

It's Just You and Me

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/15256644) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/15256644>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hetalia: Axis Powers
Relationships:	England/France (Hetalia) , England/France , Canada/Prussia (Hetalia)
Characters:	England (Hetalia) , France (Hetalia) , America (Hetalia) , Canada (Hetalia) , Spain (Hetalia) , Prussia (Hetalia) , Norway (Hetalia) , Russia (Hetalia) , Bad Touch Trio (Hetalia) , Hungary (Hetalia) , Denmark (Hetalia) , Finland (Hetalia) , Sweden (Hetalia) , South Italy (Hetalia)
Additional Tags:	Background Relationships , Minor Denmark/Norway (Hetalia) , Minor South Italy/Spain (Hetalia) , Human , Alternate Universe - Human , Countries Using Human Names , Alternate Universe - College/University , Punk England (Hetalia) , Alternate Universe - Punk , Bad Touch Trio Band , Singer France , Drummer Spain , Bassist Prussia , Guitarist England , Fluff , Angst , Fluff and Angst , Minor Finland/Sweden (Hetalia) , Punk Rock
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2018-07-19 Words: 11,529 Chapters: 2/4

It's Just You and Me

by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

Every Thursday night in a dingy punk bar the Bad Touch Trio play.

Arthur goes almost every week - he likes their music and has made his friends through the bar. He definitely doesn't like the lead singer, the playboy Francis Bonnefoy. He would rather just avoid him. But as Arthur's life tends to go, it's not that easy.

Notes

This is the first part of three - I've already got the second written, but I won't post it till I'm well into the third. Hopefully I'll get it up in a week or two but we'll see. It really depends on how much people like this!

Human Names of Countries (For Reference):

Arthur Kirkland – England

Francis Bonnefoy – France

Alfred F Williams-Jones – America

Matthew Williams-Jones – Canada

Gilbert Beilschmidt – Prussia

Antonio Fernández Carriedo – Spain

Elizabeta Héderváry - Hungary

Lovino Vargas – Romano

Feliciano Vargas – Italy

Ludwig Beilschmidt - Germany

Mikkel Densen – Denmark

Lukas Bondevik – Norway

Tino Väinämöinen – Finland

Berwald Oxenstierna - Sweden

Ivan Braginsky – Russia

Inspiration for the name came from [It's Just You and Me](#)

Chapter 1

Francis had a crush.

Really crush was an understatement. It was more of him spending any time where he wasn't making music or with his friends thinking of this person. Sometimes it would even distract him from those.

He didn't quite understand it or know how the man had wormed his way into his heart. He'd never felt like this for someone. Sure, he'd had plenty of flings. But that attraction had only ever been physical and one off. He didn't know how he'd developed these feelings for a person he'd barely talking to and only really knew in passing. Someone who basically hated him. It was quite the conundrum.

It had taken him a few weeks to notice the new guy who came to all the concerts they played in one of the smaller punk bars near the university. He knew most of the regulars and outside of them few people came more than twice. Of course there had been plenty of new first years, a few of whom had stuck around, but there was something a bit different about this one. Maybe it was the way he always seemed to be writing his own music while listening. Or maybe it was the perpetual scowl on his lips.

It had been because of his adorable cousin Matthew (and now boyfriend of one of his best friends) that he got a name for the grumpy man. Arthur Kirkland, English Literature and Mythological Studies student. They'd gotten off on the wrong foot right away, getting into an argument over something trivial.

They fought every time they talked. But God Arthur was attractive, with his multiple piercings and red streaked hair. Even his hideously bushy eyebrows couldn't take that away. And over a few months he'd ended up liking his personality too. He would die before he admitted that to anyone. And anyway, how was something going to develop when they'd never had a normal conversation?

Arthur would never admit it, but Francis was the reason he'd gotten into the punk scene. It had always been there, a little bit, whenever he pulled out his guitar or listened to the heavier music he liked. He just didn't express it. He'd been the quiet and nerdy kid in high school. He still was, he liked his books and tea, but that was the thing he kept hidden now.

He'd been at the open day for the university he now attended with a bit of time to spare. A small concert, showing off various music students, was advertised nearby so he'd figured he'd check it out. He didn't have much hope for it. At first it had just been classical music, which Arthur pretended to like but didn't really.

But the last band had been different. Arthur had known from when the bassist had played the first chord. It was heavy music, his short of music. The lead singer was what had really

caught his attention. His voice could only be described as beautiful, long hair contrasting the shaved looks that most others in the room had been sporting. His guitar playing was sub-par but that hadn't matter. The band sounded amazing.

If only he hadn't turned out to be such a prick. It had only taken a few weeks after starting university to hear rumours of Francis Bonnefoy, lead singer of the Bad Touch Trio and playboy of the music department. And he was just as insufferable as he was flirtatious. It was hard to be around someone who hit in others with every second word (and no, Arthur was not jealous of anyone Francis hit on).

It didn't stop Arthur from going to their concerts or buying the CDs they'd produced themselves. They were still a good band and he didn't mind the other two members. But he wouldn't ever talk to them if he could help it.

But when one of his only friends was now dating the bassist (and related to Francis) it was a little hard to avoid them.

"So why exactly are you both taking Creative Writing as an additional course?" Gilbert raised his eyebrows at his two friends as they headed towards the lecture theatre.

"Well, that boy Antonio has eyes on is in that class," Francis gave a smirk in the direction of his darker haired friend. "And he was too scared to do it alone so he dragged me into it."

"You left me to take a course on my own," Gilbert pouted.

"You're taking beginners French with Matthew, you'll be fine," Francis didn't feel sorry at all. While in the first semester they'd all chosen to take the same elective, just because it was easier, he didn't mind changing it about. They had all of their music classes together anyway.

"I should be awesome enough that you wouldn't want to abandon me," Gilbert continued, though without much chance to say much more because they'd reached his lecture theatre.

Francis just gave him a snide "remember drinks are on you tonight" before him and Antonio continued on their way.

"I heard that a certain Englishman will be in the writing class," Antonio spoke up for the first time since they'd left their music practice to go to actual classes, pulling himself out of the nervous thoughts he'd been undoubtedly falling into.

"There are quite a lot of Englishmen at this university, Tonio. We do go to an English university." Francis was just going to pretend he didn't know exactly who his friend was referring to. It wasn't like it couldn't be anyone else.

"You don't like every Englishman who attends the university," Antonio gave a raised eyebrow and smug smile.

“I beg to differ, I’ve slept with many English people both men and women. No one specific would come to mind when you say that.”

“Slept with is different to liking,” Antonio rolled his eyes good naturedly.

“I do not like people,” Francis waved his hand in a dramatic flourish, coinciding with their arrival ten minutes late to the lecture. They got a glare from the lecturer for being late to the first class of the course. Neither were bothered by it.

It wasn’t that hard to find the person who Antonio meant. He was sitting at the back alone, ripped clothes and arm tattoos contrasting the studious look on his face. He was one of the few people who seemed to be paying attention to the class.

“Good luck,” Francis whispered to Antonio, leaving his friend to go sit with the angry Italian he had taken a strange liking to and heading for Arthur.

“Fancy seeing you here, mon lapin,” Francis put on his most charming grin as he sat beside the (mostly) blond.

“Oh, bugger off,” Arthur hissed back with a pointed flare at Francis and then the lecturer. Clearly someone wanted to pay attention in class. It didn’t really fit the image the younger boy had for himself. “Go bother someone else.”

“Ah, but you see nobody else is quite as entertaining to bother as you,” Francis responded, keeping his voice to a whisper to avoid getting called out for talking in class. He didn’t want Arthur to hate him that much more.

Arthur let it a humph, setting down his pen when he realised he wasn’t actually going to get any work done. “Don’t you have better things to do like skipping class and picking up girls?”

“Is that a hint if jealousy I hear?” he could only hope so. The other student had on his prime grumpy face, which was endearing if anything. “I can pick you up if you so wish?”

“I’d rather die than sleep with you.”

“That is a bit extreme, no? I have been told I am quite skilled and am yet to be turned down.”

“That’s because people have bloody low standards.” Arthur had turned a nice shade of pink now, not quite looking Francis in the eye. So that had the effect he wanted.

Francis wasn’t actually as big of a playboy as the rumours said. Yes, he did do one-night flings. But he believed in love and each time there was a small hope it might be the one. It was a shame that the reputation had come about because of it. Though he did have his own flirtatious nature to blame for that.

“So then what are your standards, mon cher sourcilles?”

“Higher than yours,” Arthur shot back while looking positively uncomfortable. “Not all of us will fuck anything that moves.”

“But some of us will actually, as you so crudely put it, fuck people.” It was a bit of a low blow, but Francis just liked winding Arthur up. He didn’t mean anything by it really.

Arthur's face tightened at this and he seemed at a loss for the right angry insult to throw in Francis’ face. He was saved by the lecturer giving both of them a stern glare followed by essentially telling them both to shut up.

The rest of the rest of the lecture in silence and Arthur left as soon as it was done. It was only as he went to leave himself, tagging along behind Antonio, that Francis realised that he had yet again only argued with the Englishman.

He should really try not to do that.

-

It was late afternoon, coming on dinner time, when Arthur finished his classes and headed towards his accommodation. Thankfully he only lived only a ten minute walk from campus- otherwise it would be a much harder commute. He didn’t even have to worry about finding a flat next year since Matthew already had the sorted for him. His parents were buying him and Alfred a flat (they were very well off), and since it was three bedrooms they had a spare. Matthew had been nice enough to offer it to Arthur.

He was relieved to get back to his room. With one class with a certain asshole frog and two other actually important ones following he was just a little tired. He looked forward to the break.

What he was not expecting when he unlocked the door was to see a mess of fast food wrappers scattered across a previously clean floor. Only one of the culprits had the decency to look guilty.

“What the hell are you doing here?” he directed his glare at Alfred, who sat on the floor with something very similar to ketchup smeared on his chin. His twin was less likely to be the cause of the mess. “How did you even get in?”

“I’m here to get some help on an essay I have due!” Alfred replied all too chipperly. “Since you’re good at essays and all.”

“English has nothing to do with politics so I can’t help you,” Alfred snapped. “And that doesn’t answer my second question.”

“Gil helped us get in,” Matthew gave a sheepish shrug from where he sat on the bed. “Alfred would’ve broken your door down otherwise.”

“Good to know that the security is top notch. Have either of heard of waiting outside?” Arthur shook his head and sat with a sigh. He already knew the answer. Alfred didn’t know the meaning of the word wait. He held out his hand to Alfred for the essay plan he’d brought. “I’ll help if you clean up your mess and don’t do this again.”

Alfred gave an enthusiastic nod, handing over the plan and getting to work cleaning up the abundance of rubbish. One look at the scrawled writing and Arthur knew he was going to have his work cut out for him.

“I’m surprised that you didn’t go to Gilbert’s after you got him to help you break into my room, Matthew. Unless you want help with an essay too. I’m afraid I don’t speak frog, though, so I can help there.”

Matthew laughed. “Nothing like that, you know I actually put effort into my course.” A pointed look at Alfred. “Gil tried to drag me over but I wanted to ask if you were coming to the gig tonight? You missed last week’s so I wasn’t sure.”

“Oh, I forgot about that.” Normally the bad touch trio played every Thursday night in the same punk and metal bar – one that Arthur and his few friend frequented anyway. Hed missed it the week before because of course work. “Who’s going?”

“Elizabeta definitely. I think Tino is going since Berwald is working tonight. Lukas and Mikkell. Maybe some others.” Matthew hummed thoughtfully. “Oh! I heard that Antonio managed to convince Lovino to come along.”

“You mean the angry Italian who you get along with somehow?”

“Yeah,” Matthew laughed. “I don’t think you’d hate each other if you actually talked.”

“You said that about Francis.”

“And you don’t hate him,” Matthew rolled his eyes. “there might be a few others about but I don’t know for definite. Al isn’t coming because of that essay that’s due.”

Arthur couldn’t say that was a bad thing. Alfred was in no way into that kind of music he just came along for the company and drinks. It helped that most of the time one of the band members ended up buying rounds for friends. Arthur shamelessly accepted those.

“Anyway, you haven’t given me your answer.”

“I’ll come.” Arthur couldn’t really see any reason for him to not go. He didn’t have any work and he’d missed it the week before. “I guess we better get to work on that essay, since *someone* will take far to long to write it even with my help.”

The music blared and thrummed through Arthur's body in just the way he liked it. He followed Matthew through the people already on the dance floor towards a corner near the small makeshift stage. One was reserved for people performing that night and the other was essentially reserved by their friends every Thursday. While most would hit the dance floor for the evening they always ended up back there, drinking and singing.

“Arthur! Fancy seeing you around here.”

Arthur couldn’t help but roll his eyes at his friend, Elizabeta, as he slid into the booth beside her. Matthew had made a beeline for the other table and Gilbert. Arthur didn’t mind, though had no plan to join him. Francis motioned him over as he sat at the other table. Arthur just flipped him off.

“I only missed one week.”

“Well you could’ve been dead for all I know,” Elizabeta teased.

“You saw me a few days ago, Liz.”

“I never know what kind of fights you’ll be getting into, especially without me to back you up.”

Arthur smiled as she offered him her drink and took a swig of it. Their friendship was an odd one. In many ways they were incompatible, but something had just clicked when they’d met in this bar. Some people had mistaken them for a couple but god Arthur was far too gay for that. They were just comfortable with each other, even if they only tended to see each other when they went out. She was his closest friend beside Matthew.

“I only get into fights I can win.”

“Like that time you took on Berwald and got beaten into the ground?”

“... I was very drunk that time.”

“What about the time with Ludwig?”

“Drunk.”

“Gilbert?”

“... we’re friends now?” That hadn’t been the best start to their friendship but sometimes two people rubbed each other the wrong way and made up for it. Other times they didn’t.

“That doesn’t stop it being a stupid decision.” Liz gave him a somewhat disapproving look, only increasing as he stole more of her drink. He should really think about getting his own.

“Oh, it looks like they’re getting ready to start,” Arthur pointed to the makeshift stage where Antonio was setting up his drums, the other two joining him.

“Then that’s our queue to move to the dance floor.”

“Drinks first.”

“Drinks first,” Liz tilted her current one towards him before knocking it back. “Perhaps we can pick up some stragglers, such as Tino, along the way.”

“Sounds good to me.” Arthur moved out of the booth and the two of them headed to the bar. Thankfully there wasn’t much of a queue. Soon they had both downed a few shots, moving towards the dance floor with beers in hand and Tino in tow (it was a bit hard to pull him away from Berwald, who worked at the bar). Francis had just begun singing so they hadn’t missed much.

Soon they were all dancing, moving to the heavy music that contrasted Francis' melodic voice. They were mostly a group, all bumping into each other, but there were a few times that Liz dragged him off to dance just them. It always happened along with some joking flirtation but they both knew Arthur was gay and Liz preferred girls anyway.

Francis tried to pull him up on stage at one point, leaning over when Arthur was near the front with his hand right out. Arthur just told him to fuck right off. Francis laughed at that and got someone else up instead. (Arthur wasn't upset that he hadn't said yes, not at all).

"You look tired," Lukas slid into the seat beside him, sliding a beer over. The bad touch trio had finished and it had moved on to the DJ for the night. Arthur had really needed a break. He loved the atmosphere, but it always took something out of him.

"Well you know what Liz is like to dance with."

"True," Lukas laughed. "I don't know where she got all that energy from. I am not jealous of Matthew right now."

"I'm sure Gilbert will swoop in and save him soon enough." Though how that worked out would depend on if Elizabeta and Gilbert were best friends or worst enemies at the moment. "Where's Mikkel?"

"Bothering Tino and Berwald at the bar." Normally it was hard to get one without the other, though Arthur much preferred the quiet Norwegian. The two were quite good friends but rarely got time alone. He honestly wasn't sure what relationship the two of them had.

"I'm sure they're happy about that," Arthur took a swig of his drink, not quite looking at Lukas but instead where Francis was flirting with some shy looking man near the bar. Bloody frog. Poor boy was head over heels. "How did you find the last assignment?"

"Fine," Lukas shrugged. Both were studying mythology as one of their joint degrees and it was how they'd met. The course wasn't particularly large. "But you already asked me that earlier. Is there something you're trying not to think of?"

"Of course not," Arthur denied immediately. Why would he be? He was just trying to have a good night out with friends. Maybe bringing up university work had been a bit weird.

"If you ever want to talk I can listen." It was strange to hear that from someone who was normally as standoffish and sarcastic as him.

"Thank you."

"I won't listen to you just complaining about people, though."

"Fair."

Lukas nodded, before looking over his shoulder and signing. "Looks like Mikkel wants to go back to dancing. Want to come with me?"

“Sure, I’ve had enough of a break now.” Arthur was quite happy to down his drink and get up to join his friends again.

“Why don’t you just go join him?”

Francis had thought he’d been subtle about his jealousy. It was hard not to feel it as he watched Arthur dancing with his friends, laughter on his lips and green eyes lit up like they only did at things like this. The tight trousers he’d worn made his movements almost sinful and it took everything Francis had not to run over and steal him away. Especially when he got drunk and got more physical with his friends. How Francis wished he'd dance with or hug him like that.

“Non, that would only bother him.” Francis ignored Antonio’s disbelieving look. At least it was the quieter of the two who had noticed. Gilbert had always been more oblivious, especially now that he was besotted with darling Matthieu. He would not be able to keep something such as this a secret. “He does not want me there.”

“Por supuesto, idiota,” Antonio just shook his head. Francis didn’t need to know what it meant to know his friend was making a dig at him. The word awfully like English kind of gave it away. “Well I am going to go over to the others. You can join or remain here alone.”

Francis couldn’t say he wanted to sit alone and the night was too young to go home already. “I’ll go to the bar and then I’ll join. I haven’t had nearly enough to drink yet.”

“Don’t overdo it,” Antonio teased before heading over to the grumpy Italian he was currently pursuing.

Francis forced himself to move in the direction of the bar. More alcohol really did sound like a good idea. He didn’t like having too much before he sang but that wasn’t problem anymore. It would help him relax and he had a lot of catching up to do when the others had started earlier.

Soon enough he had downed enough to be dancing freely (though he did so sober), moving easily through the crowds. He danced with friends and strangers alike – even managing to steal Gilbert away from Matthew for a particularly (and platonically) sensual dance. He had not been able to do the same for Tonio who was back to sitting down, this time with Lovino and his friends.

He ended up mixing with strangers, his more flirtatious side coming out and resulting in him making out with a fair few people. Really it was all just a normal night out.

“Oy, Fran.”

The night had been winding down and Francis had gone around into the back to begin packing up the band equipment. The other two were unlikely to do it for several reasons. Antonio was too drunk to touch any of it really. “Oui?”

“I need you to take Arthur home,” Gilbert looked more tired than anything, a lot more sober than expected. “Matthew wants to leave now but can’t convince him to come with us. Berwald said that he can stay while he clears up, but him and Tino live in the opposite direction.”

“Just how drunk is he?”

“Well he started talking to his imaginary friends and he gave me a hug.”

“Mon dieu he must be very drunk indeed. You take Matthieu home and I will deal with les sourcils.”

“Danke schön,” Gilbert looked more than relieved to be able to leave.

Francis just waved him away. He would probably see his friend when he got back to the flat the three of them shared after dropping off Arthur. He just hoped the younger man didn’t complain too much. Francis could manhandle him if necessary but he would rather it would not come to that. At least Arthur tended to argue less when drunk. Or at least his arguments were less cohesive and easier to ignore.

He finished packing up all the equipment. Gilbert had taken his bass guitar on the way out, Francis slung his own guitar around his shoulder. The rest could be left there. He just hoped it wasn’t too difficult to get Arthur home.

“Francis,” Tino greeted him with relief as he made it to the bar. Arthur was leaned into the Finn, muttering something about how nobody really liked him and how they all just used him to write essays. It would have been amusing if he didn’t have to take the drunk man home. “Berwald is ready to close.”

“Got it,” Francis nodded and placed a firm hand on Arthur’s shoulder. “Come now, Mon cher, let’s get you home.”

Arthur jumped up, batting Francis’ hand away and almost falling in the process. “Don’t touch me, frog! I don’t want your dirty hands anyway near me.”

Francis sighed. Of course, this was not going to be easy. He raised his hands so Arthur could see where they were with out of focus green eyes. “I will not touch you. But it would be best if we got you home, no?”

Arthur grudgingly accepted this So Francis picked up his bag and led them both out with a wave to Tino and Berwald. He quickly realised he had no idea where the Englishman lived and that he was far too drunk to remember. A quick text to Matthew, who was thankfully still awake, quickly remedied it.

“Why are you following me?”

Arthur asked the question a few minutes into them walking, as he stumbled along and occasionally leaned into Francis.

“I am walking you home.”

“And why would you do that,” Arthur's thick brows drew together and his words turned more bitter. “Don’t have someone’s bed to fall into tonight.”

“I do not. I would not choose them over you anyway.” Francis felt more free admitting such at that point. Arthur wouldn’t remember the conversation the next morning, drunk as he was.

“Yes you would,” Arthur mumbled, glaring at him. “You’re always off with other people and every time we talk you’re an ass.”

“Perhaps the problem is that you do not want to talk to me.”

“Not true.” It was hard to hear what Arthur was saying with how quiet he was and how slurred his words were. “You just always say infuriating things and never let us talk normally.”

“Then we can try arguing less.”

That seemed to appease him and the rest of the walk to his accommodation was a comfortable silence (with Francis having to help him walk a few times). He thought it was sweet that Arthur actually wanted to talk to him. If only he wasn’t so grumpy when sober. But it was good to know that the other man did not hate him.

It was a bit of a task getting Arthur into his flat. He didn’t seem to like the idea of stairs and Francis practically had to drag him up. Soon enough they reached his room. Francis shoed Arthur to bed and got him a glass of water in the hopes it would stop him having too bad a hangover tomorrow.

He had to admit that Arthur’s room wasn’t what he’d expected. It was a strange mix – incredibly neat with stacks of books and sewing supplies, but also band posters and punk items in sight. Even his electric guitar was like that – a soft blue in colour but covered in punk stickers.

While Francis had been looking around Arthur had managed to change out of his jeans into baggy plaid trousers and fallen into bed. Francis couldn’t help the faint smile on his lips. He should’ve expected that he would be a nerd with how hard he tried in class.

“I’ll be leaving now, then. Sleep well, Arthur.”

“Wait.” Before Francis could leave an arm grabbed his sleeve. “Could you... maybe stay?”

The last bit was mumbled and Arthur wouldn’t meet his eyes as he said it. “The floor is not too comfortable to sleep on.”

“There’s enough room.” Arthur shuffled over on the bigger than a single but not quite a double bed. He painted such a cute picture all bundled up, even if still a mess of a drunk.

“Then there's no way I can refuse.”

Francis made quick work of removing his shirt and trousers, not particularly ashamed to sleep in just boxers. It was far more comfortable anyway. Then he slipped in close to Arthur –

nice and snug.

“Bonne nuit, Arthur.” Francis couldn’t help but place a quick kiss on his messy curls.

“Night,” Arthur mumbled, closing his eyes as he burrowed into the covers and closer to Francis.

Francis smiled and let soft breaths and the warm body beside him lull him to sleep.

Arthur woke to the early afternoon light pushing through his curtains, rolling over and snuggling closer into the warm body beside him. There was a slight grumble and the arm loosely hanging over him moved a bit. It was comfortable and he moved even closer.

Wait.

His eyes snapped open and he jumped back from the man who had been half asleep beside him. It was hard to get away with their legs tangled together but he managed. “What the fuck are you doing in my bed?!”

“Good morning to you too,” Francis gave a lazy smirk and propped himself up on one arm. His hair was unfairly neat for having just woken up unlike Arthur’s mess of bed hair. A slight blush formed in Arthur’s cheeks as he realised that the French man was topless. Not completely naked but the bare chest, broader and smoother than his, was enough to make his mind go places. “I trust you slept well?”

“Why are you... how did you even... we didn’t?” Arthur couldn’t form cohesive sentences around the shock and hangover already hammering at his head.

Francis just looked amused which pissed Arthur off even more. “Of course we didn’t. Do not worry, mon cher, I didn’t lay a hand on you until you hugged me in your sleep.”

Francis’ words got under his skin and he flushed with a combination of embarrassment and rage. “Get. The. Fuck. Out.”

“Do you have someplace to be?”

“I want you out of my room right now.”

“You did not seem to have a problem last night when you practically begged me to stay.” Francis sat up with a raised eyebrow.

Arthur scowled, moving off the bed to find the shirt he was pretty sure Francis had been wearing the last night. He threw it in his face. “I won’t say it again, leave.”

“As you wish.” Francis didn’t seem all too bothered as he pulled on the shirt and collected all his things. Arthur almost wished that he would leave his guitar. It was so much nicer than his second hand one. But that was not what he should be thinking of right now.

“I hope this won’t happen again,” Arthur spoke tersely.

“We shall see. Until next time, mon lapin,” Francis blew a kiss as he opened the door. Arthur proceeded to slam it in his face. He could practically hear him cackling as he walked away down the corridor. Wanker.

With Francis gone, sat in his bed and let his head fall into his hands. His rage disappeared and he was left feeling deflate. *Of course we didn’t.* Those words that had made him angry at first now hurt. He didn’t know why they did. Of course, Francis would not lower himself to sleeping with Arthur when he could have anyone. He was just the punk that tried too hard in class and had no good looks going for him. Arthur knew he wouldn’t be anyone’s first choice. That he had so few friends reminded him of that. It wasn’t that he hated himself, much, just that he was realistic.

He wouldn’t want to sleep with that French bastard anyway.

But if he didn’t, why did it hurt so much.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

Posting this earlier than I expected! Sorry if the quality isn't as good as the last one, I edited it entirely myself whereas a friend read it through last time (so I may make some changes when they read it). I just wanted to post it before I go away this weekend.

The third, and final, part may take a fair bit longer to post. It's going to be the longest by far, considering the "short" part by part description is 600 words >< I've only written one part too of like 10 so it may take a while. Just bare with me, hopefully it'll be worth it!

Arthur had a crush.

It had taken him a long time to realise it. He didn't entirely understand, still. How did what had felt like hate translate to actually liking someone? He guessed when he thought about it more it kind of made sense. The anger at how Francis flirted around with everyone. Getting into arguments with him and then annoyed at himself for always just arguing. Really, he'd been the one to start most of the arguments. Maybe it was just denial?

Having accepted his feelings didn't make it easier. There was no way that Francis liked *him*. He'd make that much obvious the morning he'd stayed over. Now he had to figure out how to not let him know and get over it.

At least it was a Saturday which meant that there was very little chance that he'd bump into Francis. Arthur's plan was to do university work, so there wouldn't be any visits to the pub. But he wouldn't be able to avoid him forever.

He didn't really know if he wanted to talk to anyone about it, either.

A knock on his door pulled him out of his thoughts and he grudgingly got up to open it. He was surprised to see Matthew standing there, bag from a local bakery in his hands. They both stayed in the same student accommodation, with rooms close enough to each other, but Matthew spent most of his time at Gilbert's flat anyway.

"I figured I'd check up on you to make sure you were eating," Matthew gave him a slight smile as Arthur let him in. "I know what you're like when you're doing work."

It was true that when Arthur started on something he'd just stick with it, taking breaks only to get tea. However, he was yet to start any of the readings he needed to do for his course. He'd been too busy thinking. Guilt settled in his stomach at his lack of productivity. He still gladly accepted the sandwich Matthew handed him.

“So, how’s it going?”

“Slowly,” Arthur mumbled after taking a bite. “I’ll get through all the books I’ll need to, though.”

“I’m assuming that means you’ll turn down my offer to go out tonight?”

“Yeah, sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Matthew smiled again. “Gil suggested I invite you because it’s always nice to have a bigger crowd. Antonio isn’t sure if he’ll be able to come so it could be only a few of us.”

“I would if I didn’t have so much to do,” Arthur shrugged. “I’m assuming Francis is going then?”

“Of course,” Matthew’s eyebrows raised and Arthur immediately regretted asking. “It’s strange for you to ask after him. Did something happen?”

“Of course not,” Arthur snapped, instantly knowing that he had been too defensive. “Why would you think so?”

“He did stay over on Thursday night.”

Arthur groaned and turned just a little bit red. Of course Matthew knew that, he’d probably stayed with Gilbert in the flat the Bad Touch shared. “I was drunk and asked him to stay while *drunk*. He made it quite clear that he didn’t want to stay in the morning. There’s nothing more to it.”

Matthew didn’t look convinced but thankfully moved over to another subject. “Anyway, I also came here with some news.”

“Oh?”

“Gil told me yesterday that the band is looking for a new Guitarist.”

“I thought Francis was the Guitarist?”

“Supposedly he feels like he’s bringing down the band with it. You know he much prefers singing and the piano. He wants to concentrate on the singing part.” Matthew shrugged.

“Why don’t you try out for it?”

“Absolutely not.”

“You’re good enough at the guitar for it. It would give you a chance to play more than you currently do.”

“But I don’t want to.”

“Just consider it,” Matthew smiled slightly. “They’re holding auditions Tuesday and Wednesday evening, I’ll text you the location.”

Arthur didn’t give much acknowledgement of that. The idea was tempting but he didn’t want to spend more time with Francis than he had to. That would just make things harder.

Matthew left soon after, the two not saying much more to each other. With his friend gone Arthur turned back to his books in the hope he could get some work done and stop thinking so much.

“Oh, bonjour Matthieu.” Francis had come to expect his slightly younger cousin to frequent his flat, but it was the lack of Gilbert that confused him. “Where’s Gilbert?”

“Running to the shops to get food.”

“I assume you will say no to my offer to cook for you?” A nod in response. Francis just smiled and began to pull out the food he needed. He remembered when Matthew had been quieter, always in the shadow of his slightly older twin. His only friend through school had been Arthur – and what a strange friendship that had been. It still baffled Francis somewhat. But now Matthew was much more talkative. Francis was glad him and Gilbert had found each other. “Did you manage to convince Arthur to come out tonight?”

Matthew shook his head. “He has work to do.”

“Shame, he could have convinced Elizabeta and Lukas to come.”

“And that’s the only reason you want him to come?”

“Well it certainly isn’t for his delightful company,” Francis laughed, turning on the stove. “The more the merrier, is that not the saying?”

“That’s true but are you sure there isn’t another reason?”

“You’re being awfully pushy today,” Francis shook his spatula at Matthew good naturedly. “Gilbert’s really influencing you. But there really is no other reason. You know as well as I that Arthur dislikes my company.”

“I really don’t think he does.”

“How doesn’t he?” Francis didn’t entirely understand why Matthew was pursuing this subject. Was he trying to get at something? Maybe he just wanted the two of them to become better friends. Or perhaps their arguments were getting on his nerves. Francis could understand that. “He made it quite clear that he didn’t like me when he told me to get out Friday morning.”

There was a thoughtful silence before Matthew spoke again. “Maybe he just misunderstood something you said. You know that he will often take things the wrong way.”

That made Francis pause. Had he said something to annoy Arthur that morning? The Englishman had seemed grumpy upon waking up but not enough to kick him out straight away. He couldn't think of anything specifically, but he did annoy Arthur easily.

He didn't get a chance to say anything else on the matter because Gilbert chose that exact moment to burst back into the flat. He didn't particularly want to have the discussion with him around – the man was awful at all things like that. How he had a boyfriend Francis didn't know.

"I brought back some awesome food for us to eat!" Gilbert declared, placing a bag that was almost definitely full of oven pizzas on the table. Matthew gave him an appreciative smile anyway. "Oh, hey Francis, fancy seeing you out of your room."

Francis rolled his eyes at his friend. "Some of us had to put up audition advertisements on the college forums while writing our next new song because *someone* was on a date."

"And thank you for taking on the advertisement," Gilbert's tone was somewhat sarcastic but the hearty slap to Francis' back was heartfelt.

"Speaking of the auditions," Matthew piped up, gaining their attention. "I mentioned it to Arthur. I think I got him to consider it."

"He won't come." Both Gilbert and Francis responded in tandem.

"He might."

"He wouldn't want to be in a band with me," Francis shrugged.

"He's not very confident either," Gilbert pointed out. It wasn't something that was noticeable about the angry man who tried to act like he was as punk as could be. But most people in their group knew about his lack of confidence by now. It hadn't taken Francis long to discover it.

"There's always a chance," Matthew's smile was almost knowing.

Francis didn't really have a response for that. Instead he plated his meal and bid the two a good evening, saying that he would be ready in an hour to go out.

The idea of having Arthur in their band was an appealing, if unlikely, one.

"You look like you were falling half asleep in that lecture," Lukas commented as Arthur left his morning mythology lecture with him.

"I was up late practicing guitar," Arthur yawned, glad that he had two hours until his next lecture. Enough time to get a bite to eat and some tea. Maybe even a bit of coffee (as much as he disliked it) to wake him up.

“Sounds smart,” Lukas replied in a tone close to sarcasm but still managing to remain as emotionless as he often was.

“It wasn’t,” Arthur sighed. “I wouldn’t have if I wasn’t audition tomorrow.”

Whoops, there it was. The thing he didn’t really want to let slip. After most of Saturday thinking (and not doing work) he’d decided that it was worth a shot. He could put up with Francis and his crush for the infuriating man if it meant playing on stage. He just didn’t mean to tell anyone before. At least Lukas probably wouldn’t tell anyone.

“For what?”

“Uh, Bad Touch Trio... they’re looking for a new guitarist.”

Lukas gave a non-committal hum. If it was most people it would’ve freaked Arthur out a bit. However Lukas’ would normally give a sarcastic retort if he thought something was a bad idea.

Even without many words exchanged between them, the Norwegian’s nod and slight smile as they parted ways made him feel a bit more confident. Maybe this was a good idea? Okay, so he shouldn’t have stayed up late practicing. But he was definitely going to do the audition now.

He was too busy searching on his phone for the perfect song to play that he didn’t notice the small group walking in the opposite direction to him until he bumped right into the tallest.

“Ah, sorry, I wasn’t paying attention,” he apologised, picking himself up from where he had half fallen. He had to force himself to not freeze when he noticed just who he’d bumped into. *Shit.*

“Fancy seeing you here, Arthur,” Ivan said with a pleasant smile that Arthur knew led to all the wrong places. “I didn’t realise you had come to this university. You’ve changed.”

“I didn’t realise you were here,” Arthur responded evenly ignoring the last comment. He’d thought he’d never have to see the tall Russian again after he’d left high school a year before Arthur. Of course luck wasn’t in his favour.

“This is a pleasant surprise, da?” Ivan smiled and the two with him nodded in agreement. Arthur thought he recognised one, the girl, but he wasn’t sure who the other man was. “I had hoped to meet you again!”

“Yes, it is,” Arthur tried to look like he meant it. He’d learned the hard way not to piss Ivan off.

Ivan leaned forward so his eyes were on level with Arthur’s, forcing Arthur to make eye contact (something he wasn’t too good at anyway). “You haven’t forgotten our promise, have you?”

“Of course not.” How could he?

Ivan smiled as he straightened back up. "I will be seeing you around."

It was a statement, not a question, and Arthur could feel a sinking feeling in his stomach. He was glad to continue towards the café he had been going to but the thought of seeing Ivan again was not a good one.

"Hey dude, are you okay, you look like you've seen a ghost!" Alfred's way to loud greeting just made Arthur's head hurt. He was regretting organising to have lunch with him today.

"I feel like I have."

Alfred just looked confused. "What did you see?"

"Ivan." Arthur wasn't surprised when Alfred's expression darkened. Ian had transferred to the same high school as them when they were in second year. Even though he was the year above him and Alfred had a rivalry due to their sports prowess. Arthur had mostly avoided it, even if Alfred was one of his only friends. He hadn't really interacted with Ivan much until he'd been put up a year for English and they'd shared a class.

He didn't really like to think about what had happened. He hadn't told anyone, either, because he knew Alfred would just shove his nose where it didn't belong.

"He goes to this university?"

"Seems so."

Alfred's face tightened and he angrily shoved a bacon roll into his mouth. Arthur sipped on his tea. He didn't have enough to deal with this. "I hoped I'd never have to deal with that commie again."

"I think we all did," Arthur sighed. At least for Alfred it was just a rivalry. Him and Ivan had a history and the Russian had never been too nice to Matthew. Hopefully the quieter twin would be able to avoid him. "Don't fight him if you see him, though. We aren't in school anymore and I don't want to drag you to hospital."

"You say that as if I'd end up in hospital!"

"You've stopped working out as much and he's gotten taller."

"I'm still strong, I'll beat him up any day."

"Sure," Arthur rolled his eyes. "Well, Matthew you wouldn't want you to fight."

That stopped Alfred where he was flexing to show off his muscles. "Oh, yeah. I'll try not to for him. Doesn't mean I'll be nice to him, though."

Arthur counted that as a victory. He seriously didn't want to go through whatever would happen if they started brawling. What if the police got involved? That would be such a pain for him and Matthew.

Though maybe it would mean he didn't have to deal with Ivan. But somehow he didn't think it would be better.

"That's fair," Arthur just nodded. "How about we talk about something else? This is meant to be a break between lectures."

"Okay, dude, I understand that my amazing battle plan is just too much for your mind to handle! We'll move onto topics you can understand."

Arthur let out a frustrated sigh but let Alfred change the topic to whatever crazy thing he wanted to talk to. It was better than thinking about Ivan anyway.

"Well that was truly uninspiring," Francis let out a sigh, scribbling out the name he'd written only a song ago. So far their auditions had been fairly awful. There had been a couple who could play better than Francis but wouldn't necessarily fit with the band. But most seemed to have never picked up a guitar before

"You'd think there would be someone in this university who could play guitar," Gilbert grumbled.

"Well at least there's still more to come?"

Francis wasn't sure if what Antonio pointed out was a good or a bad thing.

"Shall I send the next person in?" Matthew popped his head round the door. He'd offered to help with seeing people in and out to make the band's lives easier, so if there was no one around they could get a bit of practice in. Alfred was doing it the next day if they still held auditions. He probably wouldn't let them get practice in for all his talking but they still appreciated him helping.

"Go ahead," Francis nodded, hitting Gilbert to stop him making loving eyes at his boyfriend.

Matthew scurried away and soon chatting could be heard as he brought in the next person. Talking in a distinctive British accent. No, it couldn't be. They were in Britain after all plenty of people had that accent (and Francis totally hadn't memorized the nuances of a certain person's way of speaking).

"So, what's your name?" Antonio cast a smirk at Francis who was rendered speechless.

"You know what my bloody name is," Arthur grumbled as he plugged his worn guitar into the amp they'd provided.

"Were just following the proper protocol."

"Proper protocol my ass," Arthur fixed them with a glare and Antonio raised his hands on a surrender. It took him nudging Francis for him to add his name to the (most crossed out) list of candidates.

“You’re welcome to start,” Francis got over the shock that Arthur was here, giving in an encouraging wink that only earned him the middle finger. Cute. He could tell that the blond was anxious under that grumpy facade. It was all rather adorable.

Arthur took a deep breath before he started to play. His hands moved fluidly over the strings of the guitar as he started into a slow melody. It was only a few beats in, as it began to speed up, that Francis recognised it.

It was one of the bands songs he’d written. They hadn’t played it for a long time, not since the beginning of the last year... right when Arthur had started coming along to their concerts. He must have transposed it himself because Francis didn’t share sheet music beyond the band members.

And he was playing it perfectly. Francis could feel the emotions he normally conveyed through his voice coming through in the notes. Something about it made his heart beat faster and he couldn’t look away from Arthur, how calm he looked even as he played a song that was full on metal.

When he finished he gave a nervous smile. Francis couldn’t say anything, his breath taken away. He hadn’t expected Arthur to come along *never mind* play one of their songs.

“Well,” Antonio eventually spoke for all them (all in a bit of a state of shock). “Thank you for that. We’ll let you know if you get in.”

Arthur mumbled a thanks and backed out of the door.

“Do we even need to hold the other auditions?” Francis finally managed to speak.

“I agree,” Gilbert nodded.

“I think it would be impolite not to see the others already here,” Antonio sighed. “And we haven’t discussed our decision...”

“Come on, Tonio, he played one of our songs. Perfectly. Plus we already know he’ll fit in,” Francis pointed out.

“Not if you two are always arguing.”

Francis waved his hand at that. “We won’t argue, don’t worry. At least we won’t disrupt practice because of it.

Tonio didn’t look too convinced but shrugged anyway. “I still think we should see everyone else for today and then discuss it. That’s the fairest way.”

Francis nodded his agreement while Gilbert muttered something about being too awesome to sit around for too long (which was basically him agreeing).

He was certain that they decide on Arthur to join the band so he was more than happy to sit through the rest, as boring as they may be.

Arthur couldn't believe it when he got the text from Matthew telling him he'd been chosen as the band's guitarist. Supposedly none of the members had told him because they'd been arguing over who would, before Matthew had stepped in and done it. He was going to get to play guitar properly.

Then he'd gotten a text from Francis to organise him getting the music. That had proceeded to Francis practically inviting himself over on Thursday to help Arthur learn some of the pieces.

Arthur didn't know whether to be excited, annoyed or nervous. Really it was a combination of all three. Since it was on Thursday it meant he would go with Francis to the bar they played in. He wouldn't be playing that night of course, having nowhere near enough time to learn the pieces, but he didn't know how he'd stay calm around the Frenchman.

He was restless as he waited for Francis, tidying his already pristine room. He jumped when his phone buzzed and rushed to let him into the accommodation building.

"You're strangely quiet today," Francis commented as they entered his room.

"Maybe that's because I have to learn all the music before next week," Arthur rolled his eyes.

"I'll still be playing guitar with you until you are confident enough to do it yourself," Francis smiled, looking around the room. "This is quite different from what I expected."

"You've seen it before," Arthur glared at him.

"I was too busy looking after a certain drunk to properly look. I didn't expect you to be into embroidery... it does not go with your punk image."

"Oy, put that down," Arthur grabbed the embroidery hoop off Francis and put it back where it belonged. "Just because I sew doesn't make me any less of a punk."

"I didn't say it did. I just didn't expect your room to be so clean and... gentlemanly."

Arthur was glad Francis hadn't said nerdy as his eyes settled on the vast collection of fantasy novels behind a few Star Wars figures. "Yes, well, you're not here to sightsee."

"No, I'm not," Francis conceded, getting his guitar out from where he'd placed his case. He then sat down on Arthur's bed and indicated for Arthur to do the same. "Let's go through the music together."

Trying not to blush a little, Arthur picked up his own guitar and sat beside Francis. He made sure to leave a good gap between them so there was no contact. He just needed to act like they normally would.

They started with the easiest song, which Arthur had already practiced and gotten through well enough. It was mostly just Francis pointing out how he'd imagined it being played or

telling him what emotion he wanted conveyed, rather than technical help. Arthur was better than Francis at the guitar when it came to how to play.

They got through all the music with just a bit of time to spare. Arthur had been so engrossed in playing that he hadn't noticed that Francis had edged closer each time he'd offered a tip or changed Arthur's position. Now they were sitting right next to each other, legs touching and Francis' arm resting behind him. It occasionally brushed his back but couldn't quite be counted as being around him.

Arthur didn't know what to do. He didn't really mind it and, honestly, didn't want to protest. But that's what he would normally do. He doubted Francis even noticed. He was a flirt by nature so it was probably an instinct to him at this point.

"Do you need to do anything before we leave, mon lapin?" Francis leaned towards Arthur, hand moving to rest on his knee.

"Get your hand of my appendage, you pervert!" Arthur hit his hand away and jumped onto his feet, moving far from the bed.

"Excusez-moi," Francis put his hands up. "I didn't know you disliked people touching your knees so much."

"Just don't do it again," Arthur snapped, deciding not to sit down. Maybe that had been a bit of an overreaction. While calling Francis a pervert was nothing out of the ordinary, literally jumping up when he touched him was. Francis was a very touchy person after all – normally Arthur would just hit his hand away.

"I won't."

"Good. I need to get changed before we leave, so get out."

Francis raised an eyebrow but silently did what he was told, after packing up his guitar. Arthur let out a slight sigh of relief as the door closed behind him and started looking through his drawers for suitable clothes.

He just hoped it got easier to deal with his feelings as time went on.

Francis wasn't sure why he still attended his French lectures, especially considering how late they ran. At least he'd been able to spend the particularly dull one thinking over what had been on his mind since last Thursday.

Arthur.

He had been so close to making a move. Slowly getting nearer to him while the two of them were playing guitar. If the Englishman had noticed he hadn't said anything. Francis had taken that as a good sign. Then he had messed it up by moving too fast (even though it had been hardly anything). Maybe he'd read things wrong and Arthur had no interest in him.

Lost in his own thoughts Francis didn't notice Gilbert until his friend practically tripped him over.

"Oh, bonjour, Gil. Where are you heading?"

"The library."

"I'm quite surprised that you're going to a library," Francis teased his friend as the two began to walk together. "It's quite unlike you."

"I do occasionally study," Gilbert retorted. "I'm just mostly too awesome to."

Francis laughed. He wished he could have the confidence that Gilbert had (how he was still passing his course, though, Francis didn't know). He was just glad that being in the band actually helped with one of his courses (music) and that he was fluent in the other already (French). It made his life easier. "Is it something for History? Or first year French... because I'm sure Mathieu would help you learn that."

"It's for history," Gilbert elbowed him for the suggestive tone he used at the end. "Matthew is already helping me with French, anyway."

"I imagine it is hard for a German to speak, what with it being the language of romance."

"What are you implying by that?"

"Oh, nothing more than that you're all romantically stunted." Francis gave a charming smile.

Gilbert was about to respond with something equally scathing (or a punch, Francis didn't know) but they both stopped talking as they heard a familiar quiet voice. A distressed, familiar voice.

"I just need to go to the library, could you please let me past," Matthew mumbled.

"We've already given our price for that," a female voice sneered.

"It would just be easier to give in, da?" Another, male voice.

Francis and Gilbert exchanged looks before rounding the corner quickly. Matthew was being crowded by two blondes, the man just a bit taller than him but with a much stronger build. It was clear that the conversation was anything but friendly.

"Oh, Mathieu, fancy seeing you here," Francis said loudly as Gilbert audibly cracked his knuckles. The other two took a step back from Matthew. The girl looked ready to fight them, even though she was quite short. The man gave them a calculating look before saying something in another language to her that seemed to make her back off.

"See you again, Matthew," the man smiled before they walked away from the library.

"That won't be necessary, fuck off!" Gilbert shouted after them, putting a protective arm around Matthew. He looked a bit shaken but relieved that they'd both appeared before

anything worse had happened.

“How about we go into the library café and sit?” Francis suggested softly. Matthew nodded in agreement. It was a bit of a pain to get them in, as Gilbert refused to let go of Matthew, but soon enough they made it to a small table.

Francis went and ordered for them all, knowing that there would be no way to separate the two when Gilbert got like this. He was a little bit overprotective. Matthew didn’t seem to mind and Francis was glad his cousin had someone like that with him, really.

“So, who was that?” Francis asked after a giving Matthew some silence to burrow into Gilbert’s side.

“Ivan and his sister Natalya,” Matthew replied softly. “They went to the same high school as I did.”

“I take it you didn’t get along?”

Matthew shook his head. “Him and Al were sort of rivals. He didn’t like me because of that.”

“And he bullied you,” Francis guessed.

“Yes.”

“If I ever see him again I’m going to beat him into the ground,” Gilbert ground out, arm tightening around Matthew.

“Please don’t, that will only make it worse,” Matthew’s tone turned slightly pleading. “I don’t want you to get into trouble.”

“Fine,” Gilbert muttered. “But I can’t be held accountable if he does anything to you.”

“Let’s hope he doesn’t,” Francis put in. “But if you see him again, text one of us. Or Tonio... or even Al, though he’s a bit useless.”

“I will.”

Francis nodded, ready to let the subject go (it wasn’t ever nice to bring back school memories). Then he remembered something. “Didn’t Arthur go to the same school as you? Did Ivan treat him the same as you?”

“I think so,” Matthew sighed softly. “They had a class together and Ivan was never nice to him. Arthur wouldn’t talk about it, though.”

That just concerned Francis. He just hoped this was the only time they’d see Ivan – after all they’d gone most of the year without meeting him until now.

It was full of nerves, rather than excitement, that Arthur entered their normal bar that Thursday. Today was the first day he would be playing with the Bad Touch (formerly with Trio on the end). He wouldn't play the whole thing, only joining half way through, but that didn't make it any less nerve wracking.

His first point of call was the bar. Berwald gave him a disapproving look but still poured him the beer he ordered. He knocked it back and was about to order another when someone grabbed his arm and tugged him away.

"Don't get drunk before your first performance," Elizabeta shooed him into their normal booth.

"I'm just planning to get tipsy," Arthur frowned, but sat down at her terrifying glare. "It'll help with my confidence."

"You'll be fine. Don't you guys agree?" Her look to Mikkell and Lukas pulled them out of whatever weirdly romantic argument they were having.

"Yeah, you'll do great!" Mikkell added hitting Arthur on the back, hard, to the loud speech. It didn't help.

"It can't be worse than the test we sat yesterday," Lukas shrugged. That Arthur appreciated. He'd known Lukas long enough to know that was him showing support.

"See, the masses have spoken," Elizabeta smiled. "No reason to worry now!"

"Right... I still think a drink would help."

"You can have plenty afterwards. Francis announced he'd be buying for everyone before you arrived, so you can get drunk enough to forget if you fuck up."

"Thanks, Liz, you always know exactly what to say to make me feel better," Arthur replied sarcastically.

"That's why we're friends, isn't it?"

Arthur had to say he was grateful for her company, as much as she was making jibes at him while trying to support him. When the original trio went on she didn't even go up to dance and instead stayed with him until he had to get ready. He was too nervous to dance but was glad someone was with him.

When he got onto the stage he almost forgot how to hold a guitar never mind how to play it. It took Francis covering the first few bars and Gilbert bumping into him while jumping around to snap him out of it.

It was easy once he started playing. He let the music take over, the beat of the drums keeping him in time and Francis' voice giving the emotion. Each time he slipped Gilbert would cover with improvised bass or do something ridiculous on the stage. It was thrilling and soon he was getting into it, not just standing like an expressionless statue as he played.

This was what he'd always dreamed of when he'd gotten into the punk scene.

It was over far too quickly. Arthur very gratefully took the drink that was offered to him as he got off the stage, face flushed from the effort of playing. He didn't realise it was alcoholic until he'd chugged it. Ah well. It gave a nice buzz to continue the high of playing.

He was on his way to join his friends when Francis interrupted him, looking unfairly attractive and well put together for someone who had just sung for an hour.

"Let me get you a drink, mon cher."

Arthur didn't argue as Francis led him to the bar, ordering them cocktails. He was in too good of a mood to even complain about the arm loosely draped around his shoulder. He might as well go with it. The night had been so great so far and there was no point in ruining it.

"Dance with me," Francis said before Arthur could go off when they finished their drinks.

"Just this once, frog," Arthur replied though his tone didn't have the normal bite to it. He didn't feel like arguing. The alcohol was softening him, that must be it.

"I'm honoured," Francis laughed, taking Arthur's hand and leading him into the mass of moving bodies. Arthur liked his laugh when it was genuine. He disliked the airy thing he had when flirting with others, but when he relaxed it was nice.

"You should be."

They didn't say anything more, just dancing with their bodies a bit too close for Arthur's comfort. The doubts began to filter into his mind but he pushed them away. They could be saved for another day. No point in questioning why Francis was doing this right now.

Arthur lost track of time as they danced, all the songs mashing into one. He was still disappointed when Francis led them out of a crowd and out the back door. He gave him a confused look. Why had they gone outside when they weren't leaving?

"I need a smoke," the Frenchman shrugged. "I'm sure some fresh air will do you good."

Arthur couldn't deny that. It had been quite hot inside, something he'd noticed more than normal due to how sweaty he'd gotten on stage. It wasn't exactly attractive. He was glad that he'd dressed lightly.

While Francis lit a cigarette, Arthur moved to lean against the wall as his mind buzzed with thoughts again. Why had Francis latched onto him since they'd finished playing? Maybe it was just to congratulate him on joining the band. But Arthur was sure Liz had said about him offering to buy free drinks for everyone. He hadn't seen that happen yet.

"What are you thinking about?" Francis' voice came from far too close. Arthur turned to find him standing next to him, cigarette almost finished.

"Nothing much," Arthur shrugged. "Just how much I enjoyed playing tonight."

“I’m glad,” Francis grinned, one that lit up his entire face. Arthur blushed just a little. It wasn’t his fault Francis looked so good. “You’re a great addition to the band.”

“Thank you.” Arthur was ashamed of the fact that he stammered that out and blushed more. He wasn’t used to compliments.

Francis just smiled more rather than smirking as he normally would. He dropped the almost finished cigarette on the ground and put it out with his foot. Then he turned to rest one hand on Arthur’s shoulder, the other against the wall essentially pinning him to it.

“What are you doing?” Arthur squeaked at the sudden contact, before glaring at him but not pushing him away. He wanted to because he knew this was just a prank, or Francis seeing him as someone else to sleep with and discard. But maybe that was what he needed to get over his ridiculous crush.

“I’m making a move on you, mon cher.” Francis’ hand moved to his chin, tilting it up as he leaned forward and captured Arthur’s lips in a kiss. It was a bit messy, because Arthur hadn’t kissed in so long, but still felt so nice.

Then he realised what he was doing and who he was kissing. He pushed Francis away and tried to ignore the momentary hurt in those perfect blue eyes.

He was just faking it anyway.

“I won’t be another one of your flings,” he spat out, looking away for fear that he may give away how he felt. He feared how Francis may react.

“You think that’s what this is? Oh, mon coeur, je veux être avec toi.”

“I don’t speak frog,” Arthur bit his lip to stop the tears he felt threatening. Damn alcohol. It didn’t help that Francis had suddenly switched to French, which he didn’t understand. Maybe it was to offend him.

“Sorry,” Francis’ hand found his chin again and gently turned his face so that they were looking at each other. The same hand wiped away the tears that had began to form. Arthur forced himself to look at Francis – noticed how flustered he looked, how soft his expression was. His eyes held none of the disdain Arthur had expected.

It was almost like he couldn’t find the words for what he wanted to say.

Eventually he did. “I want to date you, Arthur.”

“You want to date me?”

“That is what I said, no?” There was some part of the normal Francis there in the way his lips curved into a slight smirk. It made Arthur feel more comfortable, but no less confused.

“But why would you want to date me? I’m boring, I embroider in my free time for god’s sake, you could do so much better. I mean look at my eyebrows, I’m-”

Francis cut him off with a finger to his lips. “I like you for all of that. I don’t care if you think I could do better. I don’t want anyone else, I just want you.”

Now Arthur was at a loss for words. Francis meant it? There was no denying how genuine his words and expression were. He couldn’t lie to himself about that. Now he didn’t know what to do. He’d never imagined this being a possibility. In every scenario he’d imagine his crush had been unrequited.

“I always knew that I could make you speechless,” Francis chuckled, earning a half-hearted glare. Arthur didn’t get a chance to give a sarcastic response, to retreat into sharp comments, before he continued. “Arthur, will you be my boyfriend?”

“Yes.” Arthur didn’t hesitate this time. He didn’t need convincing that this was real, not anymore. “Yes, I will be.”

This time he didn’t push Francis away as he leaned in for another kiss, even sweeter than the last.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!