the situation but Dan is shouting at the top of his lungs as Harry’s attempting to get around where Des holds his father back. Gemma and Lottie settle beside him, so he’s sandwiched. “Will the madness ever end? Stay tuned for the next episode of *Council Life Behind the Scenes,*” Lottie says with such a wistful tone that Louis dissolves in a fit of laughter, Gemma right behind him.

“It is rather like a soap opera,” Gemma gasps.

“I’d say Harry and papa are the stars, really. They’re what makes it. Look at them,” Louis points around laughter, unable to really be serious with their dramatics.

Anne is in the middle now, trying to calm Harry, which they sympathetically watch her fail. Harry continues to spew obscenities, truly enraged. Honest, the Omega hopes this doesn’t become a physical altercation.

“Lou, may I?” Blinking, the boy realizes Gemma’s hand hovers over his rounded belly.

“Course, Gems.” Again the first touch that isn’t his or Harry’s causes him to flinch a bit, but
Gemma doesn’t seem the least bit discouraged, “Wow. You’re rather…developed for only two months.”

Louis sighs, upset, “So everyone says. I have an appointment with my doctor next week so I’ll keep you up to date.”

Gemma smiles gently. “Not an insult, but that’s relieving. Boy or girl?” So much like her brother. This must be where Harry gets his odd traits, really. Louis reminds anyway, “I’m two months along. I don’t know quite yet.”

An impressive thud steals his attention, but the neighboring sofa’s simply been knocked over. Still in the safe. “Sort your shit out, Styles!” Dan snarls though Harry follows up with a snarl just a bit louder, “I’m working on it, inconsiderate bastard!”

“Yikes,” Louis says, wincing.

“Paternal instinct, Lou,” Gemma says like it’s so very obvious. Harry’s role model, surely.

“Girl,” the Omega tells them.

“Oh boy. Good luck with that,” Lottie says, sincerely meaning it.

Louis pins her with a murderous look, but doesn’t comment, rubbing soothing circling into his belly.

“GOD DAMN IT!” Des roars with so much force the entire room freezes over. “GET OUT! BOTH OF YOU! GET IT TOGETHER! OUT OF THE HOUSE! YOU ARE GOING TO SCARE THE CHILDREN!”

Louis sympathizes with Des, who tries so hard to be the peacemaker between his son and his best friend. Happy to see both Alphas dragged to the front door, protesting in rage, and kicked out. Des returns, smooths his once crisp button up and smiles an obviously fake smile. “I don’t know what to do with them, I really don’t.”

“They’re big boys,” Louis reassures, more to himself than Des. “They’ll sort themselves out.”

“I’m not so sure they’re even adults,” Anne comments dryly.

“Who let them procreate?” Jay says, as Louis gives her a pointed look, she gives him a pointed look. They share an amused moment before, “Tea anyone?”

“Me!” Louis chirps first, the others in agreement.

Once he’s sipping on his blessed tea, Louis is in a much better mood, munching on biscuits and engaging in the best fawn ever. “Harry wants her to have my eyes. But I quite fancy his eyes more, Anne,” and “We didn’t really prepare, so the doctor couldn’t tell me much,” which earns him concerned looks, and though it becomes an elephant in the room nobody seems to have the heart to kill the buzz with talk of the very possible health concerns. Which Louis is extremely grateful for.

A long while passes when the bell chimes throughout the first floor. Des sighs heavily, “Should I make them sleep outside?”

Louis laughs like it’s the best joke he’s heard. It’s the seven cuppas he’s downed. Hyper does not settle well with him. Its three rings, and painful laughter later that Anne scolds, “For heaven sakes go answer the bloody door already.” And so Des does so. Really buzzing Louis awaits
impatiently, and when the two come in his jaw slackens. Harry’s arm is around his father’s waist…and Dan is smiling. Which what the bloody hell is Harry doing with his arm around his dad’s waist? There’s a bruise on Dan’s jaw. But Harry seems untouched. Louis is proud of Dan’s obvious restraint, and a bit peeved by Harry’s obvious lack thereof restraint.

But what is going on? Louis only realizes he’s spoken out loud until Dan announces, “Harry and I have come to a mutual agreement. I hope to see the day he regains my trust entirely.” That’s it? Louis narrows his eyes. “What’s the agreement?"

“Your happiness is rather important to us. We can be civil to keep everyone happy. I’m sorry for the way I reacted, Louis. But please understand you’re my little prince, and I love you so very much. I wish no ill will to you, Harry, or my grandchild, ever. You have my blessings. I apologise.”

An overwhelming relief bullets through his veins as Louis says, “You’re already forgiven, papa. I love you too. And thank you.”

From there everything continues in a vast rush until the Omega awakens to find Harry’s carrying him through the corridors of his family’s manor. Curling impossibly closer Louis hums, “You’re such an Alpha idiot.”

“I know,” Harry says. “I was out of line.”

“Naw,” Louis giggles drowsily, “Tha’ was sweet to me. How you defended my honor. But you didn’t need to hit my da’.”

A low, smoky laugh echoes through the corridors. “I didn’t hit your father, paradise. He hit himself to prove he was the dominant Alpha. I can freely laugh ‘bout it now. We actually laughed about it together. But I didn’t laugh enough over it to be honest.”

“I…will….laugh with you,” Louis bursts into delighted giggles, “Who let Alphas rule, really?"

“I have no idea,” Harry says around husky laughter. “I promise to never punch myself to prove I’m worthy of you.”

“I didn’t think I had to worry about that,” Louis snickers, kissing up his throat as Harry fumbles to open the door to his childhood bedroom. “But it’s nice to be reassured.”

“Glad to be of service,” Harry whispers, setting him on his feet (Louis whines in protest, but sleepily and sluggishly strips and shrugs into one of Harry’s silky shirts, climbing into bed on his back in wait). Absolutely naked, the shame long gone, the Alpha curls up around him, and tonight Louis gladly accepts the little spoon, because Harry’s hand flattens on his belly.

And little love must love the attention too.

&&

“Is there any other possible day to meet with him?” the Alpha asks, seated on the window seat in the third floor sitting room, nails raking down his arm. When there is an unsympathetic denial Harry stiffens, anger crawling on all fours in his chest. “Fine. I’ll be there.” Without giving the receptionist the chance to ruin his chance, Harry disconnects and hurls the phone. With an entirely too satisfying crash the bloody thing meets the wall and propels back onto the hardwood.

‘Such a disappointment,’ the voice cackles madly as Harry clutches his throbbing temples, lips curled as his Alpha lashes out against the mental assault. But there is only so much his Alpha can do, nothing in comparison to the monster.
Hunger gnaws at his bones, tightens his skin, reminding him just what is needed to alleviate this creeping pain. In attempts to distract his body from its craving Harry yanks viciously at his hair, threatens to pull tuffs right from the roots. Its cackles grow in strength with his every shit attempt.

Consumed by his mind’s inability to function around his addiction Harry doesn’t notice Louis’ settled beside him on the window seat until scuffed Vans hover just a bit over the ground, smaller in comparison to his boots, planted firmly on the hardwood. “Hi,” his voice is hesitant as a dainty hand lands on his thigh.

Words fail him. An unwarranted fury flares hot, pinpointing Louis. Frozen, the Alpha stares blankly at their shoes–once Louis’ forgotten about the tattered things Harry’s tossing them. “You weren’t supposed to leave the house without me,” the Alpha says tightly.

“You were asleep. You don’t sleep enough. I wasn’t going to wake you,” Louis says sensibly. “Anyway I wasn’t alone. I brought three bodyguards with me.” It’s meant to placate, but the fury escalates to the point that his hands ball into white knuckled fists. There is no physical threat to Louis. Perhaps the wall, or even better, the fucking bodyguards, who are fucking fired. The second he’s able to think without this uncontrollable fury they’re out. “I didn’t think it’d upset you this much,” Louis whispers when Harry doesn’t respond.

“You don’t ever fucking think,” the Alpha sneers, “That’s the fucking problem.”

“You’re one to talk,” Louis hisses with an upset bite as he snatches his hand away.

With an entirely too hostile glare Harry stands. “I don’t think? All I fucking do is think, Louis. I think and I think and I think about you. No matter what I consider your feelings. You couldn’t give two shits about mine.”

Defensive Louis lurches upright and storms up to him. A tempest storms in his beautiful eyes. “You know what? I think my leaving isn’t what’s stuck up your arse. And I’m not tolerating you taking your anger out on me. So either fucking talk to me, or I’m leaving.”

At the mention of his Omega leaving again his Alpha claws at his chest. Baring his elongated canines Harry growls in warning, though Louis only flicks his fringe with an entirely unimpressed look, “What? Going to bite me now? Go all Alpha on me? Try to–,” Wild, Harry pounces, circling his waist and crowding him to bury his face in his throat, sinking his canines into his bonded skin. A whimper spills from Louis’ mouth, baring his throat and fisting his hair. Blood stains his mouth as Harry sucks gently, an overwhelming sense of control building in his chest. It’s when Louis’ panting that the Alpha licks at his skin, mouthing up his throat to claim his sweet mouth in a bruising kiss. “When will I mark my territory?” Louis gasps, breath sweet and warm. “You’ll be wearing so many sheer shirts. Gonna back stab you with my name.”

Harry laughs hoarsely. “Two months, paradise.” Christ, so long. So very long—they demanded one month. Alas both mother’s insisted, “We’re in charge here. One month is not enough time! It’s such short notice!” Which fine. More time to plan a proper proposal. Once this week is over with Harry intends to be his wish come true, remembers Louis’ exact words on just how he wanted to be asked for his hand.

“But ‘m tired of speculation on who’s gone and knocked me up!” Louis complains into his jaw, leaving love bites in his mouths wake. “They’ve accused Liam! They’ve accused Aiden! They’ve accused fucking Grimmy!”

“And they’ve accused me,” a menacing growl forms in his chest at the name Aiden.

Louis giggles, pausing at his pulse point. An inescapable possessiveness lights him on fire.
“They’re so skeptical. Either it’s childhood love. Or it’s remain best friends. We waited so long, they’ve given up on the idea of Harry Styles bonding Louis Tomlinson.”

“’Cause you let fucking Grimshaw court you,” Harry says with an all too bitter bite. With his hand fist ing Louis’ hair Harry dips to tongue at his swollen lips, filthy and demanding. Louis parts his mouth, mewling and tugging at his lengthy waves. “Yeah,” Louis whimpers, “To make you jealous. And don’t play innocent. You fucked with all those trashy Omegas. How could anyone think you’d possibly settle down?”

In reproof Harry thrusts his tongue with more force, dominating easily as Louis’ strokes tease. Christ, he’s always such a little tease, coquettish in ways that wreck him. “Everyone knew. Knew just how I felt. I knew exactly how I felt, too. We took our friendship too far and everyone knew. We got so damned carried away in each other and everyone knew it. Ever wondered why Alphas didn’t court you? You didn’t let them. Just like you didn’t let me court anyone else.”

Breaking the kiss Louis’ lashes flutter to reveal doe-eyes. “’Cause you’ve always been mine. I didn’t care who you fucked with as long as I was most important. I always need to be most important to you. Nobody else.”

“Long as you know who you belong to likewise,” Harry says, breathless just looking at him. “I’ve been about you and I’m still about you. I’ll always be about you.”

“No more them. Only me. Us. This.”

And fuck Harry doesn’t know what to do. Just gets carried away in him, paradise. Them. This.

&&

“Wha’ put that stick up your arse again?” Louis asks, curiosity dancing in his bright eyes. As the Alpha settles beside him on the laid out rug, with the telly running on mute and bowls of cereal settled in their laps, dismay spirals through him. Spooning at the fruit loops, Harry admits, “I made an appointment with Council. For my readmission.”

Louis squeals. “Baby! That’s lovely! Why would that upset you?”

“It’s tomorrow,” the Alpha manages gruffly.

Just like that Louis wilts, shoulders drooping in his T-shirt. Guilt splits his veins. “Oh,” the boy mumbles as Harry viciously plays with his soggy cereal. With his appetite for food diminished Harry swallows thickly, “I tried to schedule a later date. But the executive was adamant it be tomorrow. Or not at all. Because of the stunt I pulled…with the gun. I don’t know what to do.”

Gently, Louis takes his bowl from him, planting it on the hardwood with his own, then climbing into his lap, curling up as small as possible with the swell of his very round belly. Taking his hand the boy fiddles with the rings on his fingers. “Okay. I think you should go.”

Of course Louis never ceases to surprise him. “What.”

“Go. With all the time spent in training I’m sure most of your prerequisites are complete. Politics should be what you need to be granted status. Depending on how many political courses the most it should take is a year. And–,”

“Louis…” Harry croaks, puzzled. “Tomorrow is your appointment with the doctor.”

Louis kisses his fingertips, like he’s comforting him. Like he’s the one in need of comfort. “I know, H. And it’s okay. I can have Liam or Ni come. Or my mum. They won’t mind. I’ll have
bodyguards if it makes you feel bett’ah.” Nothing possibly could at this point.

Heartstrings tugged in cruel ways Harry buries his face in his hair. “I want to be there…I don’t want to miss it. I… I don’t want you to go through that without me again…”

“It’s one appointment, Hazza,” Louis tells him. “I will be fine.” But what if you’re not? What if they only have bad news? God, the sneaking suspicion that Louis wouldn’t tell him, wouldn’t tell him childbirth might be too much on his body, this baby might be too risky right now, is too crushing. Crazes his Alpha.

“Such an important one. This appointment decides our future, paradise. I should be there,” resentment bleeds in his tone.

“Your status is important for our future,” Louis reminds. “Impacts our future. I need you to secure us.” The truth is always so hideous.

“I’m sorry,” his voice breaks.

“’S not your fault,” the worst part is Louis’ voice breaks too.

“Promise me. Promise to tell me everything you’re told. Promise no secrets. Your mess is mine. My mess is yours. No matter what I need to know. Even if the odds are against us.”

“You will try to take her away, won’t you?” the Omega asks with a horrified tone. “Anything less than okay is too much for you.”

Numb, Harry nods.

“Then ’m sorry,” Louis says. Dread fists his heart. “Because I’m not giving up. I don’t care what odds are against us. I’m keeping her.”

“I can’t let you do that.”

“You’d take away my choice? Is that the Alpha you are now?”

“Why do you do this to me?” The devastation bleeds into his voice. “I need you. B-But you’re so willing to leave me. I’m scared. And you’re not. You’re so ready to trade your life for this undeveloped fetus. Why are you like this?”

Louis sighs with a wistful note. “I love her. I don’t know what else to tell you, baby. I’m scared. Of course I’m scared. I’ve nev’ah been so scared in my life. Because I don’t want to leave you.” When the Alpha can’t find his voice, tears gathering in the corners of his eyes, Louis murmurs, “Little Love’s heart is beating now.” A hoarse sound rips up his throat, torn between wanting to love this pup and the inability to love it more than Louis. “I promise you every detail. Nothin’ but truth.”

Without permission Harry wraps their pinkies in an embrace, whispers into his hair, “I will always love her. Even if this… doesn’t work out.” Even if I can’t choose her. Even if I have to.

The rest of the night Louis says nothing. Curls up on what seems to be his side of the bed and shuns his touch. He promises, like always, to be better.

&&

Exhausted, but unable to sleep with the hurricane in his head, creeping down his throat to his chest, Louis lies there what feels like hours. Judging by the quiet Harry’s not fallen asleep
either, but then again when does Harry sleep in bed with him ever?

Sadness sneaks between the hollows of his ribs. Louis doesn’t dare touch his pregnant belly. Not angry at Little Love (the present cause of their angst), just…afraid. Scared of her. Scared for her. Scalding tears spill onto the pillow.

And it’s only now coming over him—the notion that he’s not going to be around once she’s in the world. No. Right now he cannot afford such thoughts. Faith stays with him. Long ago he’d sworn to never let Harry’s beliefs manipulate his. And he won’t, refuses to be swayed.

Louis sits up slowly, scrubs at his tears and sniffles, “Hazza?”

“Yes,” a tentative whisper.

“I need you,” the boy confesses, tiny voice quivering as the tears become unavoidable. Shoulders trembling Louis hides his face in his hands, unable to face his Alpha, who needs him. Who’s always needed when Louis just wanted him. Somehow the roles always seem to reverse between them. Louis’ never needed anyone but himself. Except now… Except now.


More than anything in this world.

The insight is foreboding, lurking to crush him. Louis simply holds onto him. Let’s his Alpha bear the weight of his grief. Like he’s struggled to do since Harry gave himself over to his demons, since he lost his Harry.

But this is his Harry.

All those silly sayings were right.

Everything he lost has come back to him, and it’s—he’s eternal.

   &&

   “Haz! Haz, wake up!” the most lovely voice to touch him is so frantic that Harry scrambles upright before he’s entirely conscious, terrified that he’s lashed out despite being untouched by his past’s mental abuse. Blinking rapidly, Harry’s stare finds Louis’ frail figure in seconds. The pale sunlight accentuates his lovely glow, brightens his cerulean gaze. Searching his face the Alpha finds nothing but anxiety as Louis shrieks, “You’re running late!”

Oh. Thank God. A relieved breath is punched from his lungs as Harry smiles sleepily, sprawls out to admire him. Glorious Louis gives him an entirely disbelieving look, “C’mon, lazybones! Get your arse up! There are things to be done!”

“I’d rather just lay ‘ere and admire you,” his voice is raw with sleep. Lowering his gaze the Alpha’s battered by affection, edging close to the unbelievably round of his belly, nosing at his belly, “Good morning, my little love.” Louis’ breath hitches audibly, hands running through his untamed curls. “All ‘bout you today. Please, be good to papa for daddy.” Planting kisses to his smooth, stretched skin, Harry sits up, “Okay. I’ll be an adult for now.”

A fountain of smiles in his eyes Louis leans in to kiss him quick, then, “Shoo.”
Rushed, the Alpha does his best to manage his damp curls once he’s finished in the shower. In the end he’s pulled his hair into a usually smooth bun, applying cover up (why hadn’t he used this before?) to the circles underneath his eyes, then jogging into his bedroom (abandoned though the wardrobe still homes his best outfits). Hastily, Harry dresses; two piece striped Lanvin suit he’s sure he’d spent a fortune on at one point. Once he’s slipped into boots to match Harry’s drawing on his rings.

In his room the Alpha grabs his phone as Louis stands waveringly, beaming when Harry steadies him, wrapping his arm around his soft waist, dragging him to the door. Longing flares in his chest as Louis hums, reaching up to untie his hair, smoothing his fringe back so his curls are loose. Arching a brow Harry watches his sharp cheeks flare with a delicious pink, “Love your curls. Leave ‘em out. You look so…chic.”

“You’re too kind,” Harry comments dryly, smirking as Louis slaps his shoulder, “Oi! You know I’m the sweetest. But I’m not into stripes.”

Sobering up the Alpha murmurs firmly, “Bodyguards. Alberto in charge. Your mum. Text me the entire time. Ignore the pap. Stay on track. Take care of our pup.”

“Yes, dear,” Louis grumbles, rolling his eyes, then seriously, “Please, H, don’t worry I’ll be fine.”

Circling his waist, pulling him close enough that little love is tight between them, Harry whispers dejectedly, “I miss you already. Please, for the sake of what’s left of my sanity, behave.”

Louis giggles, stretching on his tip toes to kiss him softly, “’M a good boy for you, Alpha. Now run along and do grown up shit. I’ll be waiting for you to come home.”

With his heart on his sleeve Harry kisses him three more times, then, “I love you. I love our little love. I want good news.”

“We love you,” the Omega says with wide, sincere eyes. Then, with Louis watching from the doorway, calling, “Good news, Harry, we’re getting mated in two months and having a baby in seven!”

And fuck it’s the best news.

&&

Conveniently enough his tardiness works out. Harry arrives in Parliament at exactly 9 A.M., which punctuality is always saluted, especially when he doesn’t have to wait, helped right into executive Stewart Hamilton’s unbelievably spacious office by an overly excited receptionist. Behind his desk the Alpha stands to greet him with cool, dark eyes. Harry takes his hand firmly, “My lord. It’s an honor.”

“Likewise, Mr. Styles.” It’s genuine enough. “Please take a seat.”

Harry does so the exact moment his phone vibrates. With his Alpha on high alert, Harry discreetly takes his (new) phone out, glancing at the screen to read ‘Omw now, love u xxxx’ Itching to respond, the Alpha shoves the phone between his thighs and finds Hamilton staring at him through narrowed slits. “A reason for the disruption?”

Swallowing, Harry mutters, “I apologise, my lord. My pregnant Omega is on his way to the doctor which is the reason for the disruption.”

The stunned expression that flickers over his aged features is rather satisfying. “I wasn’t aware of
this. Tell me about the lucky lad.”

Which, okaaay. Odd that Hamilton seems so interested. Nonetheless Harry gushes perhaps a bit too readily, “Louis Tomlinson, sir. We’re to be mated in two months time. We’re two months pregnant. We weren’t expecting this, if I’m honest.”

Hamilton’s brows are nearly to his hairline. “You’re a lucky Alpha.” The comment doesn’t sit well with him. Harry stiffens, directing his glare to his hands, flat on either of his thighs. “Congratulations. All my blessings. I’m going to make this quick as possible so you can go to him. Where you’d rather be.”

Unused to such…consideration, especially not after the reputation he’s earned himself, Harry thanks him profusely. Listens with as much attention possible with how edgy his Alpha is until Hamilton’s handing him stacked information with ACCEPTED stamped in read to his admission papers. “I expect to be invited to the ceremony, Mr. Styles. With dedication you should claim your title in six months. Your time in training was quite impressive. You’re a strong young man.” Yeah right. If only you knew.

Smiling weakly Harry nods, “Of course, my lord. Thank you.”

Rudely, before Hamilton’s finishes his next sentence Harry’s bolting out the doors, jabbing at the lift until the doors open, blessedly empty. In the elevator the Alpha responds to his text, ‘Okay?’ The response is instantaneous, ‘no, I’m dead.’

Vicious instinct rips through him the second the elevator doors come apart in the parking garage. In seconds he’s clasping his seat belt, typing back as he’s stopped by an obnoxious light, ‘don’t piss me off, I will come right now nd u will be sorry’

As the private office is on the outskirts of London it’s not such an unbearable drive, only twenty minutes speeding (which Harry does, because fuck, he needs to be there). ‘Come inside me :D,’ Louis truly believes his Alpha hasn’t reared its head with an undeniable anger. Without bothering to reply, Harry focuses on the road, lucky no police appear (not that they’d stop him. It’d become a high speed chase). On his way a little florist shop catches his eye, and well, Harry’s truly fucking, so far up Louis’ lovely arse, that he risks the stop. With his expertise in flowers Harry spends exactly five minutes to purchase a bouquet of blue, purple, and yellow iris’, blessedly in season. Louis isn’t much into flowers, doesn’t have any particular attachment to one, but Harry wants to express his (sadly wavering) hope and faith through something more than his fumbling words.

As he’s gingerly setting the bouquet on the passenger seat his phone flashes with another text. ‘Goin’ in now. Come out with good news xx’

Which fuck, just his luck. So close. Just not enough. ‘You’re enough for us,’ again the voice returns to him, but Harry doesn’t have time to dick around and drowns its howls out with music. Pulling up to valet parking the Alpha staggers out with the flowers, tosses the keys, and runs through the white halls. It’s glaringly empty, reserved for ‘special cases,’ and though he has no sense of direction Harry manages to find the receptionist’s desk in seconds, “Louis Tomlinson. What room?”

“I’m sorry, my lord, I can’t–,”

“’M his mate,” Harry snarls, temper flaring as the seconds tick by. “I’m going to find out one way or another, Miss. I demand this number.”
Visibly petrified the poor Beta fumbles, “105, down the first hall to the right.” Unable to bother with her any longer Harry tries not to trip over his feet, but does so anyway in his rush, knocking on the door because the manner is ingrained by now.

There is no response. Twitchy, wanting to see him, Harry raps again until there are muffled voices, and the door opens to reveal a very protective mother. “Excuse me,” Harry breathes, brushing past Jay to where Louis sits on the stretched hospital bed, playing with his nails uninterestedly, his feet dangling above the white tile. A bit out of breath, the Alpha holds out the bouquet, speaks nervously, “Hi. Sorry I’m late. What did I miss?”


“Everything’s fine,” Harry assures him with his heart racing, “I’m sorry I took so long. I wanted–,”

But the Omega pounces, on his tip toes with his hands in Harry’s waves, kissing him with an intensity that dizzies him until Louis breathes into his mouth, “You’re here…You’re here…” This is why. This is why Harry had to be here. Because Louis needs him. Emotional as ever Louis’ crying, silent tears skating down his face as the Alpha thumbs at them. “I’m always going to be here. I don’t care what I have to do, ‘m here for you. For this pup. For us.”

Louis’ bottom lip wobbles adorably, though his hand lifts to cover the one Harry’s cupping his face with. When the boy only stares, seemingly lost for words (wow, that’s novel) the Alpha says with a cheeky smile, “There’s also flowers. They symbolize hope and faith and passion. All of which I have. I have faith in you, this, us. You give me so much hope. I’ve never felt passion like I do for you, paradise.”

With an unsteady giggle Louis whispers, “You’re an undercover sap, Harry Styles. I’ve unleashed the hopeless romantic in you.”

Before the Alpha can agree snivels float over to him. Confused, brows furrowed, Harry glances to find the source of the sounds. Jay is seated in the corner, dabbing at her tears with tissues. “Don’t mind me. I’m just…quite caught up in this sugarcoated love story.”

“We needed a sug’ahcoating,” Louis chirps, gathering his flowers and settling on the rather plush mattress. With his belly round and obviously carrying, the boy is so pretty, nosing at the flower petals with lashes that cast shadows, and sculpted cheekbones. He might drool a bit when the boy’s gaze meets his, the blues a shade darker with promises. Of course he’s hard in seconds, visibly hard, though taking a seat on the stool beside the bed to take the flowers and place them on the neighboring loungers.

“Good news,” Harry breathes, stroking his belly.

“Good news,” the conviction in his voice is enough to get him through this.

&&

“Alright, well,” Dr. Holt murmurs once the introductions are over with and Harry’s proved his dominance through implied threats and emphasized the importance of Holts’ dedication to him. “I have the results from your blood work, Louis. And I’m pleased to tell you the results have come back fairly normal and–,”

“Fairly?” Harry asks tightly even as Louis’ heart sprouts wings, prepared to soar with joy.

“‘Yes, fairly. Louis’ hCG hormone is unusually high. The ultrasound should help determine why.”
Already extremely tense Harry’s jaw works as Holt continues evenly, “We’re going to check the fetal heartbeat and confirm there are no abnormalities. The health concerns remain the same as any. Omegas, particularly male, are designed to carry children much the same a female Omegas, but it’s a bit more difficult due to hormone levels and the variance in adaptability. A lot of the times fetal development takes a bit more time, so be prepared to see the pregnancy into a year. Currently Louis is fairly healthy, though I’m going to stress the importance of eating better, especially in this case as Louis’ body is in the process of adjusting and fairly fragile at this point in the pregnancy. Miscarriages are very high during the first trimester, the risen rate for males is a bit concerning.” Louis vows to do better, desperate to see this pregnancy through until he’s holding Little Love in his arms, alive and healthy.

“Are there any other, more helpful measure’s we can take to ensure his safety?” Harry demands, rather impolite.

Overwhelmed by the information Louis blinks slowly. “Unfortunately no. Just stay hydrated, light exercise, much rest, eat accordingly. Speaking of which, your sickness,” he glances at his laptop, frowning, “is reoccurring?”

With a helpless nod, Louis waits until Holt smiles cordially. “That’s not unheard of during the first pregnancy. Usually by the second trimester it’s ebbed significantly or stopped altogether. Not everybody is the same so I cannot say exactly how it will go for Louis. I apologise, Mr. Styles.” Of course it’s Harry he’s directing, because it’s Harry who’s making demands every which way. Louis can’t seem to find his voice, smiling weakly up at his mum who’s stroking his hair alongside Harry.

“What about abnormalities? What happens then?” the Alpha spouts.

Seemingly used to overbearing Alphas, Holt is unperturbed. “That is for you and Louis to decide, my lord. I can only suggest and inform. Depending on how disconcerting the condition is you may want to consider terminating the pregnancy.” Just the mere notion causes Louis to flinch, looking up at Harry vulnerably.

“Say we decide to continue?” Harry is staring at Holt with an intensity that causes Louis’ heart to stutter in his chest, touched that Harry’s even taking his wishes into consideration. *Oh, Haz...*

“Then we do what we can. Monitor and do everything in our power to ensure the health of your pup, but most importantly Louis.”

“What are the odds Louis doesn’t survive this pregnancy?”

“That’s complicated. I’m confident Louis can get through this trimester without fault. First trimester is most concerning for the baby. The second and third trimesters the fetus is fairly secure. And if Louis’ body continues to accept its changes then Louis should be secure as well. Childbirth is the main concern. But Caesarean sections are more often applied to these cases. Unless Louis refuses.” At the thought Louis grimaces, but decides he will be grateful to any help he’s offered. With his Alpha regarding him expectantly Louis clears his throat, “I’ll do whatever I have to, Dr.”

“Very good, Louis. Your tolerance is going to help this pregnancy along.”

“Holt, I need an estimate.”

With a horribly contrite expression, “Fifty-fifty, my lord.” Louis’ heart sinks as Harry nods wildly, eyes glassy and lurking with those daunting thoughts. “But we will do everything in our power to make sure this is successful.”
Louis swallows thickly, squeezing Harry’s hand. “Thank you, sir,” Harry’s voice is an emotional rasp. “I have a few more questions on what to expect, but first I’d like to know what the restrictions are besides the obvious no alcohol, drugs, et cetera.”

“There are quite a few. I will have a list prepared for you.”

Harry’s shoulders relax just enough that Louis’ anxiety eases. “Is sexual activity safe?”

A flush lights Louis’ face on fire, “Haz!” he hisses, though Holt remains professional as ever, “Up until month six sexual intercourse is acceptable unless there’s blood spotting. Then visit me immediately.”

“I could’ve told you that,” Jay says dryly, which oh no.

“Well then, let’s begin, shall we?”

Nervous vines twine through his veins as Louis nods, settling with his back to the reclined seat. Harry stiffly takes the stool beside him, clutching his hand, supporting him. Quelling his wearing faith.

“What’s happening?” Harry demands, hostility morphing his features as Louis tugs his tights down just enough to reveal his curving abdomen and his bruised hips (jeez, why had he invited his mum in the first place?). The poor doctor’s already been threatened and forced to go as in depth as possible, Harry’s just extremely controlling (perhaps he should wait outside—but that’d only cause a blowout, which Louis does not need right now).

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“Haz, baby, please. Let the poor bloke do his job,” Louis chides, an entirely too pink flush spreading high on his cheeks nonetheless. It’s just…this Harry turns him on incredibly. And the Omega cannot afford to be turned on, with another Alpha in the room, his mum, and preparing for an ultrasound that’s going to make or break him.

“Mr. Styles I may have to ask you to step outside,” Holt says evenly. “This is strictly procedure. And I cannot have my patient under pressure or stress.”

Just like that Harry’s on the defense, baring his canines as an unbelievably menacing growl tears through the room.

“Harry!” Jay says sharply. “Enough! This behavior is out of line. Put the incisors away and focus on Louis right now.”

Grateful to his strictly no-nonsense mum Louis exhales once Harry reluctantly restrains his Alpha and sighs, “Sorry. Just tense times.”

“Understandable,” says Holt, oddly sympathetic. “I wasn’t very prepared with my mate either. Back then we didn’t have such advanced technology. Still Riley was adamant we go through with the pregnancy. I still have my mate. And I have three lovely identical daughters. I’m very blessed. I’m relieved, even now, that I listened to him despite fearing the worst. ‘S not always easy, but I’ve learnt Omegas are stronger than they might appear.”

Amazed, a violent riptide of courage, pure and improved, washes away any terror for the moment. Such luck is virtually unheard of—even Jay makes an astonished noise. Louis’ gaze darts to Harry, who’s covered his eyes, but the intensity of Holt’s reassurance lifts the cloudy tension on the room. “Alright. Okay. Yeah, let’s do this,” Harry croaks, stroking Louis’ knuckles with his thumb.

Louis mouths, ‘good news’ before letting his lids fall shut as the lube is soothed into his belly, not
unbearably cold but a bit uncomfortable. Its seconds before the device prods at his belly, his
insides appear on the flat screens across the room on the wall. Always mesmerized, the Omega
gawks, comforted as the lighting quick heartbeat floods the room, oddly jumbled. Louis’ brows
furrow, though Holt doesn’t comment, moving the device until it’s pressed to the curve, and the
filmy image appears. On the screen there are two somewhat ovals, inside them cloudy, filmy
shapes, one more prominent than the other. Louis’ breath is tugged from his lungs as Holt
comments, “Ah.”

“Ahh? What’s that mean? What am I looking at?” his Alpha demands edgily.

“Congratulations, Louis, you appear to be carrying twins. Which explains the spiked hormones.”

Silence claims the room as Louis’ mouth parts, caught in the filmy image the Omega almost
strokes his damp tummy, just barely refraining as love like no other wells in his heart–doubled for
his little loves. Plural. Two.

“Oh my,” Jay’s breathy voice interrupts the spell. “This is…well this is…not very surprising.
Twins do run the family.”

“No,” Harry’s barely audibly voice is horrified. “No, there must be some mistake. There…Oh…
Christ.” Slumping on the mattress an entirely disturbed noise rips through him as his voice
escalates, hand all but crushing his now, “Please tell me this is some sick joke. I can’t…Holt, tell
me something or I’m going to combust!”

Clearing his throat as tears spear in Louis’ eyes at his Alpha’s negative reaction, Holt speaks
calmly, “Although this does change the circumstances this is not necessarily a harmful thing, Mr.
Styles. Louis’ body is already handling the addition fairly well. With no extreme adverse effects.
Which is quite phenomenal. Remember my very male Omega produced triplets–,”

“You said everybody is different! What if my Omega’s body cannot–?” the Alpha starts to snarl.

Louis runs his fingers through Harry’s untamed, silky hair, “Haz, please, baby…” his voice
quivers, misery raw in his tone. “Just listen to him.”

An unsteady noise before Harry nods into the hospital sheets, silenced to listen to Holt’s persistent
words, “To be quite honest, my lord, the concern might just rest with the pups themselves. We can
rule out an extended pregnancy, as twins are more likely than not to be premature birthed. Louis’
body can only stretch so much, which means one twin will more likely than not be larger than the
other. Though that’s not guaranteed.Everybody is different.

“Health concerns are increased. But I’m sure that’s not new information.” Another hurt noise
from his Alpha, who’s strain emanates enough that traitorous tears ooze past his lashes. Oh, Haz…

“This is the most sought after prenatal care in England, my lord. We’ve seen many male Omega
pregnancies through successfully. We will do everything in our power to see this through
successfully for all three lives. And personally I do believe Louis will carry these two finely.
Already,” Holt glances at his monitor, “they appear healthy. We know Louis is healthy. And his
body may not be equipped for two but it’s adaptable enough, and seems to be on the right track. I
do not advise terminating this pregnancy.”

Just like that Louis’ every doubt diminishes, lurks in the unconscious crevasses of his mind but
does not haunt his heart. “We’re going through with the pregnancy, Dr. Holt,” Louis states,
smiling softly at his belly. With an abrupt lurch Harry sits up, pinning him with almost obsidian
eyes, stark with all the horrors of his mind. “Does my fucking contribution not matter, Louis? Am
I fucking imaginary? You make all the fucking decisions with any fucking thought for how I feel.
When you’re ready to let me be your fucking mate come to me. I’m going home. Holt, Jay, have a
With that Harry rises, tries to snatch his hand away though Louis clings desperately. “Haz, please. Please, stay. I…I need you right now.” Scalding tears skate down his blanched face as Harry’s stare softens just a bit. “I can’t be in here right now. I can’t. ‘M sorry, paradise, but I’m not staying in this room another minute. I’m splitting wide open, I c-can’t silently let you make the decision to endanger your life. No, I’m going to…sit outside.”

Crestfallen, the Omega let’s go and watches through blurry eyes as Harry stalks out of the room, firmly closing the door behind him. Alone, Louis stems his tears, refuses to let his despair devour him, chants inwardly love my little loves, love my little loves, and clearing his throat to whisper, “I-I-Is there anything else I need to know?”

The proper doctor runs through everything in nearly ten minutes, even prepares lists for him (because Louis just can’t focus with the weight on his chest, suffocating him) with all the details he’s going to need. Two copies of his ultrasound pictures are supplied in the same folder and Louis breaks free in all of thirty minutes with his mum sparing him any pity or comfort (probably realizing Louis just needs Harry right now and won’t give anyone else’s console any consideration).

Numb, Louis announces to Harry, whose back is to the wall, hugging his knees and covering his face in his large hands, that he’s ready to go home. Without sparing him a glance Harry stands, and starts towards the exit. Louis thinks his hearts’ battered and bruised, losing its will to beat even as Jay wraps him up in her usually comforting arms, stroking his hair and whispering, “Don’t be too hard on him. He’s scared. I mean we all are, but his reaction was certainly…disappointing and upsetting. Talk to him. I think the poor lad needs you just as much as you need him right now. I love you. Keep me updated. I’ll have Alberto take me home.”

Louis kisses her cheek, expressing the same appreciation, and walking away with his arms hugging his belly, his pups. The entire ride home drags on too long, silent and terrifying.

In the house the confrontation is inevitable.

There is no quiet conversation. There is no reason. There is belligerent upset until Louis is screaming in his face, “You don’t want us! Fine! I’m leaving you!” Just as venomous Harry snarls, “Not every time you’re fucking upset can you threaten to leave me! Hate to break it to you sweetheart but those are fucking my pups too! And you’re fucking stuck with me for the rest of your life! Which might not be too long!”

Which escalates the situation until Louis’ heaving object at him and Harry’s shoving his first through walls, stalking him as he shoves clothes in his bag. Panic charges the atmosphere until Louis’ sobbing over the bag, hyperventilating. Quiet, Harry drops to his knees beside him, hesitantly pulling him into his lap, where Louis succumbs to his spiraling trauma. Fisting the lapels of his stupid striped blazer Louis stains his button up with tears, “I n-n-n-need you right now! God damn it, Harry, I need you to take care of us. To support me! I’m scared! You aren’t the only one who’s scared, Harry!”

Clinging to him Harry buries his face in his wayward hair. “I know. I know I’m sorry. I want this. I’m here. I’m not goin’ anywhere, scared or not. Don’t leave me.”

“I-I’m not,” dry heaves wreck through him, “I love you, scared or not. I love them, scared or not. And I need you to love us the same!”

“I promise,” a disturbingly broken breath. “Scared or not I’m in this to win this. No regrets.”
Any other time those words would be so cheesy. Any other time Louis would laugh. Any other time Louis would tease him. “It’s my heart,” Louis hiccups. “Don’t try and test it. It’s mine. And I will love and love and love you like I will love and love and love them.”

“Okay, paradise. Okay,” Harry rasps. “I will never try to own your heart. But I need you to promise me the imprints I’ve left there will never dwindle. Promise me I will be the only one to touch your heart. Promise me this flame won’t die with these pups.”

A million times over Louis does.

&&

Two weeks drift by until Harry’s standing in front of the forbidding therapist’s headquarters once again. It’s now that the monsters shake him to the very core, the vibrations defiling his already obsidian soul. Uncontrollably, his body begins to tremor under the abrupt assault.

It’s the first time Harry ditches therapy. Walks away. Just. Like. That.

Disoriented, with the monsters glee festering in his mind, the Alpha walks aimlessly. Like he could possibly outrun his demons.

It’s too much. It’s too much to fucking talk at this point. To conjure up anymore of the shit sloshing in his skull. Christ, he doesn’t need to add to the already towered pile. Doesn’t need to think about his personal issues when Louis’ nearly three months pregnant with his litter. Wearing. The more strength the pups gain the more strength Louis loses. It’s sickening to watch him give himself over to their demonic spawn. Irrationally the question flares in his mind: did he ever really fucking love me?

Because it doesn’t seem so. Not anymore. Because he chooses to love the pups more.

So does he really fucking love me?

Of course the monster always provides an answer, ‘obviously not.’ Nothing more. Nothing less. It’s often enough, driving him to the brinks of insanity, until Harry’s locked in his room, distanced and eerily alone; until Louis is knocking hesitantly, seeking him. It’s just…Louis is okay. And Harry is not.

Even with the sweet pregnant glow Louis appears to be in more discomfort with each passing day. Some day’s Harry is terrified to leave his side. Terrified to even be by his side and watch their nightmare play out. Always terrified, lurching into consciousness because his brain fucks with him with the cruelest, crushing efforts. Returns him to the past, but conjures the future he’s anticipating. Blood, so much blood, pain pain pain, ruins closing in on him with his too lifeless paradise and his too alive litter.

Too often Harry curls up in the Omega’s arms, silently allowing his tears to stream, to just give into his terror. In those moments, with Louis blessedly unaware and celestial as ever, Harry cries. Cries because surely God never truly forgave him. Cries because surely the divine force lured him into this false sense of security, into believing happiness was within reach, into believing better was in paradises’ horizon, just to watch him burn in his own personal hell as he takes Louis away. And oh Christ he can’t sleep, he can’t sleep with his snarled thoughts on max volume, terror a steel knife buried in his throat, dragging him down down down into the inevitable spiral of mental meltdowns.

A constant terror lurks in every crevasses of his entire being; though Harry’s fought and fought
against the disturbing emotion, though it’s forgotten when Louis’ being blissfully overjoyed, it’s
still there. Everywhere. Coating his ugly insides.

And oh God he’s the only one that notices. Louis’ in this perpetual euphoric state—so lovely in his
pregnancy. No matter the discomfort or the sickness or the fucking weather or Harry’s withdrawal
the Omega is riding the waves of an untouchable high. Jealousy splits his veins—intensifies the
ever growing self-loathing that’s sprouted. Christ, it’s just Harry wants to share his bliss, wants to
want this, them, his pups. Trapped in his own pessimism Harry doesn’t feel anything beyond
terror, dread, and anxiety.

At this point there is only one blissful high in grasp.

Like the vile creature he is, Harry is going to use it.

Fingers trembling Harry manages to text the number he’s memorized, ‘4 grams 600 pounds same
place rn’

Absolutely no wait–‘1000 pounds, done’ which is overpriced, but that’s never bothered him
before. Profit is profit.

Pocketing his phone Harry wheels around and heads north towards the alleyway on 6th
street. In
the shadows the Alpha looms, perched on the building in wait. A figure appears at the mouth of
the alleyway, and Harry fishes out his wallet, palms the grand (usually he keeps two or three
grand on hand in cash for no reason other than security) and approaches. Demons hiss in
anticipation. Without one word Harry holds out the pay, the male takes the money and leaves his
purchase in his hand. Shoving his curled hand in his pocket Harry nods, and the two continue on
their way. Always too simple.

Heartbeat an erratic thrum the Alpha rushes through the streets to his vacated car, settles in the
driver’s seat and takes his curled hand from his pocket, opening his palm to find the monster caged
by dime bags.

A ravenous appetite consumes him as Harry rummages through the glove compartments in search
of any stable surface to spread his lines. A hardback handbook makes the cut. With it in his lap the
Alpha tears open the baggie, mouth pooled with saliva as the monster chants happily, now now
now.

Spreading sloppy lines with just his card the Alpha rolls his notes tight to lean down and–

Frozen, cross-eyed to stare at the white, vomit creeps up his throat as the inescapable clarity rails
through him, demolishing any desire to snort up. Jerking upright, Harry swallows three times,
screws his heavy lids shut and finds paradise around the monsters enraged howls. Around the
demons clawing at his heart, threatening to steal his sanity bite by venomous bite.

Paradise.

Paradise is waiting for him at home. Paradise is waiting with his unborn babies. Paradise is
depending on him to be better for them. And he is depending on paradise to ground him, help him
be better. Except Louis can’t do that when Harry refuses to let him.

Yet somehow paradise always does. Even at his worst his paradise is there to whisper those sweet
violent words he needs. There to take him to his dreamland. There, home, for him.

A sob comes from somewhere in his scraped raw lungs.

Paradise is counting on him to never leave again. Harry’s promised to always come home to him.
And he will. Just him. Not the monster, not the demons nor the past. Just…an Alpha who needs his Omega to breathe better, who loves his Omega unconditionally. Who always has, who always will.

A while the Alpha sits there, willingly losing himself to his mental devastation, locking the shit in his mental closet because right now, while he’s not in a psychologist’s office, it’s unwanted. A mental closet brimming with the demons he’s already conquered. Louis gives him the power, the will to be who he has always needed—wanted to be. Someone worthy of his love.

Realization settles in his chest—his growing pups give him some of that will, too. A special place in his heart has been claimed by the precious tiny creatures they’ve yet to welcome into this life. A life that should nurture them, a life that should only show them compassion and love. A life with two adoring parents, both who would give their lives for them without even a moment’s hesitation.

That’s what his pups deserve. His precious, innocent babies.

A litter of love is so damned fitting. A litter of Little Love’s.

In these moments it’s impossible to be afraid of them. Impossible to imagine them anything less than perfect. Impossible to find reason to carry around a disgust towards them that they do not deserve. Never have.

Because their babies love Louis. They have to. Undoubtedly they don’t want to hurt him, the one who’s given them a home where they only know warmth, love, safety. Much like Harry they won’t ever want to leave him because he’s their home, their protection. Much like Harry they need him. And if they’re anything like Harry, when they’re forced to leave him they’ll wail until their little lungs refuse them, until they’re allowed into his arms and swathed in his endless love. Already they’re so much like him. Depending on their papa who is depending on their daddy.

An unbreakable chain of devotion and love.

With another hoarse sound Harry returns to the better path. Rids himself of the monster for the last time and goes home to his paradise. Paradise that’s grown from just his Omega, to his Omega and his litter too.

As soon as he’s walked in, tossing the keys on the table, Louis is all over him. And fuck how could he doubt his love when the boy is running chills down his spine with every eager question and spreading goose bumps on his skin with every gentle touch? Clinging to him, fragile and small aside from the round of his formed baby belly, Harry reaches out to his invincible heart, says all those things he hasn’t in a while. Tells him. Speaks to his heart.

And when Louis finally asks how therapy was, Harry does not lie. Confesses to his almost relapse.

And when Louis’s leaning up to brush his tears, even as his own spill down his cheeks, Harry knows with his all that there is no better bliss than this. With his Omega breathing between scattered kisses, “I love you. We love you. So much. Always.” With his hand splayed on the round of his protruding belly, where their pups are striving.

With his heart stolen and sheltered by this one unbelievably perfect boy.

“I’m goin’ to be bett’ah, paradise. For you. For them. For me. For us.” With his entire being Harry believes it.

It’s the first and last time Harry ditches therapy.
“Paradise, come on! We’re going to be late!”

At the anxious edge to Harry’s voice the Omega’s pauses where he’s knelt in the wardrobe, struggling to find trousers that fit.

“Hazza,” Louis whimpers, shoulders slumping in defeat. “I just want to look decent. But nothing fits anymore.” Caught up in his swelling insecurity Louis doesn’t realize Harry’s entered the wardrobe until the Alpha is kneeling behind him, spreading his legs and flattening his hand on his very pregnant belly to urge him softly backwards until the Omega’s head rests on his shoulder, face buried in his throat.

“You always look lovely, paradise,” the Alpha breathes, stroking his belly.

Easily triggered searing tears tumble down his cheeks as the Omega snivels, “B-B-But I can’t dress anymore. You’re always dressed to perfection. Meanwhile I look like I just rolled out of bed every day. All I manage is spandex bottoms and loose T-shirts or jumpers. I’m ah m-m-mess.”

“You’re perfect to me,” it’s so genuine that Louis smiles watery, bringing his hand over where Harry’s is rubbing soothing circling into his belly. “Beautiful, sexy, the whole bit.”

“Y-Yeah right,” Louis giggles, planting kissing up the column of his throat. It’s been seven weeks without any intimacy beyond slow, mostly dispassionate snogging. Only fifteen weeks and two days into this pregnancy and Harry’s already lost interest in his body. Which devastates him, scares him more than this pregnancy. Because oh God he doesn’t want Harry to stray.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” the confusion in his voice is so real Louis can only shrug, mortified. On a heavy exhale, “Alright then. C’mom. Get up.”

“No,” Louis pouts, nipping at his ticking jaw. “I refuse.”

“No choice, paradise,” the Alpha murmurs with enough confidence that Louis guesses his next actions. But he’s very sluggish, and very pregnant, unable to be as swift as Harry, who’s up and lifting him without any hesitance. “No, Harry, stop.” Louis protests, anxiety bulleted through his veins as hands splay on the backs his thighs, urging him to wrap his legs around his waist. “’M heavy. Let me down.”

“Hold onto me,” the Alpha breathes, nosing at his cheek. “Come on. Trust me. I’m not going to drop you.”

Swallowing, the Omega nods, snaking his arms around his neck and burying his face in his throat again. Clinging to him. Purring at the sudden proximity, enveloping in his warmth. “Good boy,” a husky whisper into his hair as Harry strides, with an eerie grace. Every step is an incredibly consoling lull. “Paradise,” Harry whispers throatily, clutching his thighs. “I want you. I’m sorry. I want you so bad I can barely keep from…”

Shivers run down his spine as seraphs spread their wings in his belly. “W-Why are you sorry?” the boy asks into his throat, hands tangling into his styled waves, fisting because his body is lighting up all over.

“’Cause I was reading,” his ridiculous pregnancy handbooks, “And I found out Alphas aren’t supposed to knot once their Omega is already pregnant. But my knot’s still swelling whenever I think about it. ‘Bout being inside of you.”
Oh, God,” Louis mews, already so turned on by the mere mention of being knotted. On fire, Louis’s cock tents in his tights, but with his belly there is nowhere to rut his hips. And oh God he’s already so wet, soaking up his tights as his hole clenches around nothing. “Want it. Want it, Haz.”

“I could hurt you,” the Alpha rasps, voice a thousand octaves lower.

“S-So thas’ why you won’t touch me anymore?” Louis asks breathlessly, parting his mouth around his pulse point to suck wetly. Once his skin is an appealing red, bruised and his, “Not ‘cause you don’t want me anymore?”

“Always want you,” the Alpha groans throatily, large hands squeezing the rounds of his ass as Louis purrs. “Always. You’re so pretty. All round and glowing with my pups. Prancing ‘round with your perky ass in those fucking tights. All the time.”

“For you,” Louis moans breathily, drenched with the heat of his need. “You’ve been neglecting me. I’m pregnant with your litter and needy for your cock.”

“Yeah? Yeah, pup,” the timbre drips from his voice as Louis kitten licks where his skin is bruised, yanking tuffs of his thick waves. “You’re mine. All swollen with my litter. Mine. Gonna have all my pups.”

Just the thought causes Louis’ little jolts to build in his body, the heat coiled so tight in his belly. “Yes, Alpha,” Louis whimpers, burrowing his nose in his neck where his head spins uncontrollably with how thick his scent’s become. “Anything.”

“Mm,” Harry hums, the vibrations felt everywhere. “Go sit on the bed while I change.”

In protest Louis whimpers, but Harry’s setting him on his feet nonetheless. Clutching the lapels of his blazer Louis shakes his head frantically, “No. I don’t wanna go out. I wanna lay with you.”

“Lat’ah,” the Alpha breathes, leaning down to kiss him, gentle and loving despite how Louis parts his mouth in welcome. “Bed. Now. And stay dressed.”

Bottom lip jutting Louis waddles just a bit on his stalk to the bed in the center of the room, then sits with his arms crossed. “You’re already dressed. ‘M wet. I’m the one who needs to change.”

With an all too determined look Harry orders, “Wait.”

Petulantly, Louis huffs, “I’ve been waiting seven weeks, Harold.”

“Whiny.”

“Yes!” Louis shouts at his stupid broad back in his stupid navy blazer as his stupid long legs carry him away towards the stupid exit. “’M goin’ to bitch until I’m being fucked proper!”

“Proper?” the Alpha asks, pausing in the doorway without looking at him (so rude).

“Proper,” the boy confirms, plopping backwards so his teary eyes are aimed at the ceiling.

“What’s proper?” his voice is a husky drawl, caressing his hypersensitive body. Achy all over Louis runs his fingertips over his swollen nipples, moaning breathily at the sharp flare in his tummy. Thumbing at the hard little peaks Louis’ lashes flutter as every nerve in his body lights up, an electric pleasure he’s never felt like this before, not from teasing his nipples. Impulsively, the boy carries his hand over his swollen tummy, towards where his cock’s trapped in his tights and—
A low growl rips through the room, flooding his senses as Louis’ back bows, mouth parted and wet to release tiny gasps, fingers tweaking his already puffy nipple. So close…so close, just one squeeze and–A hand takes his wrist, tugging his arm up enough to reach his free wrist, pinning both his hands above his head. “No,” Louis mewls, opening his eyes as Harry braces over him, hand planted beside his head. “Nonono, Haz, please.” But an Alpha rages in his blown stare, demanding and hot hot hot.

“Did I say you could touch?” A demand.

Tugging at his arms Louis squirms under the intensity, desperate to chase the fading heat low in his tummy, throbbing in his cock.

“Answer me.”

“No!” Louis pants once Harry’s flashes his canines, arching his throat in offering. When the Alpha leans forward, nosing at his throat the boy feels the heat coiling tight enough, anticipating the moment Harry’s teeth sink into his sweet spot. A smoky laugh interrupts his spiraling pleasure, “Oh, lovely. You’re so bad. Teasing me like this.”

Furious tears collect in his eyes. “You’re s-s-so mean.”

“’M not mean. Want tonight to be perfect. Special. So I can carry you into the house lat’ah and…”

“And?” Louis mumbles, losing his mind to the coiled heat as Harry’s thigh fits between his legs. And he’s rutting against his thigh, panting as the Alpha sucks love bites into his throat.

“Gonna come, pup? Goin’ to come for me if I tell you what I’m going to do to you?”

Wildly, without thinking, Louis nods, the friction spearing pleasure everywhere.

“Get my cock up in your tight little hole and fuck you proper. As hard as I can right now. ‘M goin’ to make you come over and over until you’re screaming my name. And when you’re crying and panting into the sheets I’m–,” Louis’ hips stutter, the coiled heat coming apart in his belly as he moans, “Haz, Haz, Haz,” until there’s nothing but static and sensation.

“Fuuuuuck, pup,” a drawn out groan brings him back down to his body. Kisses are being planted along his features, his hands released, heated imprints of where Harry’s fingers held him hostage remain, residual shackles. They tremble as they cup Harry’s face, and Louis leans up to brush their mouths gently, “Wanna suck you off.”

“Yeah? When we come home tonight.”

Eager, Louis kisses him again. “Bett’ah. When I find the rest of my body I can change.”

Growling playfully the Alpha swoops him, at the very least nine stone by now, and all that’s left in their wake are Louis’ enamored giggles and Harry’s ridiculous, not funny (attempts at) jokes.

&&

“But where?” Louis whines, sulking in the passenger side, impatient as it’s been three hours already and they’ve driven through two districts and too many towns. “Where where where!”

At ease like he hasn’t been since the heat they spent together Harry laughs, almost illuminated by his excitement. “I told you it’s quite a drive.”
Pouting just because, the Omega humphs, and turns to face the window.

“Why the long face, paradise?” His natural optimism is too infectious, and Louis’ melting under its force. It’s been so long since Harry smiled like this. It’s been so long since Harry’s been so excited. And oh God the nest of butterflies in his belly are awakened by playful happy Harry. This is Harry before he stopped giving any fucks. When he was overly emotional and cheeky and charming and dodged bullets.

Louis missed this–more than anything he’s realizing.

Facing him, the Omega cannot contain his smile, chirping, “I’m simply restless, Daddy Dearest. And brimming with excitement as where we are meant to be.”

“Together.”

Biting his lower lip Louis stifles the most girlish giggle his traitorous tongue has formed. “We are, aren’t we?” is what Louis manages once Harry’s hand covers his knee, stroking. “We’re not too far now, Papa Paradise.”

Dissolving into laughter at the name Louis pats his hand. “Oh, love. Don’t eva call me that again.”

“What?” the Alpha glances at him with an entirely too pleased grin. “Papa Paradise. ‘S cute. Like you.”

“Daddy Dearest is funny. Unlike you,” Louis retorts sweetly, batting his lashes.

And it’s Harry’s turn to pout. “You wound me. I’m telling our daughters all about your mean ways.” Louis’ heart spreads its wings and soars because Harry doesn’t talk about this, doesn’t talk about their steadily approaching future, about their pups. Not like this–not when their minds aren’t clouded with sexual craving.

A blush spreads high on his cheeks as Louis whispers, “Don’t know that. Could be daughter and son.”

“Every family’s dream. In one go we have both.”

A dusky cloud settles over him, threatening to downpour once Louis whispers shyly, “But I don’t just want one of each gender.”

Any other time Harry would tense up at the mention of any children beyond these two. But oh he’s in such an amazing mood and Louis is basking in his sudden enthusiasm. Tonight his Alpha smiles, so wide the boy’s cheeks ache for him, though he’s itching to poke at the crater in his cheek, “We’ll see how this one goes. You’re doing so well, paradise.”

Under the praise Louis brightens incredibly. “They love me,” the Omega whispers fondly, stroking his belly over the wool of his jumper, “We’re strong.”

Squeezing his thigh Harry mutters gruffly, emotional beyond upset and resentment, “Yeah. They do. I mean...if they’re anything like me they love you. And if they’re anything like you, they’re strong.” And oh God Harry’s never truly acknowledged them like this, never acknowledged they’d have any of his attributes. As if they weren’t his—like they were bastard children, illegitimate.

At the thought Louis flinches, caressing the curve of his belly with more love, enough love to make up for what Harry’s yet to show them. “What? What’s wrong?”
Louis chews nervously on his bottom lip, then admits, “I was kinda scared you didn’t think they were yours.”

Rather rudely Harry laughs outright, patting his knee, “Louis! Louis, baby, what.” When the boy only shrugs helplessly, “You may be manipulative but I’ve known you eleven years. I know when you’re lying. Really, I knew you were lying when you said you were on birth control. I know I was the Alpha you laid with. I know I was the first. And I know I’m going to be the only. I know like I know the earth is fucking spherical that this litter is mine. And if they weren’t, though that’s impossible, I’d still be here.”

And here comes the waterworks. At least they’re touched tears. At least Harry’s so focused on the road Louis can quickly dab them into nonexistence. Luck is on his side as Harry says, “We are almost there.” Louis peers out the window to find, “Buxton? Harry, why the hell are we in Buxton?” Curious, the Omega lowers the window, pokes his head out to make sure he’d read right. “Louis, put your head back in the car.”

Refreshed, excited, Louis leans out a bit more so his belly brushes the interior of the door. “Louis. I’m serious. Sit down,” the Alpha bite to his command riles him like no other, so (albeit stupidly) Louis stretches further, one with the wind and all. “God damn it!” the shout is laced with such apprehension that the boy jerks back into his seat. Raising and obviously locking the windows Harry focuses straight ahead, knuckles white with how taut his grip is on the steering wheel. Chewing nervously on his bottom lip Louis fidgets, hands wringing in his lap. When there is no reaction the Omega blurts, “That was stupid.”

“Extremely stupid,” the Alpha snaps, though once Louis shrinks just a bit Harry exhales shakily. “Apologise.”

“I’m sorry,” Louis whispers, truly meaning it.

“Don’t pull shit like that. Don’t endanger yourself or my litter.”

With his blood running cold Louis lowers his stare, ashamed to have acted out like that. Pathetic tears pool in his eyes, blurring his vision as the Omega rubs his Little Loves in apology. As his breaths hitch in his throat Louis struggles to stem his tears, but it’s futile as Harry’s hand returns to its previous place on his knee, stroking over his tights. “Please, don’t cry, paradise.” But Louis can’t stop, guilt lancing his veins. “Hey.” Harry says gently, stroking up his thigh, “‘S okay. It wasn’t intentional. You just…You just need to remember you’re three people now. And I need you to be as careful as possible for the safety of the babies.”

“B-B-But,” Louis hiccups around frantic breaths, “I’m s-s-so childish! A-A-And what if I’m n-not fit to be a parent?”

“Hush. You’re going to be the best. You’re already the best. Pup, you’re doing perfect. You’re eating right. You’re thinking about them, and what they’re going to need and you’re…I wish I could be so considerate. B-But all I’m thinking about is you being okay and then…well, blowing raspberries into their little belly’s and playing pica-boo and all that silly shit I shouldn’t be thinkin’ ‘bout right now. And then you’re sitting there with your bump, our litter, and it’s so beautiful and I just love this sometimes. When I’m not scared I love this. I love being here to watch your belly grow as they do. I love being here to watch you comfort them when you’re scared. I love being here to watch how you’ve started to waddle and started being emotional as I can be. I love being here. I’m sorry that I’ve not reassured you enough. But…all I think anymore is how stunning you are, pregnant and supporting two other developing pups. I just…I…” he’s breathing rough by the time he stumbles on his words, and Louis can’t stop crying, awash with joy, “I know you’re going to be the best of us. Because you already are. Never think otherwise.”
And oh God the Omega just wants to climb into his lap and tell him; tell him he loves him, his pups love him, tell him he’s the best to and for him. The best Alpha, the best mate, soon to be the best daddy. Because in his soul Louis knows Harry’s going to be the favourite. Because he knows Harry’s going to be the cool daddy. And Louis is going to worry and worry and worry himself sick between the three of them. And he just…he can’t wait.

Right now, while he can’t settle in his lap, Louis tangles their fingers. Silent, Harry squeezes, and Louis’ never breathed better.

Any residual toxins from his constant anxiety dissipates with fresh doses of his Alpha’s support. Everything feels okay. For the first time in so long…everything feels perfect.

&&

“Okay! Okay!” Louis giggles breathlessly once Harry’s helping him out of the car and onto the concrete. As the sun is currently setting the Omega’s able to take in their environment. Trees. Glassy dome-shaped buildings. Which okay? “Where are we?”

With a breathtaking grin Harry asks softly, obviously just barely containing his exhilaration, “Care for a stroll?”

Louis frowns, but tucks his hand in the crook of his elbow, which Harry inhales sharply at, “You’re freezing, Louis. How haven’t your poor little fingers turned blue yet?” But really Harry is so warm, and Louis curls his fingers into his skin, sinking into his side and shivering at the warmth that emanates from him. “They’re always cold,” Louis soothes softly, “‘S okay.”

“We’re talking about this tomorrow,” the warning in his voice is prominent enough that Louis noses at his arm, leeching on his warmth. “Mind if I court you?” is his next fondly exasperated question. The oddly worded question triggers a previously docile memory, but the Omega cannot be bothered with it. Wants to stay here. With his Harry. Right now. “Court me,” Louis breathes, smiling dreamily up at him.

Emotion dances in his mossy stare, though without another word Harry’s guiding them down one particular pathway. Happily, Louis hums, “So where are we?”

“Pavilion Gardens.”

As peak district is nowhere near Louis’ childhood environment he cannot recognize or even figure the glorified attraction. It’s pretty enough. Sunset stretches out before them, steadily leaving shades of pretty pinks and radiant yellows in its wake. All the trees, the spiraling pathways surrounded by beautifully trimmed grass and precisely placed shrubberies. Looking now the scene is quite beautiful. “It’s beautiful,” Louis says softly.

“You don’t know much ‘bout the Pavilion Gardens, d’you, paradise?” the smug tone tells Louis there’s obviously more to this. Silent, the boy shakes his head, gazing up at him hopefully. “Didn’t think so.” Another gorgeous, toothy grin. “This way.” Like Louis was going to ditch him. Giggling, the boy struggles to catch up as an exquisite blue consumes the sky, with a brilliant orange brimming on the horizon. As they continue down their curvy pathway, Louis drinks in the sights, the gazebos, the picnics, the grinning and waving residents, grinning and waving back for no reason other than their consideration (not coming up to them). “Wow,” Louis says, already out of breath, “This is a walk.”

Brows knitted Harry pauses, “Should I carry you? It’s not too far now but I don’t want you to be in pain. I didn’t think about how the walk might affect your body.”
Charmed, Louis smiles, “I think ‘m alright. My feetie’s are fine, Harold. Lead the way.”

But of course his Alpha doesn’t give in, leaning down to wrap an arm underneath his thighs as the other rounds his waist. “’Azza!” Louis squeals, wrapping an arm around his shoulders for more support. “Really! I’m fine to walk!”

“Shh.’M taking care of you. Enjoy the view,” Harry urges, clutching him to his chest until Louis sighs, but snuggles closer, idly rubbed his baby bump as he does what he’s told. It’s truly beautiful—perhaps Harry does know his sceneries. When they’ve stopped the sun has bid them farewell, leaving only an entirely dark, starry night.

They’re fenced by trees, an oddly serene silence aside from natural’s music. “Here we are,” Harry breathes, setting him on his feet, but taking his hand. “I’m very nervous so bear with me.”

Brows furrowed Louis starts to question but Harry smiles, all boyish magnetism, tugging him through a mostly veiled opening in the shrubbery. Stumbling behind him Louis nearly scolds him for being so hasty but the thought dies as the boy realizes what’s happening.

From where Louis stands an overwhelming scene is splayed, illuminated by the dull moonlight. Moonlight that ripples and gleams on the surface of the calm water of an obvious river. Where they stand must be the riverbank. Neighboring there is more greenery, but Louis’s gaze is drawn to the bridge in the near distance, lovely and arched and just so…perfect.

Squeezing his hand Harry all but drags him forward through the plush grass. It’s there Louis finds an impressively sized rowboat, where an unknown bloke, seemingly Alpha, has settled on its edge, bouncing up at the sight of them and grabbing for the rope that must keep the boat from floating away. Absorbed, the Omega watches as the boat is situated for visitors. “I don’t know how to row, and I think it’d be a bit difficult right now so I hope you won’t mind he’s to come with us. He’s not going to sing or anything like that. He’s just goin’ to row our boat,” a nervous laugh forms in his throat, then, “gently down the stream and have his headphones in. Right, Daniel?” Once the Alpha’s confirmed, Harry implores with bated breath, “Come with me.” And so Louis nods slowly, helped into the boat through breathless giggles and shrieks until he’s seated on the padded bench and Harry’s sitting before him on the next, their ankles twined loosely.

With his hands on his bump Louis smiles shyly, so extraordinarily smitten as Harry smiles timidly. “I just want to make all your wishes come true. And I’ll start with these ones. Yeah?”

It’s heaven. This. Them. Like this. Especially as the boat begins its journey towards the bridge. Disturbed, the waters ripple prettily, and Louis is lost to the little, mellifluous noises of the water lapping at the boat, to catch the first glow overhead. But then everywhere is glowing, flourishing and beauteous, illuminated by the swift paper lantern invasion, all the little lights floating above them. So many. Too many.

Louis melts. Unable to breathe, or think, or know anything beyond the tempest of emotion. Just feeling. Feeling who they are, what they are. The enormity of their devotion, their love. A paradise all on its own.

“You said Disney. Anything Disney sweet. And well this was on a Disney film and its Disney sweet. And I know you wanted the boat ride in Paris, but we’re going to be mated in two weeks and you’re going to be nearly four months pregnant by then so I didn’t want you traveling any more than necessary.”

“How long ‘ave you been planning this?” Louis asks breathily with his heart in his mouth, glowing like lanterns in his eyes.
“I’ve always wanted to give this to you. I always wanted to be the Alpha to make your every dream come true. I asked all those years ago because I just wanted to imagine I’d be the one. The one to touch your heart—the Alpha you talked about all the time. I didn’t think I ever could be that Alpha. I didn’t…believe in myself. I never could have. But you did,” the stark ache in his voice strikes at his already drumming heart as his eyes brim with tears. “You believed in me. No matter how many times I hurt you. No matter how many times I let you down. When nobody else would, you believed in me,” his voice breaks and so does Louis. Into infinite pieces. It’s like he’s spiraled into this never-ending tempest of love. A fairytale. A rather rugged one with too much pain and trouble. But this is what love’s tethered out—them. Washing away any pain that’s bottled up, tears spill down his cheeks. “You believed in me when I couldn’t even believe in me, paradise. And you still believe in me despite it all. You brought me back. You brought me home.”

Overwhelmed with euphoria the Omega tears his blurred stare from the lantern swarmed sky to Harry. Sitting there, observing him with an intensity that’s brighter than the glow around them, the Alpha continues shakily, “I have loved you since before I knew the meaning of love. And it’s always going to be you. I may not own your heart, but you own mine, paradise. You’ve never led me wrong before. And I promise to never lead you wrong again. I promise to be faithful to you, to this, always. I promise to take care of you. I promise to take care of them. I promise to take care of me. I promise to bear the weight of the world for you. I promise to never forget one moment I’ve had with you. To cherish you. Next time I stand tall I want to be standing for you. I promise I will be stronger.” With an unsteady breath, Harry envelopes his left hand in both of his, warm and secure, all the while holding his gaze. “And I promise to always come home to you.”

It’s perfectly timed. As they’re passing underneath the shadowy bridge the structure lights up brilliantly. Letters dangle from its ledge, twinkling and dazzling, ‘Will you mate me?’

Stealing his attention as his breaths quicken, nerves alight, Harry places an already opened velvet box in his limp palm. But oh God Louis can’t see it, vision indistinct with the force of his tears. “I have so much more I want to say, but I’m going to spend the rest of my life sayin’ what I can’t now. I love you. Be my permanent paradise. Let me be your Alpha.” Raspy, compelling him to nod madly, unable to find his voice.

Blinking rapidly, trembling, Louis focuses on what’s nestled in the box—a diamond the size of an apple or a baseball or his head. A steel band is nestled beside it, which Louis asks around bated breaths, “W-What’s—?”

“I didn’t know whether you’d fancy the customary steel band, though there’s diamonds embedded, or just the diamond with the plated gold more,” Harry explains timidly. “You like subtle and flashy…” Such pressure. Oh, Haz…

“C-C-Can I have both?” Louis snivels stupidly as the Alpha strokes his wrist.

“Of course,” his smile is teasing as his hand returns to take the box. “But which one can I put on now?”

“Diamond,” the boy manages, and Harry takes the glittering diamond ring to tuck the box into the inside pocket of his blazer. Hesitant, the Alpha whispers, still gazing at him softly, “Tell me.”


Smiling, “And I you, paradise,” before slipping the ring onto his finger (it’s perfectly sized, snug and heavy) and admiring the sight for an instance too long. Out of control, too in love, Louis catapults himself at him. Which. Bad idea. With his weight suddenly lifted, and all the weight on their side the boat tips and pitches them into the water.
A second panic grasps him but instinctively the Omega breaks the surface, knocking his head on the bench he’d been sitting, seemingly above him now. Gasping, as the water in his ears drain Harry’s expletives rage with his lurch from the water, doing much the same and slamming his head into the boats interior, growling like an upset kitten. Around chattering teeth Louis laughs, soaking with his hair plastered to his face and his clothes sticking to his skin.

Much the same Harry’s curls are flat all around, framing his face. “This is so Disney,” the boy giggles, staying afloat through sheer will though his struggle is lessened when Harry’s arm circles his waist. “I’m going to spank the living hell out of you,” the Alpha growls, thoroughly upset. Before the boy can respond Harry’s shoving the boat up and over, leaving him to return to it, then leaning down to take him under the arms and heft all his weight. Already the vessel is flooded with water up to his ankles as Louis stands there, hugging his tummy, slightly afraid he’s hurt his pups though he hadn’t bumped into anything (or hadn’t felt it at least). There is no pain, there is no gut feeling that something’s wrong…though Harry jerks around, jostling the boat again. “Are you okay? Are they okay?”

At the wild anxiety to his voice Louis nods, though before Harry says another word, “Are you guys alive down there?”

“Lost at sea,” Louis laughs madly, “We’re murderers! Poor Daniel! Daniel, mate, come back!”

“I’m so sick of love,” Harry murmurs darkly, though the affectionate glaze to his eyes says different. “We’ve never taken anything slow, ‘ave we?”

“I beg to differ,” Louis scoffs, shivering with the gentle breeze spreading goose bumps along his skin. “I’ve been waiting for this my entire life.”

“Yeah,” the Alpha agrees softly, shuffling over to him. “Did I get something right this time ‘round?”

Stretching on his tiptoes the Omega kisses him, molding their mouths until their hearts beat the same, pouring his all into the contact, his love and his trust. Gasping, “Now. Now it’s right. It’s perfect.” And oh God it is, with Harry’s hand sneaking between them and splaying over his baby belly, with his eternal diamond caught in his damp curls and their mouths clinging, savoring. Any wait was worth this. Because this is them, now. Nothing else matters. The past, the then, is nothing compared to their now. Because it’s theirs. And nothing can possibly take this from them. It will always be theirs. Their moment. Their happily ever after.

(Vaguely their audience goes wild. As wild as the love that’s run Louis’ heart right into Harry’s hands. It’s this time that Louis knows Harry’s hands are in no need of cleansing. And it’s this time Louis knows his heart will always be able to withstand Harry’s touch.)

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By the time Harry’s able to carry Louis home it’s 4 A.M. and his lovely Omega is already asleep. Snuffling adorably, Louis buries his face into his chest as Harry tries his best not to jostle him in his blind fight to unlock the door and entire the security codes. Obviously exhausted by the day’s upheaval Louis gives not one indication of being disturbed, an exquisite weight in his arms. Closing the door with his boot Harry pauses again to reactivate the security, locks the bolts, and carries him through the shadowy hallways, up the two flights into their bedroom. Gently lying him in bed Harry removes his shoes, laughing gently when Louis’ unconsciously kicks at him, socks
following to massage lightly at the pads of his feet. This obviously isn’t his erogenous spot as Louis’ kicking again, mumbling, “Lemme ‘lone, ‘Az, you bloody tosser,” adorably upset.

Fondly Harry watches him curl up tiny on his side, shivering.

In seconds the Alpha’s shed his clothes, ignoring his semi to jack the blankets at the end of the body over them once he’s shimmed down to nose at his belly and squeezes his chunky thighs. Louis’ hand forage in his unruly hair, “Mmm. Sleepin’. Sleep, Harry.”

And so later doesn’t come that night…but that’s okay. Harry’s never been so happy. Just like this. With his Omega safe and sound in his arms. And their pups safe and sound in his Omega.

&&

Louis’s clinging to him once their three day ceremony is at its ends (finally). Clinging like Harry’s the only Alpha in the world. And in his world Harry is. The very air Louis’ lungs need to breathe, the very energy that’s hotwire his heart, the fire in his soul. “Uh,” Louis mewls when Harry’s hands splay on his arse, in the stretchy material of his (somewhat) slacks.

Breath hot, delicious, the Alpha’s tongue tastes like frosting, spreading sugar in his mouth as Louis incites him; mouth parted just enough to be an invitation, stroking, submitting to his thrusts. “You’re mine,” Louis mewls, lit up by the very words. With an unsteady groan Harry’s canines lock on his bottom lip, the sting fiery in his veins. And the soft suction on his flesh dizzies him until Louis is panting into his mouth, fingers aching with how desperate he’s gripping tuffs of his slightly wilted curls. “Yeah. Yeah. Yours,” is his husky approval as his hands work the flesh of his ass.

“Bed, Alpha,” the boy gasps once his canines tug at his bottom lip.

“Yeah, bed. Right now.” Desperation thickens in his voice as Harry hitches him, one arm wrapped underneath his thighs so his hand is gripping one globe, the other gripping his hip as Louis rakes his nails down his throat, teasing his mouth as heat pours over him. God, that he’s even able to carry him at this point sends sensation throbbing in his searing veins until he’s aching everywhere.

In minutes Louis’s being forced onto the mattress, watching hazily as Harry kneels, making quick work of removing his shoes. Needy from two months without the boy writhers on the mattress, yanking his shirt from his trousers to make this quick as possible, trying to remember how to undo buttons but failing miserably.

A radioactive heat flares hot hot hot in his rounded belly, already swollen sizes Louis hadn’t thought possible for him. But oh God he doesn’t care that he resembles a bloody whale right now he just needs. “I need I need I need,” Louis whimpers as Harry deftly begins to peel his trousers down his sawing legs, thighs already slick with how wet he is.

“Okay, pup, okay,” the Alpha rasps, spreading his thighs wide to mouth at his skin, groaning around the vicious pulls of his mouth, nipping hard until Louis’s locked his legs around his head, desperate for anything the Alpha gives him. Between his legs Harry whispers huskily, “Smells so lovely, pup. Let me have.”

Just like that the Omega’s legs fall apart, clawing at the sheets, bowing his constantly aching back, unable to feel anything around the pleasure thick in his bloodstream. “Alpha, Alpha, Alpha,” the boy chants deliriously as Harry bites up his right thigh before circling the head of his cock with his ruby red lips. His gasp becomes a pitchy whine as his hands fist Harry’s curls, canting his hips so his cock’s surrounded by heat, wet and sloppily. When the Alpha hums, the vibrations are felt
everywhere. Stealing his breath, Harry tongues up his length, bobbing his head, curls loose and pretty in Louis’ hands. Every drag is another torrent of pleasure until it’s too much too much too much and Louis’ coming apart at the seams with his orgasm, crying viciously as white bursts behind his eyes.

Sweet, the Alpha sucks softly, until post orgasm shudders wreck up his spine. “I was supposed to suck you off,” the boy mumbles as Harry’s mouth runs up the shirt concealed curve of his taunt tummy.

“M takin’ care of you,” his voice is raw, and Louis whimpers at the timbre coating the words, needing to be taken, to have nine inches of cock stretching him too full, painfully full.

“But I’ve nev’ah given head,” Louis protests breathily, not really thinking. “I want you to fuck my mouth.”

“That’s not very pleasant,” Harry says darkly. Frowning, Louis yanks at his curls, pinning him with a hazy glare. “Don’t you dare ruin this mo’. I don’t wanna hear ‘bout who you’ve lain with beside meself. Like ev’ah again. You’re mine. Thas’ my name on your back. For me only.”

“Possessive,” the Alpha drawls silkily, blown stare hungry and wanting, “’S hot.”

Louis sighs, slumping with his heartbeat thundering in his ears. “You’re ruining it, Haz.”

A beat of silence, then, “’M sorry, paradise. ’S only you… I’ll fuck your face next time.” A thrill runs through him at the words until he’s nodding madly, “Carry on, slave.”

A smoky laugh echoes through his body as Harry braces over him, between his legs, dipping forward to mouth at his jaw, teasing him as his parted lips run down his throat, breath ghosting over his bonding spot. Louis shivers as the heat builds again, lashes fluttering, victim to the sensation. “Save the best for last.”

Though the Omega shakes his head, mumbles, “no don’t wanna wait, now,” Harry moved onto his shoulder. “Mm. This won’t do.” And hazily Louis knows the loss of skin-to-skin contact is necessary, but oh God it’s cold without and Louis is whimpering, peering through his lashes to watch Harry’s hands take the collar of his shirt and yank so buttons go flying and he lifts his heavy arms so the Alpha can complete his work. And then he’s naked–belly so round Louis can’t see his how flushed his cock is, hard and wet against the curve.

When the Alpha examines with the green of his eyes thin rings around hungry black Louis melts all over again. Because he’s staring at him like he’s beautiful and sexy and the whole bit, even though the Omega knows he’s far from it right now. “You’re so fucking gorgeous, pup,” Harry whispers huskily, fingertips warm running down his sides. “So…damned pretty. Can’t wait to just…” With an uneven breath Harry closes his eyes, like the sight actually hurts him. Which confuses him enough that Louis is tossing an arm over his face to hide the sight and focus on the hypersensitive feel.

“Look at me,” the Alpha orders until Louis whimpers, shaking his head. “Look at me, paradise.” With his Omega flaring to life Louis can’t help but listen.

With an unsteady breath the boy takes his arm back to stare through thick lashes. “You’re too pretty for your own good.”

A flush spreads from his face down his throat to his heaving chest as he searches Harry’s dark stare, finding hunger and love and the same need Louis feels all over. “Reckon you tell all the Omegas that.”
“You’re lookin’ to get spanked.” Standing there, much too dressed, and much too composed, Harry’s stare does not waver, and Louis’s smart remark does not reach them because he’s speaking again, “S your night, pup. Tell me what you want.”

“You,” Louis says breathily. “Just…you. I don’t want control. No control. Do what you want to me.”

“So now it’s my night?” the Alpha smiles softly, caressing his belly, leaving trials of warmth. “Wanna taste you. Been too long.” Whimpering softly, the Omega sits up, hands braced on the mattress to grab the stretch and shove the lapels of his suit’s jacket until it’s dropped to the floor. Careful with the buttons Louis undoes them one by one, leaving sweet kisses on every bared inch of skin with Harry’s hands running through his kinky hair. Under his mouth Harry’s blazing, and the nearer Louis draws to the waistline of his trousers the thicker that delicious scent flares. “Gonna fuck my face now?” Louis giggles, tracing the slight indentations of his abs.

“No. Gonna get my mouth on you,” Harry rasps. Before the boy can pout Harry’s stroking his bottom lip, “What’s the most comfortable position for you?”

Distracted by the reminder that he’s basically handicap, Louis blushes, shrugging, “I dunno. We haven’t really tried any out,” the grudging tone must be the reason Harry’s laughing, which Louis does not appreciate.

“Hands and knees, paradise,” the Alpha murmurs once Louis frowns. “No. Now I don’t want to.”

“You’re goin’ to,” Harry murmurs. “Cause you’re my good boy, right, pup?”

“No. ‘Cause I’m needy. And I’ve not been fucked in two months,” Louis mumbles, meaning yes your good boy.

“I’ll take it,” Harry whispers with an entirely too boyish grin. “C’mon. Be good. I can’t move you.”

“Because I’m fat.”

“Because I don’t want to hurt you. You know your body best. I’m not moving you too fast or too rough. You already whine too much as is.”

“You try carrying two pups,” the boy snaps.

“I would if I could.”

“I thought the same,” Louis smiles shyly. “Still think so. I’d do this again. I’d do this a million times over.”

“A million pups? A million little Tomlinson-Styles’s running amuck? Lord save us all.”

Patting the curve of his belly Louis giggles, “We’re going to have the most gorgeous pups. Look at us. God, we’re attractive as fuck.”

“They say two attractive people make ugly babies.” By the cheeky grin Harry knows their babies will be beautiful.

Scandalized, the Omega strokes lovingly, glowering at him, “Don’t call our babies ugly, Mr. Tomlinson-Styles.”
“Like that,” Harry breathes, then, “They always look like little potatoes when they’re born.”

“You’re just wrong,” but the boy can’t contain his grin. “Beautiful little potatoes.”

“Beautiful little potatoes,” Harry agrees quietly. “Quit distractin’ me. Hands and knees.”

“But now I wanna talk babies,” Louis says seriously with a contrite look. “Can we do this later?”

His crushed expression is nothing compared to how he tries to hide it, smiling tightly enough that Louis dissolves into giggles, “You really wanna fuck, don’t ya?”

“Jokes, huh? You’re not nearly needy enough for my liking, paradise,” Harry says, and before he can even blink Louis’s pinned on his back as Harry holds his weight over him, mouth closing on one of his too sensitive nipples. “Oh, God,” Louis gasps again, his every nerve ending sparked with fiery sensation. Involuntarily Louis bows his back, fisting his mop of curls. Every flick of his tongue, every pull of his lips, drenches him in heat until Louis can’t remember how to breathe, gasping only his visions gone hazy with pleasure.

“Mm. So sensitive, pup. Gonna make you come like this.” And his teeth close on his nipple, tugging as Louis moans breathily, “Yes.” Teasing him the Alpha slows the slick drags of his tongue, of his thumb over the next, retreating a bit, despite how Louis’ gripping his hair, to blow softly until tears are crowding his eyes. So close–steadily leaking the heat from his belly causes his cock to ache and his hole to clench up, empty and wanting. “Please!” Louis cries raggedly, teardrops trickling towards his ears. “Please, ‘Arry.”

Groaning low in his throat the Alpha moves to the nipple his fingers toyed with, closing around the little nub while his fingers pinch the other, wet and puffy by now. Searing him Harry nips, canines catching his flesh, tipping him over the precipice. Seizing up, Louis whines, pitchy and embarrassing as his cock throbs, pulsing with all his pleasure.

Shivering, the Omega tries to curl up, sleepy and sated, but Harry’s trapped him, “’M not done with you yet, paradise. Hands and knees.”

Louis mewls, body awakened after two months of neglect. Slowly, the boy sits up on his knees and turns to plants his hands on the mattress, bowing his head submissively. Blessedly, there is no wait, the Alpha’s hands grip both rounds of his ass, spreading him to growl deep in his throat, “Oh, love, you’re so tight. Gonna loosen you up a bit.”

Louis mewls again, unable to find his voice around panting breaths and needy noises as Harry inhales, long and deep, groaning again before his breath is hot on Louis’ fluttering hole. Gasping, his eyes spring open to see nothing but the untidy sheets. It’s always too much–he’s so hot already, slick trickling wetly down the backs of his thighs and his achy balls as Harry’s mouth drags over his entrance. Veins alight with fire the boy chases his mouth though like always the Alpha holds him still, fingers burrowing into the flesh of his ass.

Languid, like he’s savoring, Harry’s tongue works his swollen hole, circling, teasing, jabbing at him until Louis’s crying into his arms, belly just barely touching the mattress with how his back’s arched (this will come back to haunt him, but right now all Louis feels is bliss bliss bliss). Without warning, around his tongue’s wet draws on his hole, a finger plunges into his hole and Louis whimpers, “ah,” as his hands grip the sheets, achy and desperate.

Avoiding his prostate Harry circles his fingers, stretching him slowly, tongue joining as Louis begins to cry in earnest, “please, Harry. If I feel so empty,” and “I need you!” and “I’m gonna come.” Another finger forces its way, snug and stingy in the best ways. As both draw out, they curl, rubbing against his sweet bundle of nerves. Louis comes undone again, overstimulated as
two becomes three, fucking him sloppily, stretching as his orgasm spirals on and on.

“Yeah, pup. Gonna fuck you now,” is all Louis catches before he’s empty, clenching around nothing, crying pitifully for Harry to just do something and make him better.

And oh God he does. So hot the head of his cock is blunt and thick prodding at his hole. “Relax, pup. Jus’ hold position for me, okay. Don’t wanna hurt our precious cargo.”

Louis nods madly, not really listening because his heads gone fuzzy with his orgasms and all he can think about is how full he’s going to be, stuffed full. “Pup, please, tell me you’re listening.”

Again Louis nods, and Harry groans, “Can’t wait, can’t wait,” forcing the thick head of his cock into his hole as a broken noise forms in his chest. And then the Alpha’s sinking into him, slowly, inch by tormenting inch.

On instinct Louis curls his fingers on the sheets to keep his hands planted, moaning as the white-hot pleasure torrents through his veins and Harry bottoms out. Around his sounds, Harry’s making his own, husky growls as he gives him a moment to adjust to the sudden invasion.

And like always it’s not enough time. Harry’s drawing slickly out, pressing against his prostate once he’s shoving back into him, filling him. On fire Louis mewls, and lets his Alpha do the work, hands on his hips as his pace becomes brutal, like Louis needs. Swamped, the boy focuses on the wet drags and the ecstasy they bring until his head is swimming, and his forearms shake, struggling to hold his weight. “You’re so good, pup,” and oh God Louis feels so good. Satisfied. With his tummy full with his pups and his hole full with his Harry.

Before Louis knows it’s happened he’s coming, pitiful little streaks as pleasure gentles, not nearly as good as the first three. But so relieving. Enough. “Always come so good for me,” Harry’s panting, cock throbbing inside of him, swelling.

Louis moans eagerly, clenching around him, “Yes. Only for my Alpha.” And the Alpha drives into him, fucking him so hard Louis’s rucked up the mattress, on his elbows, sobbing because it’s too much, hurts so good, “Haz, please.”

As deep as possible the Alpha freezes, knot expanding as the boy comes dry, washed with heat. With a violent jerk come spills from Harry’s cock, filling him up.

Through ragged breaths the Harry gingerly carries him upright so he’s seated in his lap, the heat of his cock brushing some unknown part in his body that causes him to moan breathily. “So good, Haz. So good,” Louis slurs sleepily as one of the Alpha’s hand flattens on his wet rounded belly, the one finding his left hand, where his diamond is proud and glittering in the dim light.

“When you think of me,” Harry whispers jaggedly into his ear. “What do you think ‘bout?”

“Think ‘bout seventeen,” Louis mumbles, lashes fluttering shut with sated sleep approaching. “Think about how you wanted to get my name tattooed on your arm and yours was tattooed on my heart. Think ‘bout how I wanted so bad to be yours, and you wanted to be mine, but we were too stubborn to think ‘bout actually mating. I think ‘bout old records and tired eyes. I think about the stars in the night sky. I think ‘bout…” but he’s stolen by sleep before he can say, I think about all I’ve ever wanted, and all I’ll ever need.

&&

“Ouch! Ouch!” the Alpha hisses as Louis runs his fingers over the scored letters stretched from shoulder to shoulder. With Harry lying flat on his belly, propped on his elbows, flipping through ‘When You’re Expecting Twins’ Louis’ given the perfect opportunity to admire his
territory. Now that the bandages have been removed, the sight is stunning as he’d thought it’d be without all the blood and gaping flesh.

“Oh, shut up!” Louis mumbles, too captivated by the pretty, posh sprawl ‘LOUIS’ “’S already healed, wanker.” Five months along and the Omega is struggling to bend, back aching even now though Louis refuses to acknowledge it. “’S so…lovely. You don’t understand.”

When the Alpha only laughs, Louis runs his fingers over the smoothly scarred skin. “Actually,” Harry murmurs, “I think I have an idea just looking at the bonding mark.”

Nostalgic, the boy’s fingers trace the smooth, glossy scar permanently homed on his throat. “Mmm. Let’s fuck.”

“All for it. But our appointment is at noon.”

“That’s plenty time, Harold,” Louis says, rolling his eyes.

“Is that sarcasm, Tomlinson-Styles?” A flush spreads down his throat at the award, and Louis bites on his bottom lip, toying with the steel band on his mated finger. “I wanna wear my diamond now.”

“I quite like the diamond,” Harry says, holding his large hand out, where he’d just barely gotten the diamond to fit on his pinky finger (because Louis wanted it in safe hands and Harry takes things too literally). “Gimme my bloody diamond, Tomlinson-Styles,” Louis hisses playfully, holding his palm out.

With a sheepish grin, “I don’t know that I can. It’s kind of stuck.”

“Kind of?” Louis arches one brow.

“Okay. It’s stuck. I’ve been trying to get the bloody thing off for three days.” It’s like he’s confessing to an unforgivable crime. Louis giggles, “Baby, why didn’t you just tell me?”

“Dunno.” And he’s never seen Harry look so adorable, with his curls in his face and his mossy green eyes round.

“C’mon, loser. We’re resorting to butt’ah or soap. One of those will surely work.”

At exactly noon Louis is waddling, yes waddling, into his appointed room with Harry practically growling at the air, stitched to his side. “Haz, baby, stop. You do this every time! Every time I step foot outside you’re all Alpha-idiot. It’s rather rude.”

As the nurse steps in first, Harry halts, steps in with Louis behind him, examines the room, then carries him forward (once the coast is clear—they’re in a private facility, private). Once he’s shut the door firmly behind them Harry let’s out an entirely too long breath, but mercifully relaxes to smile that soft ‘I just love you’ smile and help him up onto the hospital bed. “Here we are,” Louis says, already out of breath as Harry takes his hand, standing beside him.

Nurse Meredith is kind enough, finishes the mandatory checkup (by now it’s no surprise to find he’s gained so much more weight) to claim the doctor will be with them shortly and leave.

Alone, Louis fiddles with the diamond on his left finger, admiring how its rays catch in the light. “’S going to be fine, paradise,” Harry murmurs softly, though when Louis meets his gaze there’s a nearly unrecognizable glaze of dread. Touched by how hard he’s trying to be his support, Louis
squeezes his hand, “Good news.”

“Good news.”

&&

“Fraternal twins!” Louis squeals once they’ve stepped out of the private care. “Oh my God, Haz, we’re having both!” A burst of joy erupts in his chest, stealing his breath and claiming his heart.

Surprising him, the Alpha takes him by the hips and boosts him into the air (like he’s not twelve stone) as Louis cups his face, laughing because he’s won everything. And Harry’s smiling so wide his dimples are on full display, and he’s being twirled, locking his legs around Harry’s middle and burying his face in his throat. “Oh my God,” an awed breath as Harry stills.

“You’re okay,” his barely-audible voice breaks as his arms tighten, “You’re okay. They’re okay. We’re okay.”

As the Omega trembles tears ooze past his lashes. “Yeah. We’re okay, baby.”

And oh God for once they are.

&&

Delighted, Louis giggles, following his movements the best he can with how his coordination’s gone to hell (it’s hard when you’re barely able to see your feet). Swaying them slowly Harry’s singing along to his song, “I’ve been gone…gone too long…I’m coming home, don’t give a damn what these keys are for, I’m gonna knock down that front door and ’m gonna find out what this house is made of…been too many nights since its felt us make love–,”

“You tryin’ to say somethin’, sweet talker?” Louis sighs, dreamy and faraway.

“Love you baby like a wrecking ball,” Harry laughs throatily, taking his hand and slowly parting them so Louis’s twirling rather awkwardly, then being reeled back in so his head rests on his shoulder as they sway again, “You, look at you…damn you really turn me on…but if I can make it just one more day this whole house is gonna be shakin’”

Smiling so wide his cheeks ache Louis shuts his eyes to listen to his deeper tenor over the actual artists, “I hope these bricks and boards can take it, but I won’t be surprised if the whole damn place just falls, wanna rock you baby like a wrecking ball.”

“So smooth,” Louis says breathily. “This is why my names on your back. You turn even the sassiest Omegas into putty in your hands. Seductive cunt.”

“Back you up against the wall,” his voice is husky, mouth to the curve of his ear, “Love you baby, take it right there, baby. Rock you, paradise…like a wrecking ball.” As the finish plays on seconds more the Omega tangles their fingers.

When it’s silent aside from his slightly labored breaths (he’s carrying three okay) Louis asks curiously, “So Balmy Seas or Breath of Spring?”

“Breath of Spring,” Harry decides gently.

Beaming, the Omega tells him, “I was goin’ with that anyway. We should start soon.”

“No. I’ve hired professionals. You don’t need to inhale those fumes. You’re already on bedrest.
Speaking of which *why aren’t you in bed?*” There’s definite disapproval in his voice.

“I’m just too restless,” Louis says in his whiniest voice. “I’m *bored* just layin’ there in bed! And then you’re either at studies or you’re at therapy,” Louis hates that he’s brought it up.

Harry stiffens. “Weren’t one of the boy’s supposed to be here today?”

“Ni visited. We argued most the time. He’s too bubbly. And I’m too cranky,” Louis mumbles petulantly.

“Paradise,” Harry starts, but Louis’s easily triggered temper flares.

“Don’t *paradise* me,” the Omega hisses, ripping away from him (instantly regretting it because now he’s *cold*, which *great*), “I want my Alpha, and everyone else can piss off. I’m pregnant. I want you. And you’re not here most the day.”

Circling his hand on the swollen curve of his belly Louis meets his jade stare resolutely. Running his hand through his mop of curls Harry mutters, “I don’t know what you want me to do, Lou. You’re running hot and cold these days. I’m trying? Isn’t that enough anymore? I’m trying to be considerate, but it’s real hard when I already have so much on my shoulders.”

“You have so much on your shoulders?” Louis asks sharply. “You try being this fucking *pregnant and fearing for your life and out of control of your emotions and alone half the time because your Alpha isn’t there.*” As confidently as possible with unwarranted tears spreading in his eyes the Omega storms (sort of) down the hall and into their bedroom, slamming the door behind him. Regret swaps him, because that’s *not fair.* He’s being selfish. So selfish. Because he’s moody and Harry’s *just.* Living life while Louis is trapped at home doing *nothing and more nothing.*

And when Louis finally has his Alpha for *himself,* it’s a few hours because he’s always so *exhausted* and ends up falling asleep once his huge belly is full. And wakes up *alone* throughout the night because Harry won’t even *sleep* in the same bed.

Crying viciously Louis curls up in bed, muffling the sounds with his fists. What the Omega does *not need* is to be alone one more second. Can’t *stand it.* Yet here he is…alone and miserable.

A knock interrupts his crying fit. “Lou…can I come in?” the Alpha asks, too apologetic, too *understanding.* No.

“Y-Y-Yes,” the Omega weeps openly, quivering with the force.

“Hey,” Harry crawls into bed on his side to face him, stroking his baby belly. “Don’t cry, *paradise.*” Those words intensify the hollow in his chest as Louis bawls.

A hand takes his, tangled and *there to bring him back.* “Talk to me.”

“I t-t-thought it was *gone,*” Louis says around raggedly breaths.

And oh God Louis * despises* that look–dark brows furrowed, jade stare so *upset* and broken, mouth in a frown. “Thought what was gone, love?”

“T-T-This loneliness! A-A-All the time! When y-y-you’re not here I’m s-s-so hollow inside! The pups only make it b-b-bett’ah a little because y-y-you have my heart!” Spilling his soul Louis feels so vulnerable, as in love as ever.

“Oh, love,” the Alpha breathes sadly, *crushing him.* “I knew somethin’ was wrong. You’ve been too quiet.”
Louis nods a bit.

“I’ll fix it, paradise. I promise. I’ll request the courses online. And I’ll... You can come. You can come to therapy,” but the tremble to his voice says Louis can’t come. And the boy knows this, doesn’t want to become acquainted with his beautiful Alpha’s horrors.

“N-N-No,” the Omega sniffls, hyperventilating even as Harry soothes circles into his tummy. “N-N-No, you deserve that time away. You d-d-deserve to have freedom. Time a-a-away from this.”

A dark look clouds his features. “Louis, I don’t want time away from this. I want this all the time. Even on the bad days. Never think otherwise. I don’t like leaving you even for a few hours. It’s hell. But I’m doing this for you, paradise. For us. For our litter. For our future.”

A riptide of love crashes into his lungs as Louis dry heaves. “I know! I know that! I just... I miss you so much, Haz! And I’m scared. I’m scared that you’re goin’ to forget ‘bout us. And I’ll be lonely forever. B-B-Because it’s only you that fills every hollow in my body, nothing, nobody else. Not even o-our pups.”

Shuffling blessedly close the Alpha braces on his elbow and begins to kiss his heated, damp cheeks. “I want to be with you as much as I can, paradise. I’m going to take them online. And then I’ll only have to leave a few hours in the evening. Does that sound better, my love? I’m never going to forget this. How could I? You’re my paradise. My soul is your soul. And my heart belongs to you. This litter? Ours. I have everything I need right here. I’m goin’ to fill all those hollows so you’re never lonely again. Is it selfish of me to be glad there’s something that’s exclusively for me?”


“’S okay, ‘cause I want to be here. I need to be here. I don’t want to lose you,” the note of dread in his voice pierces his eardrums as Louis whispers, “No. Y-You won’t ever lose me. No m-matter what I believe in you. Always have, always will.”

Harry’s mouth brushes his, achingly gentle and leaving warm tingles along his lips. “You won’t ever lose me.” The conviction in his claim leaves no room to think otherwise. So relieved Louis kisses him softly again, expressing every facet of his love. “So,” Harry breathes, hand sneaking underneath his shirt to caress his belly, spreading goose bumps on his skin. “How ‘bout Kristoff and Kaylee?”

“How a-a-about no,” Louis giggles stuffily.

“I didn’t think so.”

And they are forever in unison, straying only to return home. Not to this house. To each other.

&&

“I can’t sleep,” the Alpha says blankly, scrubbing viciously at his strained eyes. “I have three in bed with me now. It’s not just... He’s so very pregnant and I just... can’t bear the thought of harming them.”

Typing furiously Veihl nods. “And you’re sure you won’t accept sleep inducing mediation?”
“Yes. I don’t want to be sleeping like the dead. What if he needs me? What if I don’t wake up—?” At the escalating anxiety the therapist murmurs, “Harry, I understand. There are other means to help. Have you spoken to Louis about this?”

“You’re my therapist,” his temper flares. “You’re meant to help. Not my five months pregnant bedridden Omega.”

Nonplussed, “We are all meant to help you, Harry.” Harry wants to believe this, but. “I’ll tell you what. I have some homework for you.”

Instinctively he tenses, but once she regards him steadily he motions for her to continue. “First I would like you to voice your concerns to Louis. Do not think into this. Simply explain to him what it is that holds you from him at night. Then, a few days afterwards I’d like you to put yourself in the mindset of your Alpha. Once that instinctual light is shed I would like you to spend every night for a week in another room. Sleep. Record your nights.

“What you dream of, how you wake up, and how you feel, and how much sleep you manage. During this week I would like you to religiously spend time with Louis in an intimate environment. Stay close. Hold him until one of you falls asleep. Don’t document this. Just familiarize your Alpha with the feel of protecting even in sleep. Condition him, so to say. The next week I want you in bed with Louis every night and sleeping. Remember that protective conditioning, keep it in mind before you fall asleep. Don’t fight sleep either. Let it come to you. Document it much the same. I will see you in exactly a week.”

Distress screams in his stomach. “What if I hurt him?”

“Mr. Styles this is what I’ve gathered. I believe your mate to be a strong young man. He has diffused those run-in’s before and he will continue to do it. That is not to say you mustn’t be cautious. But now that he’s carrying life there is more reason to make sure he does what he has to. It’s an Omega’s paternal instinct. I would ask that there be meditator, something that emotionally strikes you, to help him along. Violence is a slim to none at this point. You’ve told me the nightmares are not quite so reoccurring since we’ve begun to touch on your past. Is that correct?” They’re still there.

Harry nods, but, “I’m just…scared. I need him to be okay. I need him…”

“And he needs you, my lord. Protect your young mate and pups. Open up to your Alpha. Your Alpha will see you through this.” Wise words. The words Harry’s needed to hear. Now it’s time to listen.

&&

When the Alpha makes his way into the house it’s quiet though there’s a lilting melody floating from above. “Paradise, babe, why’s it so quiet?” he calls.

There’s an entirely horrified groan, then pounding footsteps before Louis appears, ambling down the stairway. In his rush the Omega trips up, cursing though Harry acts on impulsive, bolting up the stairs to catch him around the waist. “What the hell, Lou?”

Breathily Louis giggles. “I was going to yell at you. You woke them up! They’ve been kicking like hell all day. I couldn’t sleep. And I finally got some peace and quiet and you bloody you. They hear your voice and they’re wide awake. It’s bloody annoying.”

Pride wells up in his chest though Harry teases, “I think you’re exaggerating how much they’re kicking. It’s only twenty three weeks.”
“Holt said between twenty one to twenty four weeks they’d start kicking. They’re strong pups. Of course they’re excelling so soon,” Louis says smugly.

“Sure. C’mon. Back to bed,” the Alpha starts but the Omega shakes his head, grounded. “No. I’m hungry. I think I want a pickle.”

“I can get a pickle for you, paradise.”

“Nope. I want to stretch my legs. I’ll get it,” Louis decides, stubborn as ever.

Sighing, Harry helps him down the steps slowly, with immense care though Louis complains until they’re on ground level and the Omega can escape him, waddling adorably towards the kitchen. And he’s so damned beautiful. It’s torment. Being unable to have him. Because the boy was ordered bedrest three weeks ago due to spotting. Christ, Harry needs him to be careful, but he refuses to stay in bed every waking moment. Some days he wants to handcuff him to the bedframe. Others he just wants to spank him. Rarely the Alpha just wants him, to pay him attention and spoil him and just cuddle. Today is the rarely.

In the kitchen Louis leans on the counter, chewing slowly on an apple, then regarding him with amusement. Once he’s swallowed, “I was beginning to worry you’d gotten lost.”

Grinning wolfishly Harry sides him, leaning down to kiss him chastely. “What happened to wanting a pickle?”

Louis shrugs. “I changed my mind. I really just want ice cream…but if I must be strictly healthy.”

“Holt said cheat days were acceptable in moderations,” Harry reminds him gently. “And considering you’re out of bed right now, why would strict instructions matter?”

Beaming brilliantly, the boy bargains, “I’ll go up to bed and stay there if you go pick up ice cream. You know the sort.”

Going to the freezer, the Alpha rummages through the edibles to where he’d hidden the ice-cream. With a cheeky grin Harry turns to face him, “Ta-Da!”

Narrowing his tempest eyes Louis hisses, “You hid ice cream from me?”

“I did what I had to,” Harry murmurs firmly, holding his gaze.

There’s a beat where it’s just his stare boring into Louis’ beautifully irritated one. But as he stares the colour lightens with Louis’ defeat, melting the ice into warm pools. “Okay. I won’t be touchy. Long as I get you in bed with ice cream.”

“Your wish is my command.”

When Louis smiles, soft and fond, it’s so easy to smile back.

&&

When the Alpha pulls up to the designated building all he can think about is getting gone again. In the seven time he’s checked his clock barely any time has passed. Ten minutes.

Ten minutes of having to make himself stay.

God, he wants a line. His heart is running laps in his ribs and his palms feel like dripping washcloths and his itchy skin is driving him insane. Just when he’d thought he was far enough
from the precipice of madness. By now he’s realized he’ll always return to the edge. By now he’s realized he’ll never tumble down into the abyss.

In attempts to get out of his body, Harry looks at the lot. Twenty cars are in it, with no pattern in the makes or models. There are trucks and Toyotas and a Saac convertible and a pink VW bug and three minivans. At the sight his chest seizes up—he will not be a football dad. Nope. He’s sticking to his Range Rover. All else be damned.

Shoving his shaky hands in his pockets Harry walks over the grass to the sidewalk that runs around the building. When he reaches the asphalt stretch that makes up the drive and the lot, he takes it over to the double doors under the aluminum-sided porte cochère.

Inside, the place smells like coconut. Maybe from the floor wax on the linoleum (which reminds him he needs to get the wood in the house…) Just as his thought are seriously taking off, another male steps out of a doorway.

“You’re Harry, yeah?” the Beta asks. All kind brown eyes, and a tweedy jacket that looks too heavy for only July.

“Ah, yeah. Yeah that’s me.”

“Well, if you’re looking for the meeting, it’s down in the basement.” His smile is so natural and easy, Harry nearly returns it, but remembers where he’s headed.

“I’m going there now if you want to come with me. If you want to wait a bit, that’s cool, too.”

Harry looks down at the male’s hands. Fiddling with the buttons of his jacket. “I’m nervous,” the bloke explains. “Hands are sweaty as hell.”

Harry smiles a bit. “You know…I think maybe I’ll come with.”

“Good. I’m William.”

“My Omega’s middle name,” Harry thinks out loud.

“Yeah. You’re mated to Louis Tomlinson…It was all over the media.”

“Louis Tomlinson-Styles.” By now his palms are also sweaty in his pockets.

The basement has cement-block walls that are whitewashed in cream; a floor carpeted in low-napped dark brown; and a lot of fluorescent lights in the low ceiling. Most of the thirty or so chairs that are arranged in a circle have someone parked in them, and when William heads over to a vacancy at the center, Harry nods a see-you-later and takes one as close to the door as possible.

“It’s 21 o’clock,” a female with long blond hair says. Getting to her feet, she reads off a piece of paper: “Everything that’s said here, remains here. When someone is talking, there is no side conversation or cross talk…” And the rest fades as he’s too busy checking out who’s here. No one else is twitchy like him, and they’re mostly Alphas. Each one of them. Age range early twenties to late forties, maybe because the time of the day is convenient for those who work or go to school.

Staring at the faces, he tries to figure out what each one has done to end up here, in this coconut-smelling, stark basement with their arses planted on black metal.

He doesn’t belong here. These are not his people, and not just because none of them are of Council.
But he stays anyway, because this is it, this is better, and he wonders whether that could be true for some of them as well.

“This is speaker group,” the female says, “and starting tonight William is going to talk.”

William stands, and his hands are still working the remnants of his buttons. “Hi, my name is William.” A pattering of hellos bound around the room. “And I’m a drug addict. I…ah, I used cocaine for about a decade and lost just about everything. I’m from Detroit, I’ve been to jail twice. I’ve had to declare bankruptcy. I lost my house. My mate…she, ah, she left me, and moved out of state with my daughter. I’m not allowed contact. Right after that, I lost my job as an astronomy professor because I just was going from bender to bender.

“I’ve been clean since, yeah, last July. But…I still think about using. I g-got through rehab and I have a new job. Started three weeks ago. I’m teaching in prison, actually. The prison I was an inmate in. Math, it’s math.” William clears his throat. “Yeah…so, ah, one year ago tonight…I was in an alley downtown. I was making a buy from a dealer and we got caught. Not by the cops. By the guy whose territory we were in. I got shot in the side and the thigh. I…”

Again William clears his throat. “As I lay there bleeding, I felt my arms get moved around. The shooter took my coat and my wallet and my watch, then he pistol-whipped me in the head. I really…I really shouldn’t be here right now.” There are a lot of murmurs. “I started coming to meetings like this because I had nowhere else to go. Now I choose to come here because I want to be where I am tonight more than I want the high. Sometimes, sometimes that’s only by a slim margin, so I don’t look into the future any further than next Tuesday at twenty o’clock. When I come here again. So, yeah, that’s where I’ve been and where I am.”

William sits back down as understanding wells in his heart. And realization strengthens his resolve. Someone else stands, “Hi, my name is Ella…”

And that’s it. Person after person. Until it’s come to him. Standing, with his chest almost heaving, Harry starts slowly, “Hi, my name is Harry...” More hellos. “And I-I’m a drug addict. I…used cocaine for about six years. I…I was willingly Institutionalized by Council for nine. Which would be sixteen years with five months breaks in between every two years. Um, it…wasn’t the most…It was bad. Very bad. I was…I was stabbed in the side once. And jumped too many times. I…Attempted rapes. Attempted murder. You name it. I struggle with my past every single day. Back then I thought…” Deep breath, “I thought I could escape the trauma through the high. I didn’t think it was a problem for a long time.

“Until I began to hurt the person I loved more than…more than anything, really, in every way possible. I lost my family. I lost my friends. I lost my title as heir. And I lost my mate. For a while. I was in ruins. Mentally, emotionally, physically…I…I realized it was time…to be who I wanted to be. And that was not a drug addict with nothing ahead of him. S-So I went through a lot of withdrawals, a lot of loss, and a lot of better. I…lost my high. And I still think about using, still have the desire and I still screw up a lot. But I haven’t used in a year. I have my family. I have my friends. I have my title. And most of all I have my mate whose pregnant and waiting for me at home. I have my future. I’m almost…better, where I want to be. But I will never be perfect. And I’m okay with that.”

Jerkily Harry sits, eyes downcast as applauds bound on the walls of his skull. It’s twenty three thirty four, according to his watch, when the blonde-haired female stands. “And now for the Prayer.”

Harry rises to his feet with the rest of them and is shocked when someone reaches for his hand. His palm isn’t wet anymore, though.
He doesn’t know whether he’s going to make it long-haul. The monster has been with him a lot of years and knows him like a brother. The one thing he does know is that he needs Louis. Not the cocaine.

With the others the Alpha leaves, and as the night air hits him, he nearly doubles over from the want to snort up.

As everyone else scatters to their cars and engines starts and headlights come on, Harry walks a block over to the abandoned park he’d found months ago. Sitting on one of the rusted swings with his hands on his knees and his boots planted on the patch of raw earth Harry thinks of Louis. Thinks of his lovely paradise who’s probably sitting up waiting for him because “Goodnight’s are important, Harry.”

A while passes. For a second he thinks he’s being watched–although maybe paranoia is an offshoot to recovery, who the hell knows.

Shrugging, the Alpha returns to his car, and takes his route to better. To paradise.

Once the last group meet finishes Harry takes his place on his swing. A minute smile flickers as an easy breath leaves him.

It’s early–the sunlight just barely touching the Earth. Before this entire mess he’d loved early mornings. Loved to watch the Earth transform, loved to watch light replace dark. It’d given him hope. Harry’s finding it still does. Enjoying this alone seems wrong. So much so that the Alpha returns home and is shockingly welcomed by the aroma of breakfast, and yelping expletives, “Fuck! Damn it! I hate cooking! This is why I do not cook! I am not a houseOmega!”

Quietly setting his keys down, and toeing out of his boots Harry goes down the hall to lean in the doorway. Amused, he watches him suck on his index finger, a bit irritated with his body’s response, his cock fattening because fuck his mouth… In the soft morning light from the window over the sink his glow is that much more alluring, light hair ruffled. And the round of his belly is so damned sublime, obvious as even Harry’s shirt’s become tight, stretched. Affection warms his blood.

Noticing him Louis smiles, “Morning, baby! You’re early! Brill! You cook! Because I really need to pee, but I didn’t want to leave the stove because obviously I don’t want the house to–,” Crossing the distance Harry snakes an arm around his waist and kisses him. Gasping, the boy gives him the opportunity to taste his mouth, sweet like, “You had honeyed tea?” he breathes into his mouth. “Thought you were above that?”

“I am,” Louis mumbles, “But ‘m also pregnant. And the closest to sugar was honey. So shut up, Styles.”

Smiling, “Tomlinson-Styles to you, paradise.” Conversation doesn’t last as Harry’s desperate to be inside of him some way, retracing the contours of his sweet month, wanting to–, “Haz! Stop! It’s so impossible to pee when you’re hard! And my bladder might explode if–,”

Laughing Harry slaps him arse playfully, then runs the tap as Louis hisses, “I hate you!” but waddles as fast as possible to the loo as Harry doubles over with his laughter. “Don’t piss yourself, love!”

“I should piss on you, dickwad!” The door slams shut behind him.
“Maybe I’d like that!” Harry calls around laughter, opening the stove to check on the biscuits (they’re very sad looking, but he won’t say so).

Moments pass until Louis reenters the kitchen, drying his hands with a hand towel. “You’re a fuckin’ perv.”

“I like to watch you squirm,” he says, grabbing the over mittens to take the biscuits out. As the gravy heats Harry begins to place the biscuits on a dish but Louis snatches one. “Hey! Out of my kitchen!”

Louis giggles, munching. “Way ahead of you, Chief. I need to lay down! Bed in breakfast! Meet you there!”

Dusting his hands the boy blows him a kiss, which Harry grins at, catching and pressing his hand to his chest as Louis rolls his eyes and disappears.

And when he crawls into bed with the food laid out the Alpha plays classical music (because that’s what pups are supposed to enjoy) and strokes his belly, asking softly, “Darcy and Damian?”

“I’ll think ‘bout it.”

Which means no. “I didn’t think so.”

Stroking his hair, Louis smiles softly, “Effie and Easton?”

“I’ll think about it.”

&&

Sleepy for no reason other than he’s pregnant and tires easy these days, Louis yawns, then realizes with an abrupt pitch of pleasure, “You’re sleepin’ with me tonight!”

As he’s curled up in Harry’s side on the sofa, fiddling with the band on his left hand, Louis absorbs his shudder. “Yeah. Doctor’s orders. And unlike some I follow orders.”

Humiliated heat spreads high on his cheeks. “S not easy, is it?” the boy whispers, lashes damp with tears.

“No,” Harry sighs, lacing their hands. “No, it’s not. I didn’t mean to sound so…you know. Rude.”

Giggling stuffily, the Omega nods, understanding that they’re both extremely touchy these days. Understanding Harry’s concern. As it’s well-placed. Deception is unwise right now, and Louis promises to tell him tomorrow. Not to tell him he’s hiding the bloody liners, but to tell him he’s started bleeding again. Distress screams in his round, pregnant belly. To soothe his precious loves, Louis caresses the curve with his free hand, thinking you’re alright, lovelies. Papa’s going to be especially careful now. I’m sorry I’ve been so inconsiderate.

But Papa’s still so young. Papa has a lot of learning to do. Daddy’s here. And Daddy’s going to help all three of us.

With his entire being Louis believes it. And like his parents Louis is going to teach his pups to stay true to themselves. To follow their hearts, but never leave behind their brains.

Because oh did his heart backfire on him, but in the end…he found the happiness he’d been in pursuit of. One day they will to. Louis hopes to see the day. Louis hopes to see every day of their
Nothing can fall apart right now. Everything’s been tethered together. Everything may seem a little crazy, but they’re going to be alright.

“Take me to bed, H.” When the Alpha helps him stand his back makes odd noises, but the tension is relieved and Louis sighs happily as Harry regards him with anxious eyes. “‘S good,” Louis assures, lids drooping already. Somehow he ends up in the Alpha’s arms, and the Omega is sure Harry’s straining, but he’s also been working out (apparently they’d needed a workout room so the attic’s become just that) so Louis doesn’t fight, too fatigued. The lolling motions of his gait is so comforting he’s struggling to stay awake, knowing Harry’s going to need a little persuasion to actually go through with his therapists orders.

In bed the boy lies on his side, and mumbles quietly, “’Az, c’mon. I need you. I haven’t slept through the night in a while. You make me feel safe. Complete.” The words, baring as they are, relieve some of the stress as they work to get Harry beside him, closer to the door. It’s stiff. Very much so. But slowly Harry relaxes, tucks the blankets around them and worms down the mattress so his face is to Louis’ chest. Louis wonders idly how he manages to breathe, but doesn’t care to ask right now as Harry drapes an arm around his waist. Cuddling him, because Harry’s been the little spoon awhile despite how much bigger the Alpha is, the boy is comfortable like this. It’s right.

Everything is so right. Because Harry’s home. And so are their pups. Home in his belly awhile more as they grow.

A long time passes, and Louis’s spiraling into the most tranquil sleep he’s had since Harry refused to sleep.

“Daddy’s here,” is the faraway whisper he catches. “Daddy’s still here. Pretty babies. I promise papa’s goin’ to be alright.” The secretive words sing to his heart. An armor around his hope, carrying him into sleep.

&&

“Can we cheat?” Louis says in that pouty, ‘it’s my way or no way’ voice. “Please, Hazza. Pleeeeesee.”

“No, we cannot cheat, Louis,” Harry scolds playfully. “We lose. We lose with dignity.”

“Okay,” the boy agrees too easily, but before the Alpha can say anything he’s making his way back to sitting room where Liam is seated over their chess game. In seconds Louis knocks the entire board over, “Oops.”

“What the hell, Lou?”

“It was my baby belly, sorry,” Louis apologises, not sounding very sorry at all.

Narrowing his eyes Liam mutters, “Whatever.”

“We win!” the Omega exclaims, fist pumping. “We win! We win! We win!”

Unlike Liam, who frowns, Harry is entirely too endeared, watching the boy with his very obvious belly doing his little victory dance. “Sure,” glancing at his watch, “I actually have to go. Have an appointment with Sofia.”

Louis rolls his eyes. “Sore loser! Ah, well, good riddance.”
Ruffling his hair Liam exchanges goodbyes, claps him on the shoulder on his way out, and sees himself to the door. When the security announces his departure, Harry grins, waggling his brows. “Victory.”

“Tell me something I don’t know,” the Omega waves a dismissive hand, plonking down on the sofa and groaning, “Ugh. If this continues I think my back might break.”

Concern grasps his heart. “Is it too much? Should we see Holt? How much pain are we talking, Louis?”

“Haz,” the Omega assures quietly, “Baby, I’m fine. This is normal. Of course my back is going to hurt with all this weight I’m packing. I just…”

“Just?” Harry prompt, crouching beside him.

“Don’t freak,” Louis warns, and Harry is freaking. A mile a minute his heart pounds, a cold sweat breaking all over. “I just…I’ve been spotting again.” His expression must give away his panic because Louis reaches over to stroke his wilting curls, “Hey. Hey. It’s okay. Starting today I’m taking the bedrest seriously. I should’ve from the start…I just hate being confined. I’m sorry. Please, don’t panic. You’re going to drive me nuts.”

But he just can’t, his instincts are wild, just get them out of him, get them out, get them out. Vision black on the edges the Alpha droops, head in his lap. “Haz, please. Please, calm down.”

“I can’t calm down, Louis!” A shout tears up his throat. “I fucking can’t. I should’ve fucking handcuffed you to that bed! I knew this was fucking wrong! This was such a fucking mistake! I want them out! I want them out and now! I want to march into that hospital and demand they get them out now!” As soon as the words are out Harry regrets them. Louis is so still, and his breaths are hitching with what must be tears.

“I didn’t mean that,” the Alpha whispers, unable to face him as shame flares hot, “I’m sorry I didn’t–,”

“Get away from us,” Louis breathes, horror casted in his unsteady voice. Needing to escape Harry takes his chance, stands and makes his way out. Through mechanical movements Harry makes dinner, but doesn’t touch the food, leaving the entire servings for Louis and returning upstairs to walk right past their bedroom into the shower. From there he finds himself curled up in the neighboring guest room with the door ajar. Just in case.

Like Viehl instructed Harry ignores the piled up emotion to center on his Alpha. Thinks, this is such a mistake, but delves into the animalistic perception. Clarity.

Drawn to Louis like this Harry bolts out of the room and downstairs where he can hear him. In the doorway there is no sign of him, but Harry knows. Rounding the island the Alpha locates the Omega, on the tile with a bowl of cereal in his lap and steaming tea beside him.

Avoiding his stare Louis shoves a spoonful of cereal in his mouth.

Lowering to sit beside him Harry stares at the metal cabinet he’s propped his feet on. Somehow their fingers end up tangled, palms together. “I was hiding from you,” the Omega breathes shyly.

“I know,” Harry breathes back, squeezing his dainty hand.

At the same time the two blurt, “I’m sorry.”
Laughing nervously the Alpha asks, “What are you sorry for?”

“I don’t really know,” Louis giggles softly. “I just felt I needed to say sorry. Maybe for exaggerating earlier? Maybe for expecting you not to be scared or stressed? For underestimating how much you care. You?”

Swallowing thickly, Harry manages, “For what I said… I just...I’m an Alpha idiot. I just really love you, Louis Tomlinson-Styles. I need you to be okay. No matter what. I’d do anything to make sure… And I said shit I didn’t mean. I want them out because I want to meet my Little Love’s. I don’t want to hurt them. I want them to be okay, too.”

Squeezing his hand Louis snivels, “I k-know. I love you. Always. I can’t wait to have them in my arms either. Just a little more time. Almost there. Holt estimates thirty two weeks.”

“I’m scared,” Harry admits. “Nearly twenty nine now. Only four weeks. So early…”

“I am too,” the Omega breathes shakily. “But I know I can do this. We can do this.”

Lit up with hope the Alpha murmurs quietly, “We’re going to win.” And that night Harry prays, *I’m almost there. Please, help me to take those last steps. Just help us to win.*

If God says nothing, Harry thinks, *I was bound to lose anyway.*

&&

“Sup preggers?” Niall asks, plopping down beside him. He pats the tough round of Louis’ belly without seeming to realise, though, seated on Louis’ other side, takes Niall’s hand and places it on his thigh with a dark, *don’t-fuck-with-me* look.

“Sheesh, H, I didn’t mean no harm to the little buggers,” Niall grumbles as Louis smiles, patting his belly now.

“Don’t touch on my time, Horan,” the Alpha murmurs, rubbing his stretch-mark marred belly.

Gaze trained on the telly Louis murmurs, “It’s all on my time, ladies. I’m stuck with these Styles spawn.”

“Damn right.” Harry is all Alpha pride.

Niall snorts, “Good luck with that one, Tommo.”

Louis and Harry exchange identical smiles and hold hands atop his baby(s) belly.

&&

“I can see now that these pups are going to be the spitting image of Harry,” Jay proclaims, taking another sip of her lemonade. Twitchy, Harry’s gaze does not leave Louis, who’s toddling around in the field with his siblings, attempting to kick the footie.

“Why is that?” Des asks, beside him, equally as tense.

“Your genepool seems particularly strong,” Anne comments idly, watching fondly as Gemma begins to scold Louis for even *trying* to play. Louis appears to be sassing her, but the words don’t carry.

“I think they’ll look just like Louis,” Dan disagrees happily.
“Just a feeling,” Louis’ mum murmurs. “Reckon Harry disagrees.”

“I have no clue,” the Alpha says quietly, relieved to see Gemma helping Louis towards where they’ve gathered on the deck. Across on their play mat the toddlers are fumbling with foam letter blocks, Fliss watching over them protectively. Longing throbs in his chest. “I just want them to resemble me a bit.”

“Hopefully not that nose!” Gemma says, helping an entirely petulant Paradise into the shade.

As the carrying boy squirms away Harry stands, helping him into his vacant seat as Louis crosses his arms.

“You’re lucky I even let you out of the house,” the Alpha warns coolly, speaking only to him. A pretty blush dusts his cheeks. “Holt gave me the okay. What more do you want?”

Pinning him with a disapproving glower, Harry whispers, so only he hears, “Question me again and I’m going to punish you. When those pups are born and you’re able to handle it, I’m going to spank the hell out of you.”

Swallowing audibly, Louis humphs, but turns to Des, “I also hope they don’t have his nose.”

Annoyed, Harry mutters, “I’m going for a walk.”

This time Louis doesn’t stop him. Des does. “Harry, I think I’ll join you. A little fresh air never hurt.”

With an uncaring shrug Harry waits on him. Silently, the down start down the slope towards the concrete trail. “It’s bloody difficult. Pregnancy.”

Unable to help the reaction, the Alpha snorts. “What’s bloody difficult is Louis.”

“Well he’s carrying a lot. Not just physically,” his father reminds softly.

“I’m trying to mope, father.”

“I know. But it’s my duty to remind you.”

Continuing to stalk through the autumn leaves Harry blurts, staring blankly, “I’m scared, dad. I don’t know how to be daddy. I’m just learning how to be Harry.”

“I don’t think any of us do, bud,” Des says wistfully. “I know I didn’t. I was older when I had my pups and I still had no clue. You can read all the books—,”

“You know about that?” Harry interrupts sharply, looking at him in astonishment.

“Louis told Jay. Jay told Anne. Anne told me. You know how it goes,” Des says, amusement colouring his tone as he waves a dismissive hand. “That’s beside the point. You can read all the books you want, but damn if they help when you’re actually a parent. I’m lucky to have had your mother, really. Omegas are naturally more nurturing. They’re miracles. They always know what to do when the time comes.” The weight eases on his chest. “That’s not to say you’re meant to let Louis do all the work.” At his glower Des clears his throat, “You’re both going to learn and grow together. As you always have. The main concern is seeing him safely through it.”

“Dad,” Harry whispers shakily. “What if—,”

“No what if’s, Harry,” Des says with those damned sage eyes. “Louis is strong. He’s been
through so much. And only come out *stronger*. Have faith in him.”

“I do. I do…I’m just…so scared. I don’t know what I’ll do if–,”

“Son,” his father cuts in, “I know. This is scary. You have every right to be afraid. But you’re Louis’ solider. You were for so long. A solider for your Council. Now you’re a solider for your Louis. You’ve come so far…There is nothing, no battle, no war, you can’t beat.”

Emotion sprouts in his lungs as Des takes his hand, meeting his blurry stare. “Louis is no battle, no war. Nor are those pups. Your fear is. The worst is over, Harry.” Squeezing his clenched up hand, the older Alpha whispers, “You deserve happiness. You deserve Louis and those pups. There is balance, son. You’ve lost so much. This is your chance to *find better* then what’s been taken from you. And if there’s one thing I know, it’s that you’re going to take what Fate’s offering.”

Madly, with the traitorous tears aching to be shed, Harry nods, unable to speak with the thick emotion lining his throat. “For all your sacrifice there is nothing that amounts to what you’ve accomplished in these past two years. You came home, son. You, Harry. *You* brought yourself home. You took the measures, the help, the *path*.”

A missing piece falls into place. “It’s you, isn’t it. You’ve come to the community center. You’ve watched me sit on that swing afterward.”

Des’ voice grows hoarse. “I’m so damned proud of you.” And…it’s what he’s needed to take the last steps. To be *better*. There is no earthquake in his soul, no volcanic eruption in his mind, no firestorm in his heart. Just…blessed silence.

A whimsical voice speaks up, “Me, too.”

Both look in that direction as Louis falls into place beside him.

What a perfect moment this is, Harry thinks. Such a perfect moment with his father before him and his pregnant mate beside him and the monster nowhere in sight.

Such a perfect moment that he knows he’s going to remember for the rest of his days as clearly and as poignantly as he lives now.

Harry kisses his Paradise’s forehead, lingering against him, giving thanks. Then he smiles at Des.

&&

“Yes, paradise. When the time comes I mustn’t panic. I have to remain calm and steady and take you to him immediately,” Harry reiterates for the umpteenth time.

“Remember what Holt said,” Louis says firmly.

“Remember that.”

“I will.”

And oh God he *does*.

Its thirty three weeks, August 16th that Louis’ water breaks. Louis’ sobbing isn’t what wakes him, it’s the boy’s insistent shaking. Bolting upright the Alpha blinks rapidly, “’S it time?”

“No shit!” Louis hisses, hugging his belly as tears shake down his flushed face. “Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh fucking *Jesus*, it *hurts*.”
Frantic, though somehow calling on a calm he doesn’t feel, Harry dresses and carries him, weight and all, to the car. Once he’s there the Alpha rounds, pausing to where Jay’s standing in the doorway, calling, “Now?” (Both family’s decided it’d be best to stay with them until Louis’ labor as they live so far away).

“Now,” is all he manages before the female Omega is rushing back into the house and he’s rushing into the car.

Around the boy’s moans and pants he does one hundred in a fifty five zone until he’s screeching to a halt before the private emergency facility and calling hoarsely, the first words that come to mind, “Holt! Where the fuck are you?”

It’s not Holt that gets to them but a frantic huddle of nurses who help an absolutely furious Louis into a wheelchair, “God damn it! I don’t need a bloody wheelchair! I’m fucking going to give birth not handicap! Harry! Tell them to let me walk!” But it’s so obvious by the ashen tint his face has taken on, and the floodgate that’s been wrecked by tears in his eyes, that he’s going to have to swallow his pride. “Paradise, we don’t have time to argue. Just let them handle this.”

Vulnerable, the terror that lurks in the blues of his eyes mirrors the terror that’s clawing at his heart. “Okay. Okay, but don’t leave me, okay?”

Clutching his damp palm Harry nods, “I promise. I promise.” Given the okay the nurses take them to their designated place and by this time Louis’ doubled over his belly. “Breathe, just breathe,” they tell him, but Louis is having none of it, “Shut up and let me!”

Obviously understanding his reactions, steady and calm, two nurses instruct Harry to help him into the bed, which he does, holding most of the weight, then carefully hitching him. “Okay. Good. Now Louis we’re going to have to undress you. Is that alright, love?”

“Just get them out already,” Louis hisses around clenched teeth and Harry thinks make sure he’s okay.

And the scene blurs before his eyes, watching the procedure fall into place. Panicking at the sight of the needle, “Wait! Wait, what…what is that?” until Louis’s mumbling, “’Az, we agreed to this, memb’ah? Epidural anesthesia. C’mon. It’s going to help me.” And so he does, wincing as Louis does and the needle pierces and sinks into his lower back. At that moment Jay arrives (they’d all agreed she join because she is Louis’ mum and Louis might need the support Harry just is incapable of providing in this moment), in scrubs much like the gown Louis’ been put into. A nurse hands him the outfit that he takes, though Louis is begging, “No! ’Az, don’t leave me! Please don’t leave me! I’m scared. I need you.”

“Louis,” Jay says in the calmest tone he’s heard. “Louis, love, listen to me. Harry’s just going to change. It’s going to take three minutes tops, baby. I’m going to be right here.”

Holding his glazed stare Harry whispers, “I’m coming right back, paradise. I’m coming right back.

Two minutes. Can you handle that? They’re going to hook you to those scary machines but it’s going to help and I’m going to come right back home to you, okay?”

Whimpering Louis nods, and the Alpha squeezes his hand, drenched with panic every second he’s away from him. It’s only a minute before he’s returned to an entirely different layout. Louis’s lying on his back with machinery attached to him and curtains bracketing his belly. Jay is cooing, petting him, as Harry takes his limp hand, squeezing so Louis turns in seconds to face him.

“Baby,” Louis whispers hoarsely, “I’m scared, baby.” In over his head Harry thinks me too.
Brushing any of his tears, Harry murmurs, “Don’t be scared. We’re here. Everyone is going to take care of you. You’re going to be okay.” Please, God, let him be okay.

Nodding slowly, the boy mumbles, “Our pups, Harry. Our Little Love’s. They’re finally goin’ to be here.”

“Yeah, paradise,” the Alpha croaks. “And you’re going to be here too.”

Smiling softly, “Gonna win. Thas’ what I’m goin’ to do. And you. You too. You’ll always win from now on. Or damn McDonalds. Wish I had some McDonald’s right about now. Am I allowed to eat?”

“No, love,” Jay says, amusement colouring her tone. “Not right now.”

“Damn it,” and he’s pouting. Over McDonalds.

“I’ll buy you all the McDonalds you want as soon as I can,” Harry promises, stroking his knuckles with his thumb.

“Of course,” Louis breathes with such affection, “Because you take care of me. You love me.”

“I love you,” Harry agrees, leaning down to kiss his forehead. “More than the world. You’re my permanent paradise. So you have to stay, right?”

“Right,” the Omega murmurs. As he opens his mouth to say more Holt enters, “Alright, Mr. Tomlins0n-Styles, Louis, we are ready to welcome these pups into the world. Are you?”

“Hell yeah!” Louis cries around laughter, pumping his fist.


“Hell yeah!”

“Are you ready to meet your pups? To deliver them into the world?”

“Hell yeah!”

“Can we get on with this, Holt? Whenever you’re done cheerleading? No worries though, Louis’ just not in labor.”

“A happy Omega is a happy home, Mr. Tomlinson-Styles,” the good Doctor comments slyly, smiling knowingly at Louis.

“Hell yeah!”

“Paradise you’re having entirely too much fun right now,” Harry says, charmed as Louis sighs, closing his eyes and clutching his hand as Holt washes his own and adds gloves. Instructions are thrown throughout the room from the older doctor, medical equipment set in place. Nurses, and who he assumes to be the second doctor set to aid, take their place around Louis’s swollen belly.

“Alright. Let’s begin.”

Focusing on Louis, the Alpha can’t bear to watch them surgically proceed. The sounds are jarring enough, but Louis’ speaking around them. Jay chats like this isn’t happening, and Harry is so grateful to her quelling presence, as she seems to be doing exactly what he’d hoped: easing his Paradise.

Dread gnaws at his chest even as Louis rambles on and on. Just the sound of his voice eases him.
Tells him their path is without struggle. So far. “Oh my God!” Louis gasps, beaming so brilliantly his vision blurs with tears. “Harry! Fuck! We never agreed on names!”

And that is what they talk about even as Louis’ breathing becomes labored and his features pale. “Definitely not Darcy and Damian.”

“I think not,” Jay murmurs, blue eyes glinting with worry as she glances at the heart monitor. An inescapable panic flares hot in his chest. Tears sear his eyes as Louis jokes weakly, “This isn’t pleasant.”

“Never is, baby,” Jay whispers. “C’mon, love. Just a little longer.” It sounds like she’s pleading with him.


“You’ll take care of them, yeah?” Louis smiles, but his smile changes as he thinks about it, and a haunted expression crosses his face, a look that chills the Alpha to the bone. “Please, Haz. Promise me. Promise me you’ll love them the same.” But he just can’t. Because he will never love Louis the same as their Little Loves. Refuses to think he will have to.

“First one,” despite it all Holt’s voice is steady. Risking a glance over Harry manages to see the tiniest creature being handed to a nurse.

Panic incapacitates him as Louis asks frantically, “Why isn’t she crying? Why isn’t she crying, Holt?” Despite his obvious distress the heart monitor is slowing steadily as the boy struggles to breathe.

“Be swift,” the second doctor murmurs. “We will need to stabilize him.” Stabilize him?

And, “Number two.” Which he takes as the next pup coming to. Distinct wails crowd the space, and Louis’ slumps, lids lowering like his panic was all that was keeping him. A nurse comes over to them, “The babies are fine, but you’ll have to leave. Louis is fading, and we need to stabilize him.” Just like that he’s spiraling into conniption, “No. No! I’m not fucking leaving! Get away from me! I…”

Jay takes his arm. Oh Christ why is she so composed? Why isn’t anyone else panicking? He’s alone in his hysteria. Horrifically alone. “Harry. They’re doing what they can. You’re only in the way.”

Louis’ hand is terrifyingly limp in his, so it all too easy for Jay and two male nurses to drag his scrambling form out of the room. Abandoned, Harry hits his knees, and prays. Prays because there is nothing left, he’s powerless. And it’s never felt so real, so wrong.

Take the very breath you gave me, take the heart from my chest, I’ll gladly take his place if you’ll let me. Make this my last request. Take me out of this world. Please, don’t take him. Don’t take paradise.

But God says nothing.

Epilogue:
Aside from the countless lessons Harry’s learnt on his journey to better one of the most
momentous: God is above words. Sometimes words don’t go far enough, the vessels of letters and
the ladies of grammar incapable of holding the heart’s sentiments. Only now does Harry
understand.

See, his pups don’t need words to express themselves. They don’t need words to express their
hunger or their fuss. They don’t need words to express their contentment. They simply do not
need words.

Four months, three weeks, have passed since their birth. They were hospitalized three months. In
which Harry refused to leave. Not with them so tiny, so vulnerable. Not once was Harry more
than twenty feet away from his precious pups. Not once did Harry leave them. Not to eat. Not to
sleep. Showers were as quick as possible in the adjoining bathroom to the room they’d been
allocated. Visitors strictly prohibited aside from immediate family. Nobody was allowed to touch.
Not even when Holt gave the okay. And the good doctor ran regular tests to ensure nothing
changed with their health while incubated.

Not once did God speak to him.

And yet his pups are healthy. More so than most would be at this point. They’re strong. Born at
only 1.7kg and 2.0kg, not even one stone. Just the size of his hand. And they’re now a very proud
1.1 and 1.2 stone, which Holt assured him was above the appropriate measure for pre-mature
babies.

It’s been one month with them. Home. Safe and sound. These days become some of the best he’s
had yet despite everything. Oh does he adore his Little Loves.

Even now. Sleep deprived and running on seven cups of coffee.

With the carrier secured (it’d be checked three times) to the shopping cart the Alpha somehow
ends up in the toy aisle. As of now he’s not had the chance to delve into the possibilities. There
are so many. Pleased, Harry begins to pile the ones his baby boy, seven weeks into this world
(considering the last ten weren’t up to date with the normal time pups are meant to be in the
womb–Harry doesn’t count those weeks), smiles at. Still so tiny Easton James Tomlinson-Styles
resembles him like no other. With fair, incredibly soft skin, dark tufts of hair covered by a kitten
baby blue knit bonnet, chubby cheeks indented with dimples that mark a little, beautiful smile, and
wide identical eyes. Green and doe. Though Louis is there. In the button nose and the thick lashes.

“You like this one, do you?” he asks, grinning widely as a little mitten covered hand bats at the
stuffed giraffe. “Well then this one, like the many others, comes with us. Let’s not forget your
sister. Hmm…”

It’s at the end of the aisle that his phone vibrates in his pocket. As he peers at an interesting
looking box named *Cloud B Bubbly Bunny Plush with Soothing Sounds* Harry answers blindly,
“Who’s it?”

“It’s your very worried Omega,” the loveliest voice to be heard says over the line. “I’m missing
my baby boy. And I’m missing my Alpha. Do you, by any chance, know where they might be?”

“Funny that,” Harry says, grinning at Easton who’s drooling now (it shouldn’t be so adorable,
honestly), “I’m missing my baby girl. And I’m missing my Omega. Does that mean you belong
with me?”

“Harry,” warnings echo in his voice.
“Alright. Fine. I’m,” he peers at the aisle, “Aisle three of the play department.”

“Of course you are,” but there’s a fond note to his voice. “You can buy three toys. That’s all.”


“You’re spoiling them. When they’re brats I blame you.”

Lit up like a storm Harry murmurs, “Might I remind a certain Omega of mine that he’s had designer outfits custom made for these very pups in all different assortments and three thousand outfits when they’re going to grow out of them in two months’ time?”

“I bought different sizes. For someone who’s such a fashion expert you don’t know how to shop baby clothes for the life of you. And anyway, hand-me-downs for the next.”

“Our next litter is not going to be wearing hand-me-downs. They have to be up to date,” the Alpha scolds as Louis giggles over the line, then singsongs, “Primaddona.”

Grinning while fumbling through the baby-bag for bibs, Harry mumbles, “Hurry back to me, my love. There’s a crisis. Easton is drooling all over his designer top.”

“Even worse, Adeline just spit out her pacifier. I have no others.”

“Paradise, I packed six.”

“And you have the baby-bag,” Louis snaps. “I have everything else. I have the wipes and the wipe warmers. The diaper cream and the ointment. The bag and the changing kit. That’s all, right? Only thing is I don’t remember the diapers mum bought and she’s not answering the phone. Were they disposable, natural, or cloth? Oh my God, Haz, why are there so many nappies?”

“Okay,” Harry says slowly. “Definitely not cloth, that just sounds like disaster. Um, what even is a natural diaper? Go with disposable. That seems reliable enough.”

Louis groans into the phone. “Will you just come here?” Torn between the need to continue with the toys as Adeline hasn’t gotten her share and going to his paradise, Harry chews on his bottom lip. Really, he’s not too keen on going to look into diapers. He’s seen enough of those already. And shudders at the mere mention. But one must be responsible. “Harold. What’s more important here? Toys or diapers?”

“Probably toys,” Harry mutters, finally retrieving the bib to carefully wipe at Easton’s chin, then giving him his pacifier. “I’m on my way.” And if Harry spends just five more seconds gathering as many toys as possible, Louis won’t ever know, because he’s meeting him at the enormous wall of diapers. With the carts side by side Harry drinks him in—in these four months Louis’ lost nearly any semblance of his previous pregnancy. Slim, curvy, tiny as ever, with his slightly hollowed features, sharp cheeks, and chiseled jaw. A pretty smiles forms on his mouth, marked by the crinkles by his warm ocean-like eyes. “Hey there,” Harry says gently, circling his waist to dip down and kiss him, soft and sweet. “Nice of you to show up.” Louis breathes, kissing him three more times before easing out of his clasp and ambling over to Easton’s carrier. “Hi, pretty boy,” he coos in his baby voice, taking his mitten covered hand to place a kiss. “We’ve been missing you and daddy.”

Before the boy discovers the loaded cart Harry’s bent over to regard his lovely baby girl. Adeline Rose Tomlinson-Styles. Looking at his precious Little Love, born one minute before his other Little Love, the Alpha thinks, despite his Omegas notions, she resembles Louis more than himself. She’s much plumper than Easton, with light peach fuzz for hair (hidden as she’s wearing a pale pink knit cap reaching just above her barely-there brows). Like Easton, his daughter’s fair skin is
soft, and her nose the same tiny button. Her little bow mouth and fleshy cheeks cast health. But it’s the eyes—Louis’ eyes. Wide, round, and vividly blue.

Staring back at him. “Ade,” he greets adoringly, grinned at how her little tongue pokes out with her wide smile. “Hi, lovely girl. I hope papa’s not been boring you too much. Next time we’ll go pick up toys together.”

“First of all,” Louis starts, entirely disapproving, “Don’t call her that, I told you. Second, there’s enough for the both of them.”

“You’re being unfair,” Harry says, adjusting his Little Love’s cap, itching to hold her, but deciding against as the weather’s already artic with winter and she looks so content and warm there, in her carrier with layers of thick winter wear.

“Unfair?” Louis squawks, scandalized. “Unfair my arse—,”

“Language,” Harry tuts, regarding him through narrowed slits as he crosses his arms. “Practise for when they can actually comprehend. I don’t want potty mouthed children.”

“Oh, shut up,” the Omega mutters, storming up to him and yanking at his scarf so he’s staggering forward. As its second nature Harry’s tugging, so he’s soft soft soft against him, stretching up to meet his mouth. “Nap time soon. Know what that means?” he asks throatily as Louis runs his fingers through his waves.

“Sleep, thank God,” Louis says breathily, “If we’re lucky we have three hours tops before one of them wakes again.”

Like sleep is ever on his mind these days. Groaning, the Alpha nips at his bottom lip, sucking wetly, then, once Louis’s making a little not right now noise, “That means I can make love to you.”

A breathless giggle pours sunshine down his throat before Louis breaks the contact, nuzzling his jaw as he struggles think with the scent wiring his senses. “Quick. Make it quick. I need this sleep. And so do you.”

Anticipation flares in his chest as his hand strokes up the curve of his spine. “How quick? Like an hour?”

But the Omega only snorts, easing away towards the baby bag, “Jesus, did you pack our lives in here, Haz?”

“Well what we needed,” Harry shrugs.

When the boy pulls out the stash the Alpha almost chokes on his breath, “Were you planning to have one too?” Louis asks sweetly, cradling the three bottles to his chest.

“I definitely don’t need a bottle when I have you,” he retorts easily, distracted as Louis holds out another pacifier. Confused, Harry takes it, though Louis only murmurs, “She’s bound to get fussy.”

As right Louis is these days it’s not very shocking that little upset wails start up, pitchy and heart rendering. Out of the two Adeline triples (quadruples, just bests) Easton in sound, as his sons already much more soft-spoken. Harry doesn’t know which is worse. Most of Adeline’s tantrums are easy placated, but silence is complicated. Many times the Alpha’s ready to bury himself six feet under, terrified that they’re mistaking his silence for character and not something truly wrong. Holt’s reassured him countless times that Easton is in fine health. But he’s still so tiny, so
vulnerable, and that could change. And what if—, “Haz, please! Give her the bloody pacifier!”

Hastily, Harry scrambles over to Adeline. Happily, his daughter all but sucks the pacifier out of his fingers. The little trinket covers her small mouth and her cheeks. It’s an adorable sight that Harry just can’t resist whipping his phone out and snapping pictures, charmed by the lack thereof tears. Already she knows how to get her way.

“No flash photography,” Louis teases.

“My children,” he says, snapping shots of Louis tucking Easton’s blanket around his tiny form, “My rules.”

“Our children. Our rules.”

“S always our children your rules,” Harry murmurs idly, not at all miffed by this. Louis knows best. Louis’ all spidey-senses, and prophet. Harry fumbles. Louis strides. Parenting is more a learning experience for him that it is his Omega. Which he doesn’t mind. He enjoys learning. He enjoys that he’s out of bed warming bottles before Louis is up to breastfeed. He enjoys that he’s built a tolerance, and what’s sleep deprived to Louis is wide awake to him—he enjoys waking up first and carrying their Little Loves to the downstairs nursery and placing them in their bouncers and sitting up just to watch them do practically nothing at all. More than almost anything Harry loves being daddy.

This is their first trip into the world as a unit, and he’s going to capture the event. All else be damned. Before the Omega can retort, vibrations are dimly heard, “Oh!” the boy gasps, fishing his phone from his pocket, “Here! It’s mum! You figure out the diapers! I forgot the…” but he’s already shoving his phone into Harry’s free hand and starting in the opposite direction.

“Reckon it’s just us for now,” the Alpha mutters, picking up to Jays frantic, “Sorry! I was bathing the twins! Everything okay? Is it the pups? What—,”

“No, no,” Harry says, rolling his eyes. “We’re fine, Jay. Actually, we’re already running low on nappies and Louis insisted we restock. Thing is we don’t know the type?”

“Oh, dear Lord,” the older Omega lets out an unsteady breath. “That’s all? I rushed to respond because—,”

“Because your grandchildren’s bottoms are at risk,” he says, trying very hard not to laugh.

“How are my grandchildren? We all miss you so much. We insist we formulate another living—,”

“Jay. I hate to interrupt, but it’s nearly kiptime. And we’re not home. Louis really needs the sleep. We can definitely talk more on it this weekend when you’re over.”

Understanding, Louis’ mum begins to list the best brands and sorts. When the Alpha glances at his pups they’re still blessedly awake, but bound to fall asleep on the ride if they take any longer. So Harry hangs up once he has the information he needs and begins to carefully load the basically empty cart with boxes upon boxes of their largest packs. It’s when he’s managed to fit the last box (number seven) into the cart that Louis is jogging over, breathing a bit labored, “Sheesh. I’m really out of shape.” Blankets are tossed over the toys, “We needed those. Oh! So they were natural disposable! Brilliant. Let’s go.”

A proper mess they make it to the checkout. Mercifully, there are no lines as it’s still quite early. Even so Harry is forced to give up most of his toys, brooding the entire way as Louis chirps, “Quit sulking, baby. Go get them set up in the car.”
“I can pay. You go to the car,” Harry mutters though Louis murmurs slyly, “I go. I drive.”

Without hesitation Harry’s undoing the carriers hold on the cart, easing Easton’s into the belly of the cart because he isn’t up to struggle with the stroller right now, and warning, “You’ll be lucky if I don’t leave you behind.”

Chiming laughter ruptures his brooding as Louis skips up to where he’s before the cart, adjusting his scarf, then stretching up to kiss him softly. Before he has the chance to kiss him back the boys retreated, “Well just in case you do, don’t forget it’s the north exit and not the west.” Then, to their calm pups, “Catch you later, lovelies.”

Sighing low in his throat Harry takes them to the car (proudly it’s his Range Rover and not a minivan), parked as close as possible. Firstly he starts the car, needing it to be as warm as possible before moving on. With one hand on the cart the Alpha jacks the right rear open, spending more time than necessary double checking the locks before taking undoing Adeline’s guard on the carrier and carefully easing his tiny pup into her car seat. When she begins kicking (perhaps Louis wasn’t exaggerating all those months ago) as he’s working on securing the straps Harry murmurs as sternly as possible around his grin, “Don’t sass me, young lady.” And she spits out the pacifier, so it’s tumbling out onto the snowy asphalt.

“Well, now you’ll have to wait as papa has the baby-bag.” Though he’s mentally reminding himself two baby-bags are apparently necessary. Softly closing the door Harry returns to the cart, and to the other side, where he rushes to get Easton into the warmth. Precious as he is, his son is pliant and soft despite how wide and doe his green gaze is. It’s quick–once they’re in he’s placing the carriers in the boot, and ditching the cart. Not quick enough. As he’s waiting on Louis, Adeline begins to fuss, little, angry whines. Pinching the bridge of his nose Harry wishes his Omega would hurry because surely another pacifier is needed right now.

But. He can’t just wait it out. Rounding to her side Harry opens the door and forces his gangly limbs into the vehicle, manages to squeeze between the car seats. Frantic, Harry bends to face his daughter, whose chubby face is scrunched with her displeasure. “Hey, hey,” he says in his most soothing voice, taking her little mitten covered hand and shaking it gently. “Don’t cry, lovely. Papa’s coming. I swear.” It’s the best he can offer. Harry’s such a bloody sucker for the little tears. This is Louis’ finest category in parenting–comforting them. Meanwhile Harry’s fumbling to survive.

Adeline’s wails seem to startle Easton as his usually peaceful boy is shrieking at the top of his little lungs.

As his heart pounds behind his ears Harry even his breaths and starts to climb onto the cup holder, where he can see them both. In his struggle he manages to knock his head on the car’s ceiling, wincing though the most precious sounds greets him. A delighted hitching giggle. Slumping as the two quiet just a bit Harry regards them suspiciously–Genuine, distressing crystals ooze past Easton’s lashes, little nose pink, little mouth in an upset O. Much the same Adeline’s cheeks are tear streaked though there are none to be seen now as her little mouth is wide with a lovely tiny grin.

“You’re Louis’ little monsters, that’s for sure,” Harry murmurs, winded. “What does daddy have to do to please his Little Love’s? Keep bumping my head?” Of course the other responses are beautiful, wide teary eyed blinks. “Now, I know I’m bad at this,” he says nervously, digging through his pocket for his phone, “Nowhere near papa’s expertise. But, look, a phone.” Helpless, he holds his phone out to Easton first, moving it from side to side and watching his identical eyes follow the object. “Neat, huh?” Moving onto Adeline, whose tiny hand bats at it, “Now. When I do this,” he presses the lock.
Still too bright the thing lights up with a photo of the two of them, just weeks ago, clinging to each other, “Look, it’s you and your little brother!” One day Easton might argue the term as it’s only by a minute, but, for now, “And here’s papa and daddy,” he fumbles to unlock his phone, but then there is a picture of them, a selfie he’d taken when Louis was (technically) released from the hospital, though the Omega had only left their room to get them food. “Cute, huh?” As he shows them both the reaction’s jumpstart his heart. Though he’d read somewhere this was around the time they’d recognize faces it’s nothing compared to watching them make the connection in their brilliant, developing brains. Incredible to watch how in unison the two are even now—breathtakingly wide smiles brighten their little round faces. Wide, innocent eyes staring like it’s the most splendid sight in the world. Aside from them it is. “Yeah. Cute. Papa doesn’t like it though. Shh,” he hushes like they could actually tell. “This is our secret. This never happened. What papa doesn’t know won’t—,” but the boot comes open, wafting cold air as Louis mutters, “Never again. Next time you’re paying. Service is so slow. Why do you get to drive?”

Grinning, Harry winks at them, but throws open Easton’s side to hop out into the cold. “Because I’ve never totaled any cars,” the Alpha reminds, then, “Baby bag?” he asks once he’s rounded. Tempest coloured eyes alight with annoyance Louis mutters, “I’ve got them. You pack. I’m tired.”

Taking the bag Louis leaves him with the bag stuffed cart. Sighing, Harry gets right on it. Finishes as swift as possible as the Omega’s whining over the cold and he’s more than worried the twins might become ill. Throughout the drive not only do their pups fall asleep, but so does Louis, curled up with his hoodie over his face and his face in his arms.

Affection laces his lungs, but he doesn’t go a mile over the limit nonetheless. Once they’ve parked, Louis speaks around little yawns, “Grab the diapers. And not anything more.”

Once he’s disappeared into the house with both pups cradled in either arm Harry makes it his mission to grab as many bags of toys as possible around the three boxes in his arms (nappies may be light, but not when they’re packed in boxes). Somehow he manages to make it into the heated, stuffy house without slipping on the shoveled frost. Dropping everything at the door the Alpha holds onto one box and the stuffed giraffe, and makes it upstairs as quietly as possible. Crossing into the connecting nursery the Alpha lowers the box as Louis shuffles about with the two in his arms, humming softly.

Yanking at the tag Harry tosses the stuffed animal into the bassinet, then takes Adeline from Louis. Stubborn as his pup is, those wide cerulean eyes are staring back at him. “She’s just like you already,” Harry whispers, tossing a grin at Louis who’s chewing on his bottom lip, struggling not to smile back. “Daddy duty, Haz. You’re lucky I already changed them.”

“That was fast,” Harry breathes back, noticing all at once that his little love’s dressed in an orange onesie, the cap removed to reveal her little tuffs of light hair.

“I’m the best.”

Furiously sucking on her pacifier Adeline blinks slowly, lashes fluttering the more they banter back and forth. Easton is asleep first. “Ha!” Louis giggles in whisper—it’s a thing. Competing to see which of them gets to whichever pup to sleep first. One Harry purposefully loses most times. “Loser!”

With a chaste kiss to his daughter’s mitten covered hand the boy scampers out. Just like that.

“Jokes on him,” Harry breathes affectionately as his tiny little baby’s lashes flutter closed. “I get to tuck you two in.” Making sure she’s fast asleep the Alpha only then lowers her into the cradle with Easton (having found some time ago that the two preferred to bunk together) watch the two squirm until their almost hugging. Draping the buttercup coloured baby blanket over them Harry is
careful to place the giraffe nearby before tuning the Mobil before fiddling with the baby monitor and creeping out once he’s sure it’s on.

As he’s shutting the door a whimsical whisper startles him, “Success?”

“Success,” he breathes before facing him, momentarily stunned as Louis’s pressed against him, soft and delicious, purring as his slim arms wind around his neck. “Ten minutes.”

“Ten minutes?” he asks, just barely able to focus with how hard the scent’s colliding with his mind.

“Ten minutes,” the boy repeats, voice honeyed. When his soft lips, parted and warm, run up his throat understanding finds him. Growling playfully, the Alpha grips the backs of his chunky thighs, hitching him up his body with Louis’ swift response. “Challenge accepted.”

They’re not alone, but they’re alone enough when Harry’s carried them down the hall to one of the unused guests, in the quiet dark lee of the room. Moving him backwards, even deeper into the shadows as this room is windowless, he slips his palms under the lip of his sweater and onto the skin of his lovely Omega. Smooth, warm, vital, the boy arches under his touch.

“I’ll let you keep your top on,” he says quietly, setting him on his feet, though Louis’s mouth is so responsive against his, “But the tights are goin’ down.”

Hooking his thumbs into the waistband, the Alpha takes them to his ankles, watching him kick them away clumsily. And fuck he’s desperate, taking him around the waist and pinning him onto the mattress, kissing him deep and long and slow. Delicious, his mouth moves under his in ways that are both familiar and mysterious—but, then, this is making love, isn’t it. By now he’s well acquainted with him from the inside out—there is nothing of his that hasn’t been inside him in one form or another. And yet being with him is as wondrous as the first time.

He is the same, yet he is always new.

And he’s aware what this is about. He knows Harry needs to be in control of them right now, knows he needs to be the driver. At this moment, he wants to do something right and beautiful and do it well, because at the end of every day all he can think about is how much ugliness he’d done to himself and to others, and, mostly, to Louis.

So he takes his time, with his tongue dipping in and out of his gasping mouth and his hand caressing the slight swells of his chest, the hard peaks of his nipples, and fuck the response has a dividend that leaves his cock throbbing at the fly of his trousers: Louis melts in his hold, getting fluid and hot. Moaning much too loud for the circumstances. “Quiet,” he orders quietly into his mouth. “I’ll put you on your belly if you can’t stay quiet.”

Louis fists his hair, “No. ‘M good. Your good boy.”

A groan starts deep in his throat as his canines clamp over the flesh of his plush bottom lip. On its own accord his hand drifts down the span of his belly, tracing the tiny pucker of the scar even as Louis shakes his head softly. Bracing on his free hand Harry looks down at him, beautiful even in the dim darkness, beautiful eyes pinched shut. “I don’t like it.”

Tracing the little furrow lovingly the Alpha noses at his temple, inhaling the thick scent, both his bonding scent and Louis’ desire. “You’re so fucking beautiful.”

Pliant underneath him the Omega whispers, “So are you.”

“Glad we’re in agreement,” he growls playfully, finding his mouth again even as Louis gasps,
“Ten minutes, Styles.”

“Think I actually want you on your belly.” Without warning the Alpha’s easing him onto his belly, breath stolen at the sight of his perky ass, fleshy and his to take. “So pretty,” he groans, nosing at the swells, “Just wanna taste you.”

“Oh, God, Haz, just do something,” the boy whimpers, bowing his back beautifully so his ass is perked out for him. And his hands between his rounds, the welling heat irresistible and so wet already.

“Christ. You’re so ready.” As ready his cock pounds with his heartbeat, and fuck he just—he meant to keep going slowly, but then he’s forcing his middle finger into his tiny hole, watching him tense up, then melt in little shivers.

“Yeah,” Louis mewls, squirming, “Alpha.”

And fuck he’s drilling him with his finger, squeezing his index to spread him properly, spurred by his muffled little noises. Rocking against his prostate, Harry breathes, “Pup. You wanna come?”

“Wanna come, wanna come,” the Omega mumbles on and on until his thrusts are aimed on that sweet spot, and he’s watching him claw at the blankets, whimpering, “uh uh Alpha uh.” Until he’s shoving three as deep as possible, pressing insistently, growling, “Come on, pup. Give it to me.” And the boy’s moaning, clamped on his fingers even as he ruts into the mattress, trembling around little fucked out jolts.

As his bonding scent roars the Alpha takes his fingers back, tugging so he’s on his back, nails raking down his chest, leaving red stinging pain as he fumbles with his zipper. When his cocks’ free, the cool air is painful, but Louis’s knees are folded and it’s so easy to just have him.

Prodding at his entrance his cock is slick in seconds with how drenched Louis is for him. Linked, the Alpha is slow, knowing it’s bound to hurt when it’s been months. Slow slow slow as pleasure rips up his spine, controlling his movements so he’s driving forward, cock buried as deep as possible. Louis whimper, his head falling back his legs round his waist, heels digging into his back, stilling him.

Seconds in he’s through waiting, palming at the contours of his sharp hips to hitch him enough that his thrusts are deep and effortless and hard. Growls build in his chest as their gazes’ cling, blue is all he knows, and for once he’s washing his soul in those waters. Pleasure’s pouring over his body, and he’s lowering his head to clamp onto the bright red of his nipple, groaning as Louis clenches around him, the boy’s hands caught in his hair.

He’s pulling furiously on his already swollen flesh, wanting wanting wanting. And fuck he gives, the milky liquids hot on his tastebuds, forces growls up his throat as Louis seizes up, “Haz,” it’s drawn out, reedy and perfect. “I love you. I love you. I love you.”

Mouthing at the next it’s when Louis’ sobbing, “Please. I need you. I still need you,” that the Alpha freezes for a split second. “And I still love you. I’ll always love you. I…”

The moment is so clear to him, everything from the feel of Louis’ weight in his palms and his body clenching around his cock and his nipple at his mouth to their scents and the scent of the house, pine and lavender and the crystal-clear air. He knows the balance between his heart and his mind and exactly how his trousers are still tight around his thighs. He knows the pumping of his chest against Louis’s, the beat of his blood and his own, the gathering of erotic tension.

Mostly, though, he knows the cradle of their love for each other, for their Little Loves.
He can’t remember anything being this vivid, this real.

This is the gift of recovery, he thinks wildly. The ability to be here in this moment with the Omega he loves and be fully aware, fully awake, fully present. Undiluted.

He thinks of William and the meeting and what the bloke said: I want to be where I am tonight more than I want the high.

Yes. Damn it…yes.

Harry starts moving again, taking and giving by turns.

Breathless and straining, he lives as they come together…lives vividly.

Caught in his body, spellbound by pleasure, their pinky’s intertwined, Harry’s never seen any Omega smile as beautifully and broadly as Louis does now while looking up at him.

So he must know what Harry means.

*I love you forever*, the only promise to be left unbroken.

*fin.*

Chapter End Notes

I'd love to know what you guys thought?

All my love!

Dani xx

End Notes

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All my love!

Dani xx

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