

## Prince Harry and the Expert in Motorcycle Maintenance

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# Prince Harry and the Expert in Motorcycle Maintenance

by [juliusschmidt](#)

## Summary

*Louis puts the truck back into drive. "I'm going to ask you one more time. Where do you want me to take you?"*

*"To the Royal Palace."*

*"The hospital psych ward, it is, then," Louis says, though that's a forty-five minute trip and a lecture on tardiness from his stepfather that, in the end, will definitely not be worth the trouble.*

an abo cinderella au in which prince harry rides a motorcycle and louis, a simple mechanic, fixes it.

## Notes

1) I wrote this fic to make myself laugh. I'm not going to pretend that it's coherent or meaningful. Thank you, as usual, to E for the edits!

2) This fic was written as part of an ongoing challenge using the book 1000 Feelings For Which There Are No Names for our prompts. To read the other fics written in this challenge, [click here](#). You can find more information on the challenge here and to reblog the masterpost on tumblr, you can [click here](#). My prompt was: 817. The elation of roaring around on your new motorcycle in great weather and picturing how cool everyone thinks you are.

3) It's finished! Completed! (Not 'almost done.' Not 'I hope it'll get done.' it's DONE.)

~~4) But! I am posting it in five acts, one act every other day.~~

5) Warnings: motorcycling without helmets is very bad despite the amount of it done in this fic, a cinderella au (so light mentions of abuse), abo (so some between the lines and blink-and-you'll-miss-them noncon implications), and crackfic (so might have been written by me, but also might have been written by a pair of eleven year olds while slurping down a giant package of pixie sticks and watching ove glove infomercials at 11:30pm on a Friday night.)

# Act One

Louis knows a lot about Prince Harry.

Now, he's not in the Official Royal Prince Fanclub (bunch of stalkers, that lot), and he's never applied to be a Lad-in-Waiting (they all do it for the Instagram follows), but he knows his facts.

He knows that Prince Harry is an omega, that he was raised in the Royal Palace, that he loves tacos, and that (according to a copy of *Hello* that Louis'd pilfered from Niall) he wants to marry an alpha with blue eyes and strong hands.

(Louis has blue eyes and strong hands.)

However, Louis does not know what Prince Harry looks like. No one does.

Except his family and staff and friends and Lads-in-Waiting and other VIPs at the clubs he frequents. But, other than that, his appearance is a tightly held secret.

Given the opportunity, the wrong sort of alpha might take advantage. Accidental bonding happens and no one wants some poor, rough-skinned schmuck to be the next royal consort.

So when the man sitting beside Louis in his pick-up truck claims to be Prince Harry, adding, "You'll get a royal medal for this, I promise," Louis' fingers tighten on the steering wheel.

"Why would I get a royal medal for helping a long-haired, hippie omega stranded by the side of the road with a broken motorbike? If I were the Queen, I'd want you out of town. Not good for tourism, riff-raff like you."

The man giggles. And then snorts. And then giggles some more.

"You still haven't told me where you want me to take you and your-- what did you call it?- your baby?" Louis' currently driving in the direction of the farm. There's only one mechanic in the whole kingdom that he trusts with a bike this beautiful. There's only one mechanic in the kingdom he trusts at all. (Himself.)

"I have," the man insists, running a hand through his hair. If Louis were pressed, he would probably admit that the man's locks look less like the dirty dreads of a street musician and more like the well-manicured waves of a supermodel. Louis wants to touch them, muss them up a little.

"I can't take you to the Royal Palace," Louis tells him.

"Why not?" The man's gone from giggling to pouting in less than sixty seconds. Louis' impressed by his emotional agility.

Louis twists to stare at him. Slowly, he says, "Just think about it." He returns his gaze to the road. What a fucking idiot. Handsome and sweet smelling, yes, but a fucking idiot all the

same.

Louis continues driving in the direction of the farm.

After a few minutes, the man says, “I’ve thought about it. Please take me to the Royal Palace.”

Louis lays on the brake and the truck jostles to a stop. Behind them in the truckbed the motorbike clatters a little, but not so much as to worry Louis. Carefully, Louis switches the truck into park.

“Mister--” Louis resists the urge to call the man ‘sweetheart’ but only barely-- “I don’t know why you’re fucking with me after *I picked your ass up off the side of the road*, but I do not appreciate it and if you don’t quit fucking with me and tell me where I can *actually* drop you, then I’m going to drop you right the fuck here.”

“You’re very rude to me,” the man says, brows scrunching together. Then, suddenly, his lips quirk into a small smile. “I like it.”

Louis wants to shake him. Instead, he puts the truck back into drive. “I’m going to ask you one more time. Where do you want me to take you?”

“To the Royal Palace.”

“The hospital psych ward, it is, then,” Louis says, though that’s a forty-five minute trip and a lecture on tardiness from his stepfather that, in the end, will definitely not be worth the trouble.

“That’s where I live,” the man says. He bites at the cuticle on his thumbnail. That’s when Louis notices the half dozen rings on his fingers.

“In the psych ward?” Several of the man’s rings hold large, shiny stones. One is engraved with the letters *HRH*.

“No, I should think not,” the man says. He crosses his arms over his chest and stares pointedly at Louis.

“Look,” Louis says, trying not to think too hard about the implications of a royal signet ring being less than three feet away from his person, “I can’t just drive up to the front door of the Royal Palace and drop you off.”

“Why not?” the man asks. “Jeff always does.”

“Jeff,” Louis repeats. Louis does not follow Jeffrey Azoff, chief Lad-in-Waiting, on Instagram. But Niall does.

“Yeah,” the man confirms. “I mean, usually he drives round to the back. But a few times, late at night especially, Jeff’s come in the front.”

“I’m not Jeff!” Louis explodes. “I’m Louis, a fucking farm mechanic with dirty hands and a shitty truck and no royal blood or connections except through my asshole stepfather Simon who’d be loathe to claim me even if I won the goddamn lottery.”

“I’m sure he’d claim you if you won the lottery,” the man-- who Louis now strongly suspects *is* Prince Harry-- says.

Louis closes his eyes.

“Also, now you know me. So, that’s a royal connection.”

Louis imagines pulling up to the royal gates in a truck that has two different colored doors. With the prince inside. Then, he imagines being thrown into the royal dungeon for the rest of his life.

He keeps driving toward the farm.

“Who will be working on your bike?” It’s probably not the question most would ask upon discovering they were sharing the cab of their truck with Prince Harry, the future king of the realm, but Louis’ been desperate to know who they’ve hired as royal mechanic.

“Logan, of course.” Prince Harry beams at him. “Do you know him?”

“Logan?” Louis gapes. “Logan *Thompson*?!”

Prince Harry nods. “You *do* know him.”

“You would let *that imposter* work on *that beautiful machine*?” Louis is not one to compare automotives to human infants, but Harry’s endearment to his motorbike isn’t difficult to understand.

Prince Harry shrugs. “We keep him on retainer.”

Louis’ eyes nearly bug out of his head. “I can’t let you do that. I can’t let you hand over this gorgeous craft over that fumbling charlatan. He shouldn’t’ve even been given a license, let alone a job at the palace.”

Prince Harry does not jump up to defend Logan, which is very telling. Perhaps he suspects, just as Louis does, that it’s Logan’s ineptitude with motorcycle maintenance that put them both in this compromising position.

Louis turns down the lane and the farmhouse pops into view.

“You aren’t taking me to the Royal Palace.”

This is a correct assessment, and Louis doesn’t bother to confirm it. “You can call Jeff from the barn, have him pick you up here.”

Prince Harry lets out a small noise of distress. “I won’t be able to give you a royal medal if it looks like you’ve kidnapped me.”

“I don’t want a royal medal.”

This is a lie. Louis would love a royal medal. Who wouldn’t? If he had one, he’d pin it to his uniform and wear it out to meet clients. Very good for business, that would be. He’s trying to earn his freedom back, after all.

But Louis also knows if he were to receive one, Simon would find a way to steal it for himself.

“You’re very strange.”

Louis pulls the truck into the barn and parks it beside the two tractors he’s currently contracted to fix.

“I’m going to fix your bike,” he says. “Out of the goodness of my heart. Just like I picked you up from the side of the road. Out of the goodness of my heart.”

Prince Harry unbuckles his seatbelt. “I’m sure you have a very good heart,” he says. “But that’s not why you’re doing this.”

The prince gazes down at the rings on his fingers and a small smile plays at his lips.

“I don’t care that you’re the prince. As far as I’m concerned, inherited status and wealth have very little meaning and do not add to your value as a human being.”

Prince Harry licks his lips and his smile broadens. “How very modern of you.”

Louis throws himself out of the truck and closes the door with more force than he should, given how feebly it’s clinging to the rest of the vehicle.

He storms toward the side door to the barn and turns around when he reaches it. The prince has not followed him, which is ideal. Instead, he’s inspecting the large portrait of Louis’ mother which hangs on the wall in front the truck, which is not ideal.

“I have to run inside and check-in with my stepfather. I’ll be back in a few minutes. Don’t touch anything.” Louis tries to load the last three words with warning, but the smile he receives from the prince in return causes him to doubt his success. Obviously, the prince is not used to people not allowing him to do exactly as he wishes, and why would he be when it takes two years to apply to be on the waiting list to be his friend.

When Louis returns a few minutes later, the prince stands in the bed of Louis’ truck, inspecting his motorbike with a frown.

“Your highness.” Louis uses his title, but in a silky falsetto, trying make it as diminutive as possible.

Prince Harry’s head jerks, and as he turns to see Louis, he leans faux casually against the bike.

“What are you doing?” Louis doesn’t trust him near the lovely machine. He’s already done enough damage for one day.

Prince Harry tosses his hair away from his face with a ringed hand. For all that he’s never been photographed for the public, he certainly seems to know how to move like a model. “I was seeing if I could figure out what went wrong.”

Louis squints at him, trying to decide if he’s fucking with Louis or he’s just that much of a dumbass. He suspects the latter, so he says, “Your chain broke.”

“You could tell that just from looking at it?” Prince Harry turns back to inspect the bike. “I don’t believe you.”

“Who allowed you to have that thing? Because you don’t deserve it.” Louis makes his way over to the his desk, where he has an ancient phone and a private line, just for customers.

Harry sits astride the bike. Louis hopes he isn’t foolish enough to try to start it again. In the bed of Louis’ truck.

“What are you doing?”

Without looking at him, Harry says, “I just wanted to-- *I love riding.*”

Unbidden, Louis sees an image of Harry, naked and disheveled, bucking his hips as he rides the man beneath him. (That man is, of course, Louis.)

“You *are* an omega,” Louis says.

Harry gasps and falls off the bike, hitting the bed of the truck with a thump. Thankfully, he does not pull the bike down with him.

His head pops over the side. “Excuse you!”

“You weren’t offended when I threatened to dump you by the side of the road or take you to the psych ward, but that mere statement of fact was so upsetting that you almost injured that bike?”

Harry’s jaw drops. “I don’t know if you know this about me, being a filthy alpha, but I am very vocal advocate against omega repression.”

The slur stings and Louis resists the urge to glance down at his oil-blackened hands. “Good for you. You still-- how did you phrase it?- ‘love riding.’”

As soon he says the words, the image returns, this time with flashes of Harry’s red-bitten lips and his fingers digging into the flesh of Louis’ hips.

“My motorbike.” Harry hauls himself over the side of the truck and onto the ground. He only stumbles a little. Once he’s fully upright, he adds, “I love riding my motorbike.”

Louis folds his arms over his chest and raises an eyebrow.

“Are you implying that the Royal Prince enjoys an athletic buggering?” He sounds a little breathless.

“Do you?”

Harry stalks across the barn and shoves a finger into the center of Louis’ chest. On it is a ring with large ruby stone that certainly is worth more than this whole barn and everything in it, save the prince himself. “If I do or if I don’t, that’s none of your business.”

Louis pitches his voice low. “I could make it my business.”

Harry’s cheeks pinken and his finger doesn’t move from where it’s pressed against Louis. “Thank you for the offer, but Jeffery is probably out of his mind with worry, not to mention my mum, who prefers to know where I am when she takes her tea.”

Louis sees the opening and takes it. “Another time, then?”

Harry bites his lip. Then, he says, “The phone, please?”

Louis hands it to him.

The conversation with whomever he calls is angry and hushed, but doesn’t drag on and before Louis knows what’s happening, Harry’s handing him back the phone and saying, “Well, Jeff will be here in about an hour. He thinks.”

“I don’t have an hour to sit around and entertain you. This may surprise you, but some of your subjects actually still have jobs to do and taxes to pay.”

“Of course,” Harry says.

Louis gestures to an adirondack chair with several broken planks that Simon’s asked him to fix up before summer. “You can wait there, if you like.”

Harry drops into the chair and then squirms and makes a face.

“Sorry I don’t have a golden pillow for your very precious and valuable ass.” The words are carried on a bitter hiss, but Louis does mean them. Harry’s ass- royal or not- is lovely and Louis feels it his duty as an alpha to spare it any pain or disfigurement.

“It’s fine,” Harry says with the wince of a person who is not fine at all, but *does* wish that they were for the sake of their company.

Louis grabs a few tools and begins to pull apart the smaller of the two tractors currently in the shop. Simon’s given him the afternoon to finish working on it and threatened to withhold dinner if he fails to complete the task.

Thankfully, Louis sees the issue right away and knows exactly how to correct it. He relaxes into his work, pushing the prince from his mind.



That becomes difficult, however, when after about fifteen minutes said prince stands up, walks across the barn, and begins to hover in the vicinity of Louis' shoulder.

Louis finishes twisting a screw and then he sets down his tools and turns around. "What are you doing?"

"Watching you." Harry lifts his chin. The motion sends a rush of omega pheromones in Louis' directions. He does his best to ignore them.

"I can see that. Why are you watching me?"

"To learn about engines," Harry says slowly, as though he were explaining himself to a child.

"Why do you need to learn about engines? You have Logan, right?"

Harry frowns. "You told me he's terrible."

"Well, an afternoon of watching me work isn't going to make you any better." He considers this statement after he says it. "Actually, it might."

"Okay, then." Harry says, smiling.

Louis considers him for another long moment, watching as dimples appear in his cheeks. "What you really need is a lesson in motorcycle maintenance."

Harry's beaming now and Louis so wants to be annoyed with him. But he isn't. At all. Instead, he's endeared. "I'm ready when you are."

Louis sighs. "Unfortunately, the choice is between helping you and eating and I like you, but I don't like you that much."

"I could feed you," Harry says. He could. With those long, lovely fingers. Louis' cock twitches in his pants.

"No," Louis says and turns back to his work.

Jeff arrives with the roar of an engine. Louis isn't in a particularly good place to pause, but he doesn't seem to have a choice.

"Jeffrey's here for me," Harry announces, expression forlorn.

Louis sets down his tools, wipes his hands on his jacket, and watches as Jeff Azoff steps out the driver's side door of a pale blue Rolls Royce.

"Hello, Harry. Hello... man who rescued the prince." His smile wavers, his eye twitches and then he winces. He may be having crippling gas pains.

"This is Louis. He's a mechanic." Harry sounds like a kid during show and tell.

"And an alpha," Jeff says. To Louis' surprise, Jeff is not an alpha, but a beta.

Harry's smile widens. "Yes."

The three of them stare at each other for a few long seconds.

Harry says, "I want him to work on my bike. Which broke."

"We've already paid Logan to do that kind of thing." Jeff folds his arms across his chest and shakes his head.

He says it like he's the one who gets to tell the prince what to do, and not the other way around.

"Logan's shoddy maintenance is why the bike broke in the first place. While I was on it!"

Jeff's eyes narrow and he glances at Louis.

"He could have died," Louis adds, just for good measure.

"Harry, if we stay here any longer, you're going to miss hot yoga." Jeff sounds like he has a headache. Louis doesn't think they should have chosen someone with such a weak constitution to be in charge of the Lads-in-Waiting.

"Nick's teaching tonight?" Harry bites at a cuticle. A stripe of grease has found its way to the back of his knuckles.

Jeff nods and rubs at his wrist, like it's sore or strained and he's imagining asking it to hold him upright for a downward facing dog later.

"Bye, Louis," Harry waves as he walks away, his rings winking at Louis.

"Bye," Louis replies, but he's already climbed into the car and Louis doesn't think he's heard. The car pulls out of the drive in a cloud of dust, leaving Louis alone with the Royal Prince's motorbike, a shitty truck, and a couple of broken tractors.

## Act Two

The fact that Harry shows up alone two days later irks Louis. A good portion of his tax dollars pay for the prince's security and yet he's not even being protected by one (1) man with a gun. What could possibly be more important than looking after the prince at half three on a Tuesday?

The Rolls Royce comes to a halt beside Louis' truck. Louis waits for Harry to hop out. He doesn't. He doesn't even cut the engine.

Louis hopes the sound doesn't attract Simon's attention because Simon is the type of person to shoot first and ask question later. Louis is not in the mood to spend the afternoon digging a bullet out of his thigh or shoulder.

Louis pushes himself up from his desk, stands and stretches-- he's been working on paperwork since lunch-- and walks over to Harry's car. He raps on the window. Wearing a wild grin, Harry slowly cranks it down.

The dulcet tones of Britney Spears' *Toxic* fill the barn.

"What are you doing?" Louis asks.

Harry runs his fingers through his hair, smile unwavering. "Hi, Louis."

"What are you doing?" Louis repeats.

"Well, I came for a couple of reasons. First, I wondered how work on my bike was going. And, second, I was hoping you could teach me how to do a better job of maintaining it. Third, I thought we could go for a --"

"I mean, why are you still sitting in your car?"

Harry's eyes close and his shoulders shimmy. "I wanted to finish the song."

"Favorite song?" Louis asks. If so, Louis approves. Secretly.

Harry nods. "She played my last birthday party. Gift from mum."

For Niall's last birthday, Simon bought him a chocolate fountain and a subscription to cheese of the month club. For Liam's, he'd brought home a Batman fathead. All Louis'd gotten for his was a box of rusty screws and a McDonald's cheeseburger.

Suffice it to say, Louis has loads of practice not being jealous of other people's lot in life.

"I bet she's terrible live," Louis says.

Harry shakes his head. "You're not considering the dancing, though. It's on a whole different level."

He clicks off his seatbelt and Louis steps back from the door to let him out.

“I’ll help you with the bike,” Louis says, words popping out of his mouth unbidden, “if you help me.”

A plan begins to form in the back of his mind: a way out.

Harry steps close. He’s wearing his long hair in a bun today. It’s quite pretty, the small, soft curls at his temple a striking contrast to his strong jaw. He smells sweet, too, like he might be nearing his heat.

“Sure,” Harry says. “Of course.”

Louis closes his eyes and rearranges his thoughts. He blinks them open to find Harry standing just as close as before, his gaze just as intent.

“I’ll show you how to maintain your motorbike, and any car you’d like, if you put in a good word for me at the palace, maybe suggest that instead of renewing the contract with Thompson next time it comes up, you hire me instead.”

Harry bites his lip and Louis sighs, stepping back.

“That seems simple enough. I’m not asking you to fire him. Or even to guarantee that I’ll be hired.”

Harry frees his lip. “They don’t really...” He trails off. His cheeks have pinkened and all traces of his earlier *Toxic*-induced giddiness have disappeared from his face.

“They don’t really hire dirtbags like me.” Louis finishes for him.

Harry’s eyes widen. “No, you’re great! They should hire you. They might even do it immediately-- I know Jeff’s has some complaints about Thompson already.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

Harry’s eyes flick down. “No one really listens to me.”

“Those old fashioned pricks,” Louis spits. Simon’s not one to hold back his thoughts on omegas. Louis can’t say he’s surprised to hear that the someone who instagrams their own perfectly manicured beard as often as Jeff does would feel the same.

“No!” Harry shakes his head. “It’s not to do with that. It’s more that... my ideas are often a little... eccentric.”

Louis smiles despite himself. “Like riding your motorbike on dirt roads on the outskirts of town unaccompanied?”

“Yes,” Harry’s grinning, now, too. “And for my Matching Ball? It’s coming up, you know. Usually, they use masks or costumes, a poor play at helping the omega royal ‘choose by scent.’”

Louis nods. He's aware of the custom (again, thanks to Niall's many gossip magazines auspiciously left by the toilet), though he had not realized that Harry's ball own was imminent.

"Well, I thought a better idea would be able to do it naked."

"So you can judge partners by the shape of their cocks?" Louis asks. He can't say he doesn't like the idea. He thinks he'd probably fare quite well in a line-up. Not that anyone without a title or enough money in their pocket to buy a small island will be invited to Harry's Matching Ball.

"No." Harry shakes his head. He's turned from pink to red. "All dicks should be valued equally."

"Except the ones on poor people."

"What? No...." Harry draws out the word, his brows furrowed in confusion.

"Nevermind. Not the time to talk about the way in which the monarchy perpetuates economic oppression. You came here for motorbike advice."

Harry blinks and nods.

"Follow me."

Louis leads him over to the corner of the barn where he's been working on the bike. For a moment, he considers telling Harry that it's not finished. He doesn't want to let it out of his possession, especially if it's not going to be properly maintained.

"Louis!" Harry gasps, clutching at his chest.

The royal line is well known for its weak constitution, inbred as it is, and Louis will kill Harry himself if he has a heart attack and dies here in the barn. Louis is sure as shit not interested in being at the center of such an investigation.

"What?" Louis asks, stepping closer to assess Harry's color (pink) and the size of the pupils (on the large side of normal).

"It's so *shiny*. It looks brand new!" Harry moves around Louis, almost but not quite brushing shoulders, to stroke the seat and caress the handlebars.

Louis isn't jealous of a motorbike- not even one that lives in the Royal Palace and is petted and ridden by Prince Harry. He isn't. That would be stupid.

"It *is* brand new. It's only got 800 miles on it."

"Yeah," Harry stammers, fingers pressing into the bike's leather seat. Louis is not thinking about the way Harry's rings might feel if he were touching *Louis* like that. "But, like, I had taken it out on these back roads and when you picked me up it was coated in dust."

Harry looks around the barn, as though searching for an explanation. He won't find one. Everything in this place is covered in dirt and grease, save the motorbike and Harry himself. Louis' rather impressed with his work in that regard. But-

"The real magic I worked was in cleaning out the engine parts and replacing the chain."

"Oh my god," Harry whirls around and suddenly Louis' *knows* what Harry's rings feel like against his skin because Harry's gripping his bare forearm and saying, "It's beautiful. Thank you so much. What can I do to repay you?"

Louis' eyes flick down to Harry's lips and, under the weight of Louis' gaze, the tip of Harry's tongue darts out to lick them. *Not that*, Louis tells his traitorous mind. He needs money, a job that'll give him enough to get him out of this godforsaken hellhole of a home.

He does not need to find himself sexually- or, godforbid, *romantically*- entangled with royalty. Now way that can end well.

"I'll put in a word for you, like you asked. I just don't know if it'll do any good. Surely, there's something else I can do?"

Harry's thumb begins to rub gently against the inside of Louis' upper arm. He can't possibly mean it as a come-on. He's not a prostitute- *he's the Royal Prince*.

"What about money?" Louis' voice comes out rough.

Harry chews his lip. "I could have Jeff pay you."

Louis' beginning to question his earlier assumptions about the Lads-in-Waiting. Their responsibilities seem quite comprehensive. A lesson in not judging a man by his instagram party pics.

Louis nods.

"For the tutoring, too," Harry adds, fingers tightening.

Louis nods again, sharply this time. "Let's see what you already know then."

He begins to quiz Harry on the parts of the motorbike, their name, purpose, and maintenance basics. Harry knows next to nothing about this beautiful, expensive machine (a dungeon worthy offence in Louis' opinion), but he's an adept student, dutifully repeating Louis' instructions.

After about a half an hour of talking and touching and fiddling with the thing, Harry interrupts Louis' explanation of the starter. "Do you want to go for a ride?"

Louis glances out the open door. The sun's fallen low in the sky and Simon will be out to catalogue the day's work.

"Working people like myself don't have time for joyrides."

Harry gapes at him. “You don’t? Ever?”

Louis coughs and rubs his hands together. “I’ve enjoyed many rides in my life, but, no, I don’t get to ride for pleasure.”

Louis hums.

Harry’s smile twists downward. “It’s the *best* feeling, with the sun on your face and the wind whipping around your body.”

His eyes have drifted shut and he adds, softly, “You just know you look *hot*.”

Harry doesn’t need a motorcycle or sunshine to look hot. He looks hot enough right now- fancy floral print shirt pulling across his broad shoulders and skinny jeans painted tight to his thighs, his dark hair tied back and adorned with a cream-colored ribbon- in the middle of a dusty barn surrounded by rusting tractor parts.

Louis clears his throat. “You ride it for the aesthetic. Fucking hell, of course you do.”

Harry’s eyes blink open and he shakes his head, a curl by his ear breaking free. “*No!* The *feel* of the aesthetic.”

“A subtle but important distinction,” Louis allows.

“Exactly,” Harry laughs. “Do it with me. Just for a few minutes.”

Louis feels his resolve crumbling. He’d taken the machine for a test ride, just twice up and down the lane, earlier this morning. Bringing the thing back into the barn had felt much like chaining his soul to a brick and dropping it into the sea.

Louis wants back on that bike.

Harry tilts his head. He must know that the motion sends a waft of his scent in Louis’ direction. He must. “You can teach me how better to ride?”

Louis’ brows shoot up.

“For maintenance purposes, of course,” Harry clarifies.

“Alright,” Louis says, drawing out the word as though he hasn’t *quite* decided. (He has, indeed, decided.)

“Do you want to go behind or shall I?” Harry asks, dimpling. Perhaps the amusing implication of their innuendo laden conversation has finally dawned on him.

Louis thinks about his answer carefully. “You go ahead. That way I can see your skill. Give you guidance, if you need it.”

Their eyes lock for another long moment and then suddenly Harry’s climbing over to straddle the bike. He settles onto the seat with far more squirming and ass-wiggling than should be

strictly necessary, but such a thing won't affect the bike's long-term health, so Louis holds onto his critique.

Finally, Harry licks his lips. "Ready for you."

As soon as he's seated, Louis knows he's made a mistake. Harry's scent encircles him, sweet and teasing, and his dick presses up against the crack of Harry's ass. It's not going to stay soft for long.

The engine revs to life, bike suddenly vibrating excitedly beneath them. Before Louis can murmur directions or even consent, they're off, flying out of the barn, down the drive and onto the lane that wraps around Simon's farm.

Harry's not wrong about his skill. He's smooth shifting gears and steady around turns. He's a talented rider.

This fact doesn't do anything to lessen the throb of Louis' cock, nor does the way Harry's scent whips in the wind around them.

Louis remembers what Harry'd said about perfect weather and looking cool and his smile twists into something less carefree and more self-deprecating. He's glad they're zipping up and down the back roads where no one (unless one counts the cattle) can see, because he doesn't 'look cool' right now. He looks pathetic, desperate, arms wrapped tightly around the prince, though he has no right to be touching him this way, though he will probably never see him again.

That's alright, he reasons, holding Harry tighter still and resting his squared jaw against Harry's shoulder. With Simon's greedy ego lurking around every corner of the farm, Louis' learned to guard his pride well. He's not so careless as to lose any of it now to a spoiled prince or a couple of nosy cows.

Harry slows to a stop. In the middle of the road. In the middle of nowhere.

The engine cuts off.

Louis' stomach drops. The bike was in perfectly good shape when he'd checked it this morning. His workmanship should be flawless, especially on a machine as new as this one.

"What's wrong?" Louis asks. His voice isn't panicked. Whatever's wrong, it *can't* be his fault.

"Are those *babies*?" Harry whispers. Louis follows his gaze left to a field filled with sheep... and, yes, lambs.

"You don't have to speak so quietly. They're not *human* babies having a nap," Louis snaps, as his heart resumes beating in his chest. Apparently, nothing's wrong with the bike at all.

Apparently, Harry is a child who's never seen a sheep before.



“Can we pet them?” Harry asks, voice still far more hushed than the circumstance necessitates.

“Why would you want to *pet* them?” Louis’ hands are dirty enough without touching their filth-matted fur. “They smell, you know.”

Harry turns toward him. Their noses are nearly touching. “You smell,” he says.

“Good, I’d hope,” Louis bites back. He doesn’t smell good. He smells like grease and sweat and dirt and bacon and, if he’s lucky, a hint of Liam’s sandlewood soap.

Still, Harry flushes. “A bit, yeah.”

Louis’ thighs tighten around Harry’s and his cock twitches against Harry’s ass. The prince has to feel it. Suddenly, dismounting to play with sheep doesn’t sound like such a terrible idea.

However, before Louis can express his change of heart, Harry says, “We’ve been driving a while -- isn’t there a lake nearby?”

There is. The grassy knoll where Louis drops his bicycle and clothes when he goes in for a dip isn’t but a mile away. It’s a secluded spot, harder to get to than the public swimming area on the other side of the water, and Louis thinks he might be the only person who uses it.

“It’s more of pond, really,” Louis says. “Not nearly as majestic as the river by the Palace.”

“Can’t swim in the river,” Harry says.

“Sharks?” Louis asks. He’s only seen the roaring beast of a waterway a couple of times.

“Pollution,” Harry explains. “Don’t want the Royal Prince to burn all his skin off, apparently.”

Louis reaches up to touch Harry’s cheek. “That’d be a waste.”

Harry’s dimple appears beneath Louis’ fingertip. Up close, Louis can see the beginnings of a beard and his thumb presses into the tickle of Harry’s stubble.

Then, suddenly, the contrast of the thick, rough back of Louis’ knuckle against Harry’s smooth, pink skin jars him into pulling away his hand.

“I need to be getting back to work,” Louis says, his broken tone revealing far more than he’d like Harry to know.

Harry nods, turning back to the road and straightening his shoulders.

Louis replaces his hands around Harry’s waist and into Harry’s ear, he whisper the directions home.

The sun slips out from behind a cloud and the chill Louis' hadn't even noticed recedes just as Harry kicks the bike back on and into gear.

Once they're off, Louis can't help but again be filled with that unfamiliar giddiness. The sun is shining, the air smells like flowers, and poor, dirty, orphan Louis is riding behind the Royal Prince on the most beautiful motorbike he's ever beheld.

Harry stops the bike at the end of the drive, just as Louis' instructed him. He twists around and Louis expects a flip farewell, and perhaps a less than heartfelt 'thanks' for the repairs.

He does not expect a kiss.

And yet Harry's lips press against his own, firm and soft and chapped from the wind. He tastes illegal- literally so, as Louis' fairly sure that alphas have historically been sent to the dungeons for lesser princely infringements.

But Harry began the kiss and Louis can't be bothered to stop it. His fingers tighten in Harry's jacket, the buttery leather giving into his touch.

Harry moans, opening his mouth so that Louis' tongue can slip inside.

Louis' vividly aware of his thickened cock grinding into Harry's ass. He imagines that Harry's slick from the ride, from Louis' scent, from the steady press of Louis' half-hard dick.

One of Louis' hands slides over Harry's chest inside his jacket to finger at the hardened nub of nipple through the thin material of his shirt.

"Louis." Harry forms the word against Louis' lips. "Fuck."

Louis freezes.

"I think--" Harry begins to say, his gaze trained on something in the distance.

Louis turns to see Simon pushing back the front curtain of the farmhouse to investigate the noise at the end of his drive. With a string of curses, Louis dismounts and begins to walk away, only to be drawn close again by Harry's hand on his arm.

"Jeff'll be around later," Harry says, pressing in for another kiss. Louis can't enjoy it.

"Jeff?" He's hoping Harry misspoke.

"For the car." It's really not fair that such a vain and sickly man should be allowed- no, *instructed*- to drive such a beautiful vehicle so frequently.

Harry leans closer, rubbing their noses together. His scent draws Louis out of his Jeff-induced indignance. Harry gives one quick peck, then two and three and four.

"I'll be back, too, Lou."

Louis doesn't believe him. How can he? His life is clearly no fairytale.



# Act Three

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Harry returns three days later, just as he promised.

Louis hears the roar of the motorcycle as it rolls into the drive and he slides out from underneath the tractor he's currently working on.

The bike's engine cuts off and Harry does not appear.

Louis counts to ten. Once. Twice. Three times. (It's not Louis' fault the country school only taught him the most basic figures. He's sure the prince has many other numbers at *his* disposal.)

Still no Harry.

Louis hoists himself up off the ground, brushes his dirty palms on his thighs, and heads outside to scope things out.

Niall stands in the doorway of the house, holding a half-eaten roasted turkey leg out to the prince. Harry wrinkles his nose and shakes his head.

Doesn't know how good he has it, does he? Louis wouldn't turn down such a treasure, but, then, Niall hasn't offered it to him.

Louis stalks across the drive, noting with a scowl that Harry's bike looks like it's been bathed in mud. Again.

By the time he reaches the front steps, so have Simon and Liam and they loom behind Niall with matching hungry expressions. (Liam's is trained on the turkey leg, Simon's on the prince.)

"Niall," Simon is saying as he tries to maneuver his son out of his way. "Haven't I taught you any manners at all?"

"I asked him if he'd like a bite," Niall replies, cheeks pink, clearly affronted.

"You didn't even offer the whole thing?" Louis asks, now as appalled as Simon. "What kind of alpha are you?"

Harry turns to gaze at Louis and his expression explodes into a smile. "Louis!"

"Your highness," Louis replies, aware of Simon hovering, vulture-like, over Harry's shoulder.

"Prince Harry," Simon's voice cuts through the strange scene. "What a wonderful surprise! Would you like a cup of tea?"

Harry bites at his cuticle, but he doesn't take his eyes off Louis. "I don't have time today, I'm afraid."

Louis opens his mouth to say something, *anything*, but Liam jumps in first, "I heard you chose superheroes for the Matching Ball. Zayn said so, at least, and I think that's baller."

Louis' never heard Liam use the expression 'baller' before. Ever. Perhaps the sweet smelling prince muddles his brain as much as he does Louis'.

Harry nods, but doesn't turn around. Simon looks as though he swallowed a lemon whole and has begun to choke on it.

Then, Harry- eyes still fixed on Louis' own- unzips his jacket, revealing the thin white tee-shirt beneath and, even under the judgemental gaze of his tacky-glue family, Louis' mouth goes dry.

Harry withdraws three envelopes and proffers them to Louis, rings flashing. "The blue one is for you."

Simon grabs them. "I'll take these."

Harry twists on his heel, his long hair fanning around him with dramatic flair. "I'm meant to make sure that each eligible alpha receives his or her invitation personally. Ancient Matching Ball law."

Simon's eyes narrow. "I don't remember this protocol being followed with your mother's matching."

"She wasn't as interested in following the rules as I am."

Niall chokes on a bite of turkey. Louis imagines he's thinking about the rumor that one of the palace security guards almost arrested the prince by mistake last night. For weeing on the royal hedges. (An offence of which he was most certainly guilty, judging by how drunk the Lads-in-Waiting appeared in their Kesha singing, bird-flipping instagram story on Jeff's account.)

Not that Louis keeps up with these things the way Niall does.

With a toothy (false) smile, Simon distributes the envelopes, blue to Louis, red to Liam, and orange to Niall.

Louis doesn't hesitate to rip his open. He knows that the moment Harry turns his back, Simon's slippery fingers will confiscate it once again.

It's an invitation, a formal one, addressed to Louis in twirling calligraphed letters on heavy paper. He, *Louis Tomlinson*, is invited to Harry's (superhero-themed) Matching Ball, set to start in only thirty-six hours.

Below the ball's details is a neatly printed note in all caps.

*Lou, I really want you to come. I'd like you to meet my mum and Gemma. Yours, Harry*

When Louis looks up, Harry's chewing his lip. "I hope you can make it. I know it's short notice."

"Of course, we can make it," Simon says, leaning to read over Liam's shoulder as Liam himself sounds out the words. "Nothing more important than win-- than supporting our royal family."

Louis can think of at least a thousand things more important than this. (That doesn't mean he's not going to attend, of course.)

"Are you sure you don't want to stay for tea?" Niall asks.

Harry glances at the sky, sun high over head. "I have to visit every alpha within fifty miles before sundown."

"We have earl grey," Niall adds, as though the foul stuff might actually entice the prince. (In Louis' humble opinion, it's more likely to drive him away.)

"No, thank you," Harry says, because he's a man of taste. He gazes at Louis for a long moment, so long that Simon clears his throat.

"Bye, Louis," Harry says.

As he walks back to his bike, he brushes the backs of their hands together and a shiver runs down Louis' spine.

"Oh my god, you guys!" Liam drops the invitation (which he'd still been reading (or trying to read)) onto the ground. "This is *tomorrow*!"

"How do you know the prince?" Simon asks Louis.

"I've got to get back to work," Louis says, instead of answering.

Simon nods and doesn't press the point. He'd always rather Louis be working. So work, Louis does.

~

Simon glares at his scrambled eggs. Then, he glares at Niall's much larger helping of eggs and then at Niall and finally at Louis.

Louis wishes Niall hadn't taken so many eggs. Might've softened Simon's mood, just a touch.

"You are not going to the ball," Simon says.

Louis nods. "Of course not." Why would he? It's not like *Prince Harry* wrote Louis a personal note asking him to meet his family.

Simon's frown deepens. He probably suspects that Louis is tricking him. In which case, he would be right.

Louis is going to the Matching Ball if he has to murder Simon to get there. (He hopes he doesn't. The clean up would put him behind schedule and he doesn't want to arrive too late.)

"How did you meet Harry?" Liam asks. He's a bastard and a traitor.

"I fixed his motorbike." Louis decides to answer honestly. It's not like anyone will believe him.

"Baller," Liam says. (Okay, it's not like anyone will believe him except Liam.)

"That's luck, man," Niall says. (And Niall.)

"I don't believe you," Simon says, proving Louis' intuition correct.

"Fine," says Louis.

"He seems to hold the mistaken opinion that you're a worthwhile person to know." This is a bit harsh, even by Simon's standards. Still, Louis thinks about Harry's handwritten note and smiles.

"Maybe he likes the way I smell. Animal attraction and all that," Louis suggests. It's honestly the only explanation he can figure, but he hasn't known very many other omegas (only Zayn) and he's never met any other princes at all.

"You smell like a rotting tractor," Simon says.

Tractors don't rot, but arguing with Simon usually results in the seizure of a meal, and, if he plans to woo a royal family this evening (which he does), he needs his sustenance.

"I'm going as Batman," Liam says around a bite of bacon. "What about you?"

"The Hulk," Niall says. He loads his plate with another pile of eggs. "So I probably need to bulk up."

Liam nods as though Niall's made a completely rational statement. "Louis?"

"Is not going," Simon cuts in.

"Do you really think it's a good idea to disobey the prince?" Liam's eyes are wide on Simon. He rarely talks back to the man and Louis tries to suppress a rush of gratitude. The last thing he needs is to be indebted to Liam.

"First, I don't think he'll notice, not surrounded by all the other eligible bachelors *like yourselves*. Second, what will Louis wear? He hasn't got a costume and I'm not purchasing him one."

Louis considers the latter point. He hadn't really thought it through. Really, he'd imagined showing up in his work coveralls. Harry hadn't complained about them yet. But now that he's picturing it, that's probably not the best idea. Louis doesn't want to embarrass the prince.

"I bet Za--"

"That's enough, Liam," Simon says as he reaches across the table to grab Niall's fork out of his hands. "You too, Niall. You'll want to be able to fit into your spandex, won't you?"

Niall shrugs. Louis thinks he'd prefer more eggs to wearing spandex, too.

~

Louis' staring at paperwork, the numbers and letters running together as he tries to plan his escape for the evening, when he hears a knock on the door to his barn.

He doesn't recognize the silhouette at first, but then the man's sweet scent hits him.

"Harry?" he says.

Harry jogs the rest of the way to Louis, his loose bun bouncing behind him.

"Louis," he says.

"I didn't hear your bike." Louis considers looking past him and trying to make out the shape of it in the drive. He'd rather stare into Harry's eyes, which shine back at him.

"I left it in the lane," Harry says. And then, "I wanted to check in with you, before I fed you to the wolves."

Louis opens his mouth. "The wolves?" He thinks Harry is comparing the Queen and Crown Princess to forest creatures. But, no, that can't be right.

"It'll be you, obviously," Harry says, blushing and dimpling all at once.

"Obviously," Louis agrees, even though he has *no* idea what's so obvious at all.

"And the Lads, well, they can be a bit vicious. So ignore their insults and don't drink anything they hand you unless you've watched it being made. By a bartender."

"Why would I spend even a moment with the Lads?" There's nothing Louis wants less.

Harry runs his ringed fingers through his hair and then lifts his chin. "It's generally customary for one to spend time with one's fiancé's friends."

"Yes," Louis says. A strange non sequitur.

Harry's gaze flicks down. "I thought once we were matched you'd want--"

"Once we're *matched*?"



“Have I misread-- Do you not want... ?” Harry’s eyes are wide and he clearly can’t bear to finish the thought, let alone the sentence.

“*You* want to match with *me*?” Louis asks.

“You smell good, and you’re kind, and you work hard, and you’re fun,” Harry ticks the traits off on his fingers. When he gets to his thumb, he finishes, “and you have a wonderful cock.”

Louis suddenly becomes distractingly aware of said cock.

“I’m also poor and dirty and being held captive by my evil stepfather.” Louis ticks these reasons off on his own fingers.

“I have more reasons than you. I win.” Harry tries to wink at Louis. (And fails, but Louis’ not about to let on.)

Harry’s wish for them to be matched is a vain one. The world isn’t set up for them to be together, but Louis closes the distance between them and kisses him anyway.

When Harry pulls away, his lips are wet. “More tonight,” he says. “I just-- what will your costume be? I don’t want to miss a moment searching the crowd when I could be spending it with you.”

The statement is a little melodramatic and Louis wants to play it cool and pretend that it doesn’t make his heart flip.

“Oh love,” Louis says. He searches for answer. He can’t tell Harry the truth- that he’d planned to attend in exactly what he’s wearing now- not when Harry expects a costume.

“I’ll be Diana.”

At Louis’ blank stare Harry clarifies, “Wonder Woman.”

Louis pictures this and then takes a deep breath to calm himself. It has the opposite effect - the air around him is thick with Harry’s scent.

Harry leans in for another kiss. This one’s quick, just a peck of lips, followed by a hungry stare and a whispered goodbye. Then, Harry’s gone.

Batman steps into the barn. “Baller.”

The Hulk is close behind.

Louis doesn’t fall flat onto his ass. He stumbles gracefully.

Liam reaches out a hand to help him up. His grip is strong. Too strong. “Do you think you’re taking the Batman thing a little far?”

Instead of answering Louis’ very important and serious question, Liam says, “You’re in love with the prince.”

Louis tugs at a strap on his overalls. “Well, that’s overstating things.”

Around a slice of pizza, Niall says, “He wants to match with you. I should hope you’re in love.”

“Doesn’t matter,” Louis says. “I’m not going to the ball. I can’t, not dressed like this. And then he’ll match with someone else.”

Liam wiggles his eyebrows in a way that is distinctly un-Batman-like. “I have a plan,” he says.

“Oh no.” Liam is not well-known for well-executed plans. Quite the opposite.

“I ordered you a fairy godmother,” Liam continues, unaware of Louis’ distress.

“And I ordered you a pizza,” Niall adds.

Louis eyes the crust Niall’s holding between two fingers. “I see.”

Niall shrugs. “I was hungry.”

“Boys!” Simon’s voice booms across the drive and into the barn. “You have choreography to finish for the ballad we’ve been working on to woo the prince.”

(Sometimes, Louis doesn’t mind being on the outs with his stepfather.)

~

This time Louis hears the motorbike long before it rolls into the barn. He’s sorting paperwork into piles (work orders, bills, and nastygrams from Simon) to avoid dealing with any of it.

He watches the door, heart pounding.

Perhaps Harry’d missed his presence at the Matching Ball and ridden out to the country to bring him into the palace on the back of his noble steed.

But it’s not Harry on the motorbike.

No, it’s Zayn and a small body bag.

Well, isn’t this just like that fucker. Always wanting Louis to clean up his messes, fix his tractors, and throw his bodies into the pond.

(Okay, so this might be the first time for the latter. But given the fact that Zayn once asked Louis to build him a vehicle for the demolition derby from scratch with less than twelve hours to the starting gun, Louis wouldn’t put it past him.)

“What the fuck?” Louis asks, gesturing to the bag.

Zayn glares at him and carries it over the desk, where he sets it with a loud thump. (All of Louis’ papers flutter to the floor. Hours of work, all for naught.)

“I’ll say it again.” Louis takes a deep breath. “What. the. Fuck.”

Zayn pauses, bag halfway unzipped and stares at Louis, expression neutral. Then, suddenly, the corner of his mouth ticks up into a smile. “You’re in a lovely mood.”

Louis glowers. “Some *dick* just destroyed *two years* of work. Simon will starve me for at least a decade in retaliation.”

“Simon might be nicer to you if you were nicer to him,” Zayn says. Simon likes Zayn- thinks he’s handsome and talented- so he will never understand Louis’ plight.

Louis watches Zayn finish opening the bag. He doesn’t look inside. He’s not one for admiring dead bodies.

Suddenly, Zayn wrinkles his nose. Louis braces himself for a strong whiff of decay, but none comes. Instead, all he can smell is Zayn’s expensive piney cologne.

“You need a shower,” Zayn says.

Louis’ jaw drops. “You know my *circumstances*, Zayn.”

“I also know that I’m not allowing you to wear any of my clothing without bathing first. Surely, Simon doesn’t deprive you of soap and water.”

He doesn’t.

Wait.

“I am not wearing anything of yours. Why would I wear uncomfortable, rich people clothing?”

Zayn raises an unimpressed eyebrow.

Louis regrets the statement. He secretly pines after Zayn’s look. And cologne. And jawline. And-

“Spiderman or Superman?”

“What? Why?” Louis frowns. He supposes it doesn’t matter why. His answer would be the same. “Spiderman. You know I’m a Marvel guy.”

Zayn narrows his eyes and allows his gaze to travel up and down Louis’ body. “The suit would show off your ass.”

“Do not look at me like I’m a piece of meat.” Louis likes it, though. “We’ve talked about this.” They never have.

“The prince is doing Wonder Woman, according to Liam.” Zayn blushes as he says this. Louis suspects it has more to do with the mention of Liam than with the image of Harry in a warrior princess bikini.

“Yes,” Louis agrees. “DC’s alright, I suppose.”

Zayn hands Louis a Superman suit. And then the red cape, booties and underwear. “Alright, Clark Kent. Time to save the monarchy.”

When he puts it that way, Louis definitely doesn’t want to attend the Matching Ball.

He runs the spandex between his fingers and considers placing it right back in Zayn’s hands. Then, he thinks about Harry standing right where Zayn is now, that sweet smile on his face, warning Louis about the Lads-in-Waiting, telling Louis that he *wanted* him.

Louis begins to unhook his overalls.

Zayn reaches out to stay his hand. “No. Absolutely not. We’ve been over this. Shower *first*. Actually-” Zayn grabs the fabric out of Louis’ (admittedly very dirty) hands. “Why don’t I hold onto this while you wash up.”

~

Louis emerges from the bath, naked and glowing with excitement.

(He’s going to a *ball*. He might get to dance with the prince. He might get to drink with the Lads-in-Waiting. He might get to spit on Simon’s shoes.)

Zayn eyes him, gaze clinical and assessing. It’s terribly improper, Louis realizes, an alpha and omega, alone like this.

“Does Liam know---”

Zayn pinches Louis’ nipple. Normally, Louis’ into that kind of thing. Not with this asshole, though. If anything, it makes his already soft dick even softer.

“Liam *sent* me. He was worried you might not get your happy ending, you dick.”

“Oh.”

“Now,” Zayn says with a smile, “for the cologne.”

The old Louis disappears into a puff of delicious smelling perfume. He emerges, a new man.

Not a bird. Not a plane. Not even an ordinary farm mechanic working as a indentured servant in his stepfather’s household.

He emerges *Superman*.

THIS HAS ART !!!

## Act Four

Zayn offers Louis his motorcycle for the evening and Louis accepts.

(He's not ashamed of his truck; really, he's not. But he'd rather not have a door fall off in front of the royal entourage. That would be a poor start to the night.)

Zayn's motorcycle isn't as glamorous as Harry's, but it's still more glamorous than the beige Buick that deposited Simon and co. at the Matching Ball, which pleases Louis.

It's also glamorous enough that Louis catches the attention of the hundreds of waiting paparazzi when he pulls up to the red carpet.

On the one hand, the flashing cameras temporarily blind him. On the other hand, Louis imagines Niall will read an article featuring Louis in a Superman costume riding a motorbike while on the shitter tomorrow morning. So, overall, he counts it as a win.

Most of the other guests have already arrived, so Louis makes his way down the carpet alone, stopping every few steps to offer the cameras a cross-eyed smile.

A uniformed guard leads him up a steep marble staircase and through a massive wooden door with a knocker larger than Louis' head. Once inside the Royal Palace, he's assaulted by scents and colors and sounds.

The front hall is filled with guests in colorful costumes and even more colorful makeup- Magneto and Professor X, Static Shock and The Black Widow- all of them multiplied hundreds of times in floor-length mirrors on either wall.

For a young man who spends most of his time alone with a wrench and a busted engine, it's a lot. (In a good way.)

When they reach entrance to the ballroom, the uniformed guard says, "Invitation, please."

Louis' eyes go wide and he shakes his head. "I don't..."

"Louis!" Batman appears at the door, trailed by The Hulk, trailed by another uniformed man holding a tray of canapes.

Liam holds out a blue envelope. "Stole this from Simon for you."

"I helped," Niall says, around a bite of prosciutto.

Liam glares at him, calling into question just how much he helped. (They all know that Liam needs moral support to brush his teeth and tie his shoes, so Niall's certainly not lying, no matter how little he actually did.)

Louis snatches the envelope out of Liam's hand and throws him a soft, grudging, "Thank you."

He offers the invitation to his escort, who seems to have forgotten his purpose in the face of hor d'oeuvres. He's holding a tiny sandwich in each hand and wearing a forlorn expression as he tries to choose which to eat first.

He nods at the blue envelope. "Good enough for me, Superman. Have fun."

(Does *no one* care about the prince's safety?)

"Prince Harry's involved in an elaborate drinking game involving karaoke and tequila," Liam informs Louis.

From the instagram posts Niall's shared with him in the past, this sounds like a typical night on the town for the prince. Which, Louis had expected that the Matching Ball might be different. Special.

"I think," Niall says. He stops in front of another man holding another tray of canapes. His eyes whirl back and forth between a meatball and a prawn .

"Yes?"

Niall realizes he has two hands and grabs both bites at once. When he finishes chewing, he says, "I think he's given up on you."

This will not do. Louis places his fists on his waist and surveys the room. "Where is he?"

Even as he asks the question, the answer becomes apparent to him, his eyes drawn to Harry like the hand of a compass to true north: Harry, curls streaming down his back, skin gleaming golden and sparkling in the light of the thousands of candles decorating the room.

Instead of the lovely crew of Amazon warriors Harry deserves, he's surrounded by a horde of monsters, men with their faces covered in paint, their crude laughter winding its way across the room and straight to Louis.

"He's over there," Liam says, gesturing in Harry's direction.

"I'm going to rescue him," Louis announces.

The crowd parts for him as he glides across the room, the man of steel with a purpose, red cape streaming out behind him.

However, as he makes his way closer and closer to Harry, the Lads-in-Waiting form ranks around their prince, blocking him off from the room. From Louis.

Louis shoves at the first shoulder he comes to.

The man whirls around. He's much taller than Louis. And darker. (Or, at least, greener.)

A force to be reckoned with.

Louis' insides may crumple, but on the outside, he straightens his shoulders and tries in vain to give himself a little more height.

Suddenly, he's very happy he chose Superman over Spiderman. He'll need his superstrength for this.

"Well, hello, love," the man leers at Louis' red clad crotch. He tosses a handful of red curls over his shoulder and wiggles his eyebrows (the latter so dark as to suggest that he is wearing a wig).

"Hello," Louis replies, caught a little off guard.

"I'm Nick," he says. "Or rather, *Raven*." Then, with a smile that's trying really hard to be flirtatious, attempts to lift his wine glass to his lips. He misses and giggles as couple of drops dribble down his chin.

This man is probably not a threat to Harry, at all. He's very, very drunk. And happy.

"Louis!" Harry cries.

The Lads-in-Waiting *do* part for the prince.

And, suddenly, Louis finds himself face to face with the fiercest picture of beauty he's ever seen. Louis finds himself captivated by the smooth ridges of Harry's shoulders and the soft hairs covering his mostly bare legs.

"You came," Harry says, brushing a strand of hair out of his eyes. He doesn't seem as drunk as Liam had suggested, certainly nowhere near as drunk as Mr. Nick 'Crotch-Leer' Raven.

Louis nods. He's not sure what to say, his instincts warring within him. The eager gaze of their audience elicits the urge to make a flip joke, play the whole encounter off as a lark, but Harry's dimples warrant something softer, sweeter.

Harry reaches out a hand. He's only wearing one ring tonight. It's the gold one with the large, red stone that winks at Louis from a few feet away.

Louis crosses the small distance between them and takes Harry's hand into his own.

They're close enough to kiss, but neither closes the final inches.

"Who's this?" Jeff asks from over Harry's shoulder. He looks green, too, but it's not (only) makeup - it's illness. Perhaps the crowd is making him seasick.

Louis thinks his question is quite rude seeing as they'd met less than two weeks back. Surely Jeff remembers driving out to a farm to collect his wayward ward and his wayward ward's Rolls Royce.

Harry smirks. "Jeff's in a bad mood because I told him he couldn't sing Toxic for karaoke."

Louis chokes out a laugh. "You're a cruel bastard."



Harry shakes his head and his hair brushes Louis' cheek. "Not cruel. Selfish. Toxic's not for Jeff. It's for us. For later." He wiggles his eyebrows, as though he's suggested some sort of devilish sex act. Maybe he has. If so, Louis' certainly up for it.

Louis squeezes Harry's hand, eager to make it through the gauntlet Harry's set up for him. "You said something about a mum and a Gemma?"

Harry's eyes light up and his dimples deepen. "Yes, come meet them!"

Suddenly, Wonder Woman's dragging an utterly besotted Superman across the room toward a pair of gilded thrones. Catwoman sits in one seat, Poison Ivy in the other.

It's then that Louis sadly commits himself to a life of DC. He's supposes giving up Marvel is a small price to pay for a life of luxury with the most sweet-smelling man in the realm.

Poison Ivy's off her seat and stepping down the stairs the to meet them.

"Who's this, then?" she asks Harry.

"This is Louis," Harry says. He licks his lips and then hardens his jaw. "He's my match."

Poison Ivy tilts her head, assessing Louis. "Turn around," she says.

Louis turns around in a circle, his cape catching on a draft and sending air rippling up his spine.

After a long moment, she says, "He's well fit."

Harry giggles and his fingers interlace with Louis'. "I told you."

Catwoman, who is wearing a heavy crown over her cat ears, pushes up off her throne and gracefully scampers down the steps to meet them.

It occurs to Louis, suddenly, that he's in the presence of the royal family and he manages a deep bow.

Catwoman, *the Queen*, laughs. Twisting her long tail around her finger, she says, "It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Louis."

As though *she's* been waiting her whole life to be introduced to him and not the other way around.

Not that Louis ever desired or anticipated meeting the queen. He doesn't care about things like that. It's more Niall's thing.

Still, Louis' eyes widen and he turns to gape at Harry, who grins at him and says, "I won't shut up about you. Apparently."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, too," Louis says. "Your highness. Es. Your highnesses."

“You’re a mechanic, right?” Gemma asks. She looks radiant in green. Much lovelier than Nick and much healthier than Jeff.

Louis nods. “Mostly work on tractors.”

Harry squeezes Louis’ hand. He’s not sure if it’s meant to be reassuring or a signal for something else, and, quite frankly, he’s too afraid to take his eyes off the women in front of him to check Harry’s expression for a clue.

“You’ll be a good influence on this one.” The queen reaches out to pinch Harry’s cheek. “He doesn’t know a wrench from a table saw.”

“I very much doubt-” Louis begins.

Gemma cuts him off. “But would you be willing to risk it?”

He shakes his head. He doesn’t need his future match to lose a finger. (Especially not when he spent his drive to the Royal Palace making elaborate plans involving said fingers and his ass.)

“I never should have introduced you three,” Harry mutters, but his dimples are deep as trenches and his eyes are sparkling brighter even than the gold on his chestpiece.

“Nonsense,” Gemma says. “Now, Louis, you seem like you’d be an excellent Canasta player. Why don’t the four of us retire to--”

“Gemma, he hasn’t got any money for you to fleece off him,” Harry whines.

Louis stomach drops to his toes. He expects this will be the end of things, then. Really, Harry could’ve done him the favor of allowing him a few dances and a glass of champagne first.

Gemma doesn’t even flinch. No, she smiles sweetly at Harry and says, “I’m sure his future husband will be willing to front him an ante.”

“Against you?” Harry sounds horrified. He looks horrified. Louis wonders just how much he’s lost to his sister over cards over the course of his short life. Hopefully, he’s still got his motorbike. (Louis might’ve grown a little bit attached.)

“Children.” The Queen sounds more amused than cross. She glances between Harry and Louis. Then, to Harry, she says, “It seems like you’re not remembering your manners.”

Harry’s brows draw together.

The Queen gestures toward the dance floor.

Before Louis knows what’s happening, he’s being whisked away and into a clumsy waltz.

Against Harry’s ear, he says, “Manners dictate that you ask me for a dance, not manhandle me.”

Harry steps on his toe. It's probably a mistake.

"Would you like this dance?" Harry asks, tightening in his hold on Louis' waist.

Louis sniffs. "I would."

Harry twirls him outward, not quite in time with their steps or the music, but Louis doesn't mind. He likes the way his cape billows out around him.

When Harry dips him- not a typical waltz move, at least not as depicted in last month's Vogue Special Feature, 'Waltzing For Beginners,' but Louis isn't complaining- his hair forms a veil around their faces which are so close that their noses touch. As usual, Harry smells like a garden in June.

And Louis thinks that Harry will kiss him.

But then Harry's pulling him up and dragging him away with another whirl of hair and cape.

"Maybe I should lead," Louis suggests. He *is* Superman, after all.

"You don't know how," Harry says. He leans so close that Louis can feel the movement of his jaw as he speaks, so close that the stubble on their cheeks brushes together.

"Well, that's a little bit of a stereotype, don't you think?" Louis pulls back. He's aware of hundreds of pairs of eyes on them.

Harry doesn't seem to be. He's laughing and playing with Louis' fingers. "I had to take *lessons*. Did you have a waltzing coach?"

"I did." Louis considers the editor at Vogue a dear friend, even if they've never met. Even if she doesn't know Louis exists. (Yet, of course.)

"Alright," Harry tosses a few curls over his shoulder and bats his eyes. "Let's see what you've got, then."

Louis doesn't hesitate. He wraps an arm around Harry's back, palm pressing against warm skin, and begins to guide him toward one of the hall's many exits. The crowd parts and onlookers whisper as they pass.

Louis resists the urge to tell them to fuck off. He would usually, but his role as future consort may still be in jeopardy and he's not ready to take the risk.

He only stops when, after several twists and turns, he reaches a darkened hallway. There, he backs Harry up against a closed door, buries his hands in Harry's hair, and kisses him.

He doesn't pull back until they're breathless and panting, his thigh pressed tight to Harry's gold-clad cock.

"Fuck me," Harry breathes. Which, that's moving a little more quickly than Louis was planning, but he's not going to argue.

It's just, "Maybe somewhere a little more private? With a door and a lock?"

He's not partial to the idea of the paparazzi capturing their first shared orgasms on film and printing their slack-mouthed expressions in the tabs.

Harry reaches underneath Louis' cape to squeeze his bum. "No will come back here." He giggles. "Except hopefully us."

"I'd rather not risk it," Louis says. Now, he's imagining Liam stepping into the hallway to offer Louis earnest pointers on his technique. (Just because he's fucked *one* omega, he considers himself an expert on the entire gender.) Then, he imagines Niall following along behind Liam. To watch. With popcorn. "You don't know my stepbrothers."

Louis backs away from Harry and Harry sighs. "You're a spoilsport. I hope you'll be more open to experiment in the future."

Louis chokes out a laugh. In the future. Harry believes in a future where Louis has sex with *a prince* on a regular basis. Where they experiment together.

Louis doesn't quite yet believe in that future. But he definitely supports it.

"I'd be up for it," Louis tells him. Hell, with a little more pressure, he might even find it in himself to be up for it *right now*.

"I just want to give you a blowjob," Harry say, punctuating the statement by turning around and throwing a longing glance at Louis' cock.

Harry tugs him into a room even darker than the hallway. He doesn't flip on a light.

Instead, he slides off Louis' red underwear. It falls to the floor and Louis trips out of it and into Harry's waiting arms.

Harry runs a finger down the crack of Louis' ass and he whines. "Why is this still covered?"

Louis' experiencing an equal amount of frustration as he tries to unzip Harry's top. "Your naked Matching Ball was a much better idea."

Harry rubs their still-clothed cocks together. "It was. I'm glad *you* listen to my ideas."

Louis runs a hand through Harry's hair and the strands of it twist and tangle around his fingers. With his other hand, he finally succeeds in freeing Harry from the fabric covering his chest, and begins to run his palm over the broad lines of Harry's back.

"How do I get this off?" Harry's hands are still scrambling and sliding over Louis' spandex. Louis doesn't bother to help him. He's much more concerned about pulling down Harry's belt and skirt.

With a hard jerk of his wrist, Harry's naked but for the ring on his finger and Louis reaches down to begin to stroke his cock.

Harry gasps, his hands dragging along Louis' ass and his mouth, Louis' neck. Teeth to Louis' throat, he says, "You smell so fucking good. I haven't been able to stop thinking about you, not since the day you picked me up in your truck. I knew then that you were my match."

He couldn't've, of course. He's spouting sex-fantasy fueled lies, but Louis eats them up. He even hears himself feeding Harry some of his own, "Wanted to lay you out in the bed of that truck. Open your slick ass up with my fingers and the fuck you beside that fancy motorbike of yours."

(Well, maybe not *quite* a lie.)

Harry moans and sucks a bite into Louis' neck. Louis takes that as a sign of encouragement and continues to talk. "Didn't even know you were the prince. Thought you were just a dirty hippie, who didn't know how to care for the machine you'd stolen. Wanted so *badly* to teach you a lesson."

Louis' hand remains firm on Harry's cock, stroking up and down with steady vigor.

"Lou," Harry mouths his name wetly against his neck. "You're gonna make me--"

The light flicks on.

"Unhand him!"

They turn and there, in the doorway, stands Jeff. He looks oddly commanding in his Beast Boy costume. (It's probably the teeth.)

When neither Harry nor Louis (who's still got a very *firm* hand on Harry's dick) move, Jeff steps more fully into the room. "I said, *unhand him*."

"I like his hands on me, thank you very much." Harry pouts. Louis thinks it's especially effective with kiss-bitten lips. He'd certainly give the prince whatever he wanted.

Jeff winces as though Harry's stabbed him in the stomach. A wave of pity washes over Louis and he drops his hands.

"Sorry," he mutters. He doesn't feel sorry and he doesn't sound sorry.

"Don't apologize! Jeff should be apologizing. For the number of times you've said *I* was a cockblock, I would think you'd be a little *more* understanding *here*." Harry gestures to his naked crotch, where his erection stands proudly on display.

Jeff shakes his head. Louis thinks he actually might barf, right there, all over Harry's naked prick. "Prince Harry-- You can't-- Not *before* the actual matching ritual!"

"That's him." Simon appears behind Jeff. Over Simon's shoulder, Louis can see three uniformed guards, including the man who'd escorted him inside. "He's wearing stolen shoes."

Louis isn't wearing shoes, stolen or otherwise. Zayn's spandex suit came complete with red booties. The guards don't seem to notice or care. They push 'round Jeff and Harry, carefully avoiding contact with Harry's bare skin.

The man (who'd been the one to let him in under questionable circumstances to begin with), says to Louis, "You are under arrest for theft."

"He's wearing *booties*!" Harry cries. "This is a misunderstanding!"

"A harlot *and* a thief," Jeff folds his arms over his chest and eyes Louis as though *he's* the naked one. "Well, I never. Cuff him."

"You can't cuff him!" Harry shouts. "I'm going to *match* with him!"

"He's a liar and thief. You don't want to choose him," Simon says. "But have you met Liam? He's very wholesome."

Simon shoves a disheveled Batman into the room. Liam manages a friendly wave whilst completely avoiding eye contact.

"I agree with Mr. Cowell." Jeff licks his lips and gazes between Harry and Louis. Do his eyes linger on Harry's cock? Louis suspects so. "It seems to me that this relationship is quite *toxic*."

"Oh, *come* on. You're not still mad about--"

Louis does not hear the end of Harry's sentence. No, the guard drags him out of the room *by his cape* before the prince can finish.

## Act Five

The guard does not throw Louis in the dungeon. Louis tries to be grateful for this, but, honestly, the palace probably feeds its prisoners better than Simon does and Louis could use a day off from work.

Instead, Louis is deposited beside Zayn's motorbike and made to swear on his mother's grave that he will never return. (Louis crosses his fingers behind his back as he recites the promise, just in case. He takes his mother's grave and any promises made on it very, *very* seriously.)

He drives Zayn's bike home by the light of a full moon. He remembers what Harry'd said about looking cool. Louis definitely doesn't look cool now, not when he's missing his belt and pants, cape stretched awkwardly by the carelessness of the guard.

When he pulls into the drive, he finds the light on inside the barn.

Zayn appears to be sorting Louis' papers and smoking the stub of a cigarette. He smiles when Louis walks in, but it immediately droops into a frown.

"I was expecting Liam," he says.

Louis scowls at him. "Nice to see you, too."

Zayn stands and walks toward him. "What happened to my costume?"

"I'm fine, despite my bedraggled appearance. Thanks for asking." Louis steals the cigarette from between Zayn's fingertips, drops it to the ground, and stubs it out with a hard twist of his toe. "Thank you for not lighting the barn and all my hard work on fire, as well. Very considerate of you."

"Hey, man. I'm definitely not responsible for whatever shit you got into at the palace." He looks worried. Sincere. Like Louis is a wounded puppy.

"Technically," Louis begins to shift the blame onto him, but then thinks the better of it, "you're not."

"Simon is," Zayn guesses, at least in part, correctly.

Louis nods. *He wasn't even wearing shoes!*

"You know, I was trying to clean up my mess from earlier," Zayn says, gesturing back to the desk. "And, it appears you've earned Simon more than enough money to win back your freedom."

"How do you know?" Louis asks, heart starting to beat a little faster.

Zayn gapes at him. "Because I can count...?"

“Past *ten*?” Louis asks, incredulous. They went to the same school. They had the same teacher.

Zayn nods.

“Touché.” Louis says. And then, “Tell me everything.”

~

When Simon arrives home, he’s got dark circles under his eyes and large pit stains beneath his jacket. Liam’s missing a bat ear and Niall’s clutching his stomach like he’s eaten too much. (Or not enough. Difficult to tell sometimes.)

“Why so dour?” Louis asks as he opens the door for the disheveled entourage.

The look Simon gives Louis is physically painful (not for Louis, for Simon- the man should’ve been more care with the botox). “The Royal Prince worked himself into a Royal Snit after you left and disappeared to his room for the rest of the evening.”

“*And* the late night DJ really liked Kesha,” Liam adds.

No song triggers Simon’s rage the way ‘Timber’ does.

“So Harry didn’t match?” Louis asks.

“Mate,” Niall’s peeling an orange, a healthy midnight choice, “he wants to match you. He’s told you at least three times.”

“He’s not matching with Louis. I’ve had him banned from the Royal Palace permanently.” Simon manages a weak, but self-satisfied smile. “I’m off to bed.”

“Wait,” Louis says. “I have something to show you.”

Louis pulls out the books and recites the numbers just as Zayn’d explained them. The more Louis talks, the deeper Simon’s pit stains grow.

Liam watches with a pleased expression, as though he’s personally responsible for Louis winning back his freedom this way. (Later, he will explain to Louis with earnest glee that *he is responsible*. He’ll say he convinced Zayn to help. With his large and talented dick.)

Louis finishes, “So, as you can see, I’ve paid you back ten times what you would have spent on me if you *had* fed me every meal and given me new clothes every year like you were supposed to. That means I’m free to leave.”

Simon doesn’t speak for a long few moments. Finally, he says, “Alright, then. Goodbye.”

Louis gapes at him. He’d expected him to put up at least a little resistance.

Louis doesn’t question it, though. He turns tail and runs out to the barn. There, he packs his tools, his mechanic license, and the large photograph of his mum into his truck.



Minutes later, Niall and Liam send him off with a duffle bag filled with clothes and pair of tight hugs.

It's not till he's reached the end of the drive that Louis realizes it's the middle of the night and he has no place to go.

Of course, Simon allowed him to leave.

He assumed that he'd come crawling right back.

Louis drives to his favorite spot: the grassy knoll above the swimming hole. With his duffle bag as a pillow and his cape as a blanket, Louis lies under the stars and begins to scheme.

Tomorrow, he will send a note to Jeff, apologizing for this evening's debacle and begging him to hire Louis on as royal mechanic.

(He is, of course, counting on the fact that Jeff will not have got himself concussed on the dancefloor or fallen prey to some other malady in the last twelve hours, so he knows it's a long shot.)

He imagines Prince Harry bringing his motorbike into Louis' shop (which will have very little dust and be supplied brand new tools). Maybe Louis teaches him how to tighten a bolt. Maybe Harry rides Louis while they both ride his motorbike. (Now *that*, Louis thinks, would look *cool*.)

The fantasy has him hardening in his spandex and he reaches down, thinking to jerk himself off, but it's difficult through the suit and he finds he doesn't really have the energy to peel it off.

Louis falls asleep, Superman under the stars, half-hard, free from his would-be captor, yet still frustrated by his unfulfilled desires.

~

Louis awakens to the rumble of an engine. The sun is not yet up, but the sky is pink with the dawn.

He pushes himself up onto his elbows and contemplates the water. A dip in the pond sounds like just the thing-- rinse the troubles of yesterday from his skin and start fresh.

But the morning air holds a chill and while Louis isn't a coward, he also isn't a polar bear.

"Louis!"

Louis turns. At the bottom of the hill stands Harry, hair a mess, leather jacket unzipped, eyes swollen and cheeks pink.

Louis' chest tightens as Harry's scent hits him richer and stronger than ever before. "Your heat starts today or tomorrow, doesn't it?"

Harry nods. "Tomorrow," he says, beginning to walk up the hill.

When he reaches Louis, he says, "I went to the farmhouse to find you, but Simon said he'd fired you."

"He said *what*?" Louis shouldn't be surprised by the lie.

"When I told him that the Queen just signed a law stating that firing one's stepson was an offence punishable by death, he changed his tune."

"She did not!"

Harry smiles. "Of course, she didn't. You can't *fire* a family member, anyway. And I should know."

"Why would *you* know?" Louis reaches out and twirls one of Harry's curls around his finger. His hands are still relatively clean from his shower the night before ('relatively' being the key word) and he likes how the glossy brown of Harry's hair shines against the tan of his skin.

"Gemma tried it several times when we were little." Harry bites his lip and then releases it. "She usually didn't like my choices for family fun days."

"Family fun days," Louis repeats, trying to imagine such an event with taking place in his home. It would probably involve choreography and singing, littered with Simon's biting critique.

"Scrabble is a great game," Harry says. "Lots of people like it. Not just eccentric omegas."

Louis doesn't know who he's talking to; Louis certainly didn't impunge Scrabble and never would, but there's no else around.

Still, Louis says, "I like that you're eccentric." He releases the lock of hair he'd captured and slips a hand onto Harry's waist underneath his jacket.

Harry tilts his head. "I know."

The kiss they share is as sweet and soft as the sherbet dawn glowing around them. When they pull apart, Louis' heart is pounding like he's chasing the waking day on a cloud.

Against Louis' lips, Harry says, "Simon told me that you'd probably frozen your nuts off last night. I hope that's not true."

Louis doesn't deign the comment (or any terrible thing Simon will ever say to him again) worthy of a response.

"I really like nuts," Harry continues. "Yours best of all."

"How do you *know*?" Louis pinches Harry's side and Harry laughs but doesn't flinch away.

“Good point,” Harry agrees easily. “You should get naked so that I can find out whether they live up to the hype.”

“What hype?”

Harry hums noncommittally, fingers plucking at the collar of Louis’ suit. “Shall we cut you out of this, then?”

Louis likes the sound of that - starring in his very own bodice ripping sex scene, just like in the novels. (Not that he reads that sort of tripe.)

“You might have to, with the point of your sword.”

Harry’s hands fall to Louis’ hips and he presses them together, cock to cock. “My sword, eh?”

Then Harry steps back, lower lip catching between a flash of white teeth. “I don’t actually have a sword, Louis. Mum thinks I’d poke someone’s eye out and won’t let me carry them around, except for very special occasions of state.”

Louis frowns.

Harry adds, “She says she doesn’t see why I’d need one, anyway.”

“She’s not thinking creatively enough.”

“That’s what I said.”

Louis starts peeling the suit off. It sticks around his biceps and bum (flattering) and also around his belly and thighs (arguably less flattering).

Harry watches, clumsily throwing his own clothes into a pile beside him. Louis looks up, expecting to see laughter in his gaze. Instead, Harry’s eyes lick Louis up and down like he’s soft-serve ice cream, pouring out of his suit purely for Harry’s pleasure.

With several purposeful tugs, Louis frees his feet of the last of the spandex.

Harry chews at his cuticle. With his other hand he reaches behind him briefly and then, with slick fingers, begins to pull at his cock.

*He’s wet for Louis.*

They stand a couple of feet apart, fully naked, taking each other in, the sound of the birds waking up from their slumber, not quite loud enough to drown out the rhythmic slide of Harry’s fist.

“So.” Louis frowns. “How should we do this?”

This is neither a romantic nor a sensual way to initiate sex. But it’s not like Louis has much experience wooing princes into opening up their assholes for his cock, and he doesn’t have

rose petals or candles with him. All he has is a pile of blue spandex and stretched out Superman cape.

Harry doesn't answer. His eyes are zeroed in on Louis' cock, lips parted as though he's in some sort of trance. (Louis can't pretend it isn't flattering.)

"You said something about a blowjob." Louis doesn't really want a blowjob. Of course, he *loves* blowjobs, normally, but with the proximity of Harry's heat-sweet smell and wet ass, Louis has other things on his mind.

Harry licks his lips. "I'd like to ride you."

Louis nods, "Let's do that."

It's not the easiest position- or so says Cosmo's 'Sex Guide for New Mates'- but Louis nods. He's fucking the Royal Prince after all, something he'd never (well, barely ever) been able to imagine for himself, so it seems he might have access to some fairy tale sex magic.

He spreads out the red cape over the grass. The fabric bunches at the bottom, refusing to lay flat. Louis lays down atop it anyway.

Harry's twinkling eyes (and chest and dick and smell) make it easy to ignore the dew-wet press of grass at his ankles and neck.

Gingerly, Harry seats himself on Louis' thighs, his slick sticking to the tops of them as he adjusts. Then, without warning, he begins to pull at Louis' cock with a tight fist.

Louis gasps, eyes wide with surprise.

Harry laughs. "Gotta get you nice and hard."

Louis doesn't think it's possible to be any harder than he already is and says as much.

Harry wiggles his eyebrows. "That's what you think. You've never slept with an omega before."

Louis opens his mouth to protest, but it's true. However, "I wouldn't pop a knot for just any old omega. You're special."

Harry shifts his weight. He's so damn wet.

"I'm not. You're just saying that because I'm the prince." He looks away and his strokes slow. Louis thinks he might actually believe that.

"Harry," Louis says, "look at me. You're creative and funny and a fast learner."

Harry's chews his lips and slowly begins to open his body as he gazes back up to Louis.

"*And*," Louis adds, "from what I've seen on Instagram, you're really, *really* good at karaoke."

“You don’t have to say all that to fuck me,” Harry assures him, moving to his knees. “I’d let you in anyway.”

As if to emphasize his point, he lines up the tip of Louis’ cock with his hole. And then Louis finds himself enfolded in wet, tight heat.

But Louis isn’t finished. “Didn’t say it to get laid.”

Brows drawn together, Harry begins to move up and down. The heat, the rhythm, the bobbing of Harry’s shining curls- Louis loves it.

“I said it because--”

Harry leans down and kisses him. The angle of his body intensifies the press of his walls around Louis and he bites into Harry’s lips.

When Harry breaks the kiss to sit back up, Louis continues, “I said it because I think you need to know just how wonderful you are as a person, without the money, without the title. Just as Harry.”

Harry begins to grind down with quicker, harder strokes.

“What I’m trying to say-” Louis grits out, struggling to hold onto his thoughts, as Harry rocks up and down atop him.

“Would you stop talking?” Harry groans. “I’m trying to concentrate on *fucking* you.”

Louis shuts up. Harry’s right. They can talk later. Right now, best to let Harry’s incredible *riding* skills carry them both away.

Louis reaches up to stroke Harry’s cock. The angle doesn’t allow him to grip very hard, but Harry doesn’t seem to mind, his face twisting with pleasure.

Harry comes first, mouth and eyes wide open and fixed on Louis’ face. Louis pulls him down for a long, slow kiss, the rhythm of his hips slowing but not stopping, never stopping.

“Heat’s coming tomorrow,” Harry murmurs against Louis’ neck. Louis’ tempted to throw his own words back at him, tell *him* that he’s breaking *Louis’* concentration *now*, ruining it for him.

But he’s not. Louis fucking *loves* to hear him talk like this. It’s doing nearly as much as the clenching of his ass or the slip-sliding of his slick.

“Gonna have you match me and then knot me,” Harry continues.

The base of Louis’ cock throbs and he thinks Harry might get his last wish sooner than he’d plans.

“You like that?” Harry says, picking up speed.

(How *did* the prince get so good at riding?

Sure, Louis' seen multiple instagram stories and snaps of him riding mechanical bulls, but Louis'd been certain the parallels to such activities and sex were mere myth. He'd been wrong. The prince's skill at the one has shone through in the other.)

Louis doesn't respond, his hands clutching ineffectually at the ground, pulling up chunks of grass as his orgasm rips through him.

"Holy shit," he pants.

Harry clenches around Louis' softening dick with a wink and Louis whimpers, eyes shuttering.

When he opens his eyes a few minutes later, Harry's curled up against him and the sun has risen up over the lake.

"We should probably get going," Harry says, voice chipper despite the fact that he's been up most of the night as surely as Louis.

Louis closes his eyes again briefly. "No," he says. It's his first day as a free man. He doesn't have to do *shit* if he doesn't want to and, right now, he doesn't want to.

"The life of a royal is very busy," Harry says, voice matter of fact. He brushes a strand of hair off his forehead.

"From one prison to another," Louis says with a sigh.

"What?" Harry asks.

Louis grins and sighs, sitting up. "Never mind. Let's get to it, then."

Louis contemplates the pile of blue spandex beside him. Despite the armor it had provided the night before, he has no desire to put it back on.

"I brought you something." Harry digs around inside his clothes and then comes up with a red pair of pants. From the Superman costume.

Louis reaches for them but Harry pulls them away before he can grab them. He holds them up by the elastic waistband, squinting in the sunlight. "Are you sure these fit you? They look awfully small."

Louis rolls his eyes at Harry, tempted to say something scathing about Zayn. But then he remembers that he owes the man his freedom and thinks better of it.

After a little tussle, Louis is able to wrest the pants free from Harry. He pulls them on, puts his hands back on his hips, Superman style, and smirks in Harry's direction.

Harry gives him a long, assessing look. “I guess they *do* fit.”

Louis presses a laughing kiss to his cheek and then unzips his duffle in search of a fresh pair of clothes.

On top of the clothes he finds Niall’s latest issue of Marie Claire (which had only come in the mail the day before), ten chocolate bars, and a note.

*Love you, mate. Ring us from the palace, once you’re in. Your life’s going to be baller from now on. Happy Matching.*

It’s unsigned, but Niall’s loopy script is as unmistakable as Liam’s terrible slang.

“They love you,” Harry coos. “How wonderful to come from a loving family.”

Louis smiles to himself. Maybe he hasn’t got it so bad, after all.

Harry, who’s wearing one sock and nothing else, pulls a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt out of Louis’ duffle. “These look comfy.”

Louis remember how he’d thought Harry was a some kind of pauper when they’d first met. (Perhaps his personal fashion choices aren’t *quite* what Vogue makes them out to be.)

As he pulls a pair of sweats on, Louis is thankful for the smell of the grass and sex and *Harry* because Simon was very stingy with the laundry soap.

Harry’s head pops through the neck of Louis’ sweatshirt, hair askew and grinning.

“The day is new. The sun is shining. We should go for a quick ride,” he says.

Louis leans in to peck his cheek. “We just did.”

Harry lets out a loud, honking laugh, and then says, primly, “On my motorbike.”

“What about my truck?” The last thing he wants is for Simon to find and repossess it.

“Jeff’ll take care of it.”

“If you think, for one *minute*, that I’m going to trust that sickly human being with my beloved truck, then you’re kidding yourself.”

They’ve reached the motorbike and Harry leans against it as he meets Louis’ eyes. “He’s really quite healthy.”

Louis shoots Harry his most disbelieving look. “We’ll come back for it ourselves.”

As they arrange themselves on the motorbike, this time with Louis in front and Harry behind, Harry murmurs, “I thought you couldn’t just drive up to the Royal Palace in that thing?”

Louis remembers sitting with Harry in the cab of his truck all those weeks back. He twists around to place a soft kiss on Harry’s lips.

Rubbing their noses together, he says, “Ah, but now I’ve met the Queen.”

He turns back and starts the engine. Harry’s arms tighten around his middle.

As they pull away, rocks and dirt fly up under their tires and Harry lets loose a shout of happy laughter.

“You thinking about how cool we look? How jealous the sheep must be?” Louis calls back.

Harry presses his mouth to Louis’ ear. “Nope.” He pops the ‘p’ and the puff of air sends a tickle down Louis’ spine. “Just you. I’m only thinking about you.”



End Notes

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