

**my heart to the grindstone**

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# my heart to the grindstone

by [myrmidryad](#)

## Summary

Bahorel advises a friend of his they've met at the bar (Bahorel has friends everywhere) to buy flowers for her girlfriend, and Grantaire perks up.

No space for words, perhaps, but maybe for gestures?

Grantaire wants more out of his relationship with Enjolras than just (admittedly great) sex.

## Notes

Title from the (very appropriate) [I Want Blood](#) by Empires.

This is the part with no sex, but clumsy emotions. This is what happens when you think too hard about that porny oneshot you wrote ages ago - it develops plot beyond kinky sex.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Buying the gag was an *excellent* idea. Grantaire allows himself a good five seconds of self-congratulation before he drops off to sleep, Enjolras' arm tight around his middle. In the morning, Grantaire wakes as Enjolras slips out of bed and leaves, the sounds of breakfast floating through after a couple of minutes. Uninvited, Grantaire goes back to sleep.

It's only when he wakes up a few hours later to an empty flat that he remembers his intention to ask Enjolras about things over breakfast. The breakfast he wasn't invited to, because he and Enjolras are only fuckbuddies. And really, the *buddies* part might be stretching it too far.

He lets himself out and goes straight to work, today's shift at the restaurant a long one. He leaves the gag on the bed, next to the stain on the duvet. They'll both be gone by the time he goes back, he's sure. Enjolras is a master of concealment and misdirection when it comes to their relationship.

And that's the thing Grantaire wants to talk to him about.

He takes orders and brings out plates, napkins, new cutlery. Waitstaff are never off their feet, and Grantaire's are protesting loudly by the end of the night. He's finished off the dregs of about seven glasses of wine, which comes up to maybe one and a half actual glasses, which is not enough for him to call Enjolras.

Also, it's past midnight by the time he leaves the restaurant, so that would probably be a bad idea.

*"Says the guy who jumps to attention whenever I call,"* Enjolras had spat last night, and god is it true. Grantaire slopes home and shares a bong with Jehan, the two of them staying up till four by accident, losing track of time while they play Donkey Kong.

Enjolras hasn't told anyone, and Grantaire has followed his lead and kept his mouth shut about them. He's sure Jehan knows, and Courfeyrac and Combeferre must, but no one says a word. Just as Enjolras wants, no doubt. And Grantaire had been fine with that for a while, but lately...

He imagines the two of them walking to and from meetings together hand in hand, imagines actually *talking* to Enjolras instead of just trading insults and innuendos as an act of foreplay. They could have shared jokes, they could watch TV, they could be Facebook-official and *happy*.

And Enjolras would quit activism and Grantaire would quit drinking and they would adopt a dog. Grantaire snorts into his pillow just thinking about it. Enjolras doesn't want a real relationship, he's made that very clear. Enjolras wants someone to fuck, to *jump to attention* when he calls.

But he lets Grantaire have his own toothbrush and pyjamas at his apartment. And he asked Grantaire to stay last night – he's never actually asked that before. He's pulled Grantaire to bed and held onto him to prevent him leaving, but he's never asked out loud. It matters that he asked last night.

Grantaire bundles himself up in a cocoon of duvet and breaths in, pretending he's hugging Enjolras instead. They could be happy, if it's what they both want. But Enjolras refuses to talk, and won't give Grantaire the space to say the words whirring round his head either.

Over the next few days, an idea forms. He goes to follow Enjolras after the Thursday meeting, but Enjolras catches his eye and shakes his head – too much work to do, clearly – so Grantaire follows Bossuet and Bahorel to a bar instead and reflects on what he's missing out on. He wouldn't mind just lounging around as Enjolras worked, because being near Enjolras is the equivalent of basking in the sun for his wretched, shrivelled soul.

Bahorel advises a friend of his they've met at the bar (Bahorel has friends everywhere) to buy flowers for her girlfriend, and Grantaire perks up.

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He goes shopping two days later, the idea focusing on the restaurant gift cards he gets as a bonus at work. It's a chain, so as long as they go to a different one than the one he works at, it could be okay. At least he knows the menu well enough to know which things to recommend. He doesn't like any of the romantic cards he sees in the shops he looks in, none of them seeming to send quite the right message, so he puts shopping on hold and goes home to make a card instead, an abstract watercolour stained glass-looking thing with lots of red and blue and green.

Before work the day after, he chooses a bouquet he hopes isn't too small or too big and gives the shop the blank card and gift cards to deliver with it. Enjolras is one of those rare people who actually loves surprises, to the point where Courfeyrac has to arrange his birthday party a good week or two before his actual birthday to have the desired effect.

It does mean Enjolras is hilariously hyperactive for the fortnight leading up to his birthday, but Grantaire just finds that adorable.

He texts Enjolras that evening asking if he can come over that night, and when Enjolras texts back a simple 'yes', excitement sends tingles over Grantaire's skin. He actually smiles at some of the customers that afternoon (not all – people are unpleasant, and he's a French waiter, so there's only so much cheer he can muster). There's a palpable bounce in his step as he keys in the code to Enjolras' building and jogs up the stairs to his apartment.

Enjolras answers the door with a scowl, and Grantaire raises his eyebrows, smile melting away. "You okay?"

"No," Enjolras says shortly, turning away and stalking into his apartment. Grantaire follows him into the kitchen, frowning, and blinks in confusion when he sees the flowers on the kitchen table, still wrapped up, next to the card. "Work piles up, stuff keeps happening," Enjolras continues, and waves a hand at the table. "And now this? I'm just not in the mood."

Grantaire's heart sinks. "You don't like them?"

Enjolras rolls his eyes and actually sneers. "Oh sure, nothing says 'date me' like a cheap, handmade card. And Jesus, this restaurant?" He grabs the gift cards and snorts. "Don't you

*work* there?” Grantaire flinches, but Enjolras doesn’t notice, shaking his head in disgust. “Sweet gesture. I’d be touched if my skin wasn’t literally *crawling*.”

There’s a lump in his throat and a horrible ache in his chest, and Grantaire looks down and sticks his hands in his pockets so Enjolras won’t see them shake. “If you didn’t want to go you could’ve just said,” he mutters, turning away and walking back the way he came so Enjolras won’t see if his chin starts to tremble.

How stupid can one lovestruck idiot be? He wrenches the door open and fights the urge to run, to flee the scene of his shame. Of course someone like Enjolras would never deign to be seen with Grantaire in public. There are plenty of reasons why he’s been keeping them secret, and they all come back to how incredibly unworthy Grantaire is of him.

*A cheap, handmade card.*

Tears prick the corners of his eyes as he reaches the stairs, trying not to let his face crumple. A cheap, handmade card he spent *ages* working on. He thought Enjolras might appreciate the effort.

Apparently not.

“Grantaire! Wait, Grantaire!”

Enjolras comes running after him, and Grantaire scrubs his sleeve swiftly across his face and sets his jaw before turning around. “What?”

Enjolras’ eyes are wide, his cheeks flushed. “I didn’t know you sent them. I’m so sorry, I didn’t know they were from you.”

Grantaire’s chest can’t decide whether to fill up with hope or not, so it constricts painfully, and Grantaire’s words come out clipped. “Who the fuck else would they be from?”

“I’ve had creepy anonymous gifts before,” Enjolras says, blushing harder. “I thought this was just more of that, I swear I didn’t realise. Come back inside?”

It’s only because of Enjolras’ genuinely apologetic expression that Grantaire lets himself be drawn back to the apartment. The flowers and card make something twist in his stomach, but Enjolras winces and gets a vase – an honest to god *vase* – from under the sink and fills it with water to put them in. “They’re really nice,” he says, chewing his lip, and Grantaire sighs.

“You were going to throw them away, weren’t you?”

“Only because I thought they were from an anonymous creeper.” Enjolras is about to plonk them straight in, and Grantaire huffs and takes them out of his hands.

“Scissors, please.”

Enjolras gets him a pair and watches in meek silence as Grantaire unwraps the flowers, snips the ends off the stems – “Diagonally, so there’s more surface area to take in water, see?” –

pours the little sachet of plant food into the vase and arranges the flowers properly. “I live with Jehan,” he mutters afterwards as explanation.

Enjolras picks the card up, running his fingers over the painted front. “Why didn’t you write in it?”

Grantaire puts the scissors away, not sure exactly when he learned the configuration of Enjolras’ kitchen. “You like surprises.”

“It’s lovely.” Enjolras looks at him, holding the card with far more care than it deserves.

“You didn’t think so ten minutes ago,” Grantaire reminds him, flat. The wince it gets him brings a second’s satisfaction, followed by self-disgust at his own pettiness. Enjolras apologised. That should be enough.

“I’m sorry,” Enjolras says again. He stands the card on the table in front of the flowers and brushes his fingertips along the edges of the gift cards, frowning just a little. Confused, Grantaire realises, and he rubs his forehead as he explains.

“I couldn’t find any cards in the shops that weren’t overly...over the top, or disgustingly cute, so I figured I’d just...well, make one. And I know the food at Rico’s, and they have a decent vegetarian menu, so...yeah.”

“But...” Enjolras bites his lip, then forges ahead. “Don’t get me wrong, I appreciate it, but why?”

This is the outcome Grantaire hadn’t let himself imagine, in a rare example of attempted positive thinking. It stings all the more for the lack of mental run-through, and he looks down so he won’t have to look at Enjolras’ bemused face. Bemused because why would Grantaire try and fuck up a perfectly decent arrangement?

“Whenever it’s just us, it’s just sex,” Grantaire says, tense, every muscle in him ready to propel him towards the door and out of this humiliating situation. “Y’know? You’re, um. I mean, we don’t really talk much?”

“You want to talk?”

Christ. Grantaire rubs his face, presses his fingers into the corners of his eyes. “I didn’t send you gift cards so we could fuck in the restaurant kitchen,” he says after a moment. He takes a second to steel himself before lifting his head and meeting Enjolras’ gaze. Miracles do happen, it seems – Enjolras no longer looks baffled, but a little curious. Hope sparks dangerous flames in Grantaire’s chest, and he swallows and forges on. “I’d like to talk a bit. I thought maybe we could do that there.” He gestures to the gift cards.

“You want to go on a date?” Enjolras is starting to smile, and Grantaire sighs, painfully relieved. Which is why he doesn’t have a chance to think his next words through at all before they burst from his mouth.

“I want more than just sex.” It takes everything he has not to slam his hand over his mouth, and his entire arm twitches before he can suppress the instinct. He clamps his teeth down on his treacherous tongue instead and tries to gauge the meaning behind Enjolras’ tilted head.

There’s a long silence, during which Grantaire seriously considers trying to sidle out, but Enjolras finally clears his throat and looks down at the gift cards. “When are these valid for?”

“Um. Any time in the next...two months, I think?”

“How about tonight?” The look Enjolras gives him is verging on *shy*, and Grantaire’s breath catches as he nods.

“Tonight’s good. That sounds great.”

Enjolras’ smile widens, and he ducks his head, slipping past Grantaire. “I’ll grab my coat.”

Grantaire takes the few seconds of his absence to silently scream in triumph and disbelief, just getting himself under control in time for Enjolras to reappear and jerk his head at the door. He remembers to grab the cards before he follows, and they bump shoulders as they walk down the stairs together.

They don’t hold hands, and they don’t kiss, but they share a small table for two when they get to the restaurant. A cheap tea light in a pretty holder burns steadily between them, and Grantaire’s glad the low light hides his blushes when they happen. It’s more than sex, and it’s better than Grantaire could have ever hoped for.

*This* is what he wants, he thinks as he and Enjolras walk back to Enjolras’ apartment, arguing about the authority creators have over their content once they publically release it. The two of them together like this, more like boyfriends than fuckbuddies. Enjolras happy, maybe one day happy enough to call himself Grantaire’s and be proud of it, the way Grantaire would be to call himself Enjolras’.

End Notes

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