

## Merry Christmas Your Arse

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/21677644) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/21677644>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/F</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Gideon the Ninth - Tamsyn Muir</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Gideon Nav/Harrowhark Nonagesimus</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Gideon Nav</a> , <a href="#">Harrowhark Nonagesimus</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Alternate Universe - Modern Setting</a> , <a href="#">Christmas</a> , <a href="#">the christmas store au</a> , <a href="#">no one asked for</a> , <a href="#">Bickering</a> , <a href="#">Christmas Music</a> , <a href="#">and hatred of the little drummer boy</a> , <a href="#">no actual drummer boys were harmed in the making of this fic</a> , <a href="#">Enemies to Friends to Lovers</a> , <a href="#">kisses under mistletoe</a> , <a href="#">Dialogue Heavy</a> , <a href="#">harrowhark nonagesimus apparently wants to fuck christmas</a> , <a href="#">ok not really</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-12-05 Words: 3,951 Chapters: 1/1

# Merry Christmas Your Arse

by [nutmeag83](#)

## Summary

Gideon and Harrow work in Harrow's parents' Christmas store. Here's a year of bickering conversations they have about the holidays.

## Notes

Title comes from “A Fairytale of New York” by the Pogues.

I can't *not* write a Christmas-themed fic. I apologize to any non-Christmas celebrators (I do mention Gideon looking forward to a Hanukkah celebration at least). Please, please share your own non-Christmas holiday fics. I want to read them all!

Not beta'd. All the betas have begun their winter hibernation.

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

## January

“I fucking hate Christmas.”

Harrow said this with her head shoved halfway in the cupboard in search of the specific ornament a customer had demanded, but Gideon heard her anyway. She snickered, then almost choked on her sandwich. After a short coughing fit, she replied.

“Maybe think about a change in employment then. You work in a *Christmas shop*.”

Harrow sneered as she emerged slightly dusty, her short black hair ruffled. “I don’t exactly have a choice, do I?”

“Just because your parents own a Christmas store doesn’t mean you have to work here. My foster dad owns a plumbing business, but you don’t see me crouching over toilets with buttercrack syndrome.”

“Ewww.”

“You know what I mean. I’m just saying, they’re not *forcing* you to work here.” She paused. “*Are* they?”

Harrow’s pursed lips made her chin look pointier than usual. “No, you imbecile. But I needed a job, and I’m already familiar with how things work here. It makes sense.”

“Even though you’re the worst ornament salesperson in the entire world. Would it hurt you to not frown at the customers?”

With a roll of her eyes and a sigh, the Queen of Darkness stomped out of the room, leaving Gideon to eat the rest of her lunch in peace.

She wasn’t sure that peace suited her.

## March

“If I have to hear ‘The Little Drummer Boy’ one more time, I will defenestrate myself.”

“You won’t do much damage from the ground floor, oh Penumbral Lady,” Gideon replied distractedly. She cocked her head and assessed the candle display in front of her. “Does the left side look crooked to you?”

“Yes.”

“You didn’t even look! Come on, Harrow. This has to look nice, and I am shit at artsy things.”

Harrow raised her head from where it was laying on her arms, presumably attempting to hide away from the Christmas explosion around them. “It’s still crooked. Move the bottom three

on the left side two centimeters forward.

Gideon closed an eye and stared at the display again. She sighed. “You’re right.”

The choked noise that emanated from her grumpy coworker had her glancing her way. Harrow stared at her with wide eyes.

“What?” Gideon asked as she carefully pushed the necessary candles into place, humming happily with the final product.

“In the six months we’ve worked together, you’ve never once said I’m right. Scratch that. In the twelve years we’ve known each other, you’ve never said I’m right.”

Gideon shrugged. “I guess the Chr–”

“If you mention Christmas spirit, I will defenestrate *you*.”

“You scumbag, you maggot / You cheap lousy faggot / Happy Christmas, your arse / I pray God it's our last,” Gideon sang offkey but with great spirit.

“You can’t say faggot, Griddle.”

“I’m gay, so I’m pretty sure I can.”

“It’s gross.”

“It’s a weirdly sweet song!”

“You’re terrible, and so is that song.”

“You love it and you love me.” Gideon galumphed over to Harrow, giving her a half hug-half noogie.

Harrow wriggled out from under the onslaught. “Fuck you, Nav.”

“It’s less fun with just me. Offering to participate?” Gideon wiggled her eyebrows suggestively, knowing Harrow would hate it (and definitely for no other reason).

“I hate you so much.”

“I’m okay with hate sex.”

“What is wrong with you?”

“Too many things to list ...”

## **July**

“Fuck Christmas in July.”

“You mention fucking Christmas *a lot*. Is this a kink?”

Harrow scrubbed through her hair, leaving it sticking up and oddly endearing. Gideon buried the thought and continued the conversation. “It *is* insane how many people came out today. I love Christmas. Hell, I adore it. But this is a bit much.”

The two women surveyed the destruction of a post-sale day Christmas shop. They’d done their best to clean up after customers throughout the day, but with so many people coming through as part of the Christmas in July block party, they hadn’t been able to keep up. Gideon’s feet were killing her, and she had scratches up both arms from digging through the back room for inventory to replace what they’d sold. Along with Harrow’s wild hair, her eyes were bloodshot and she had fake snow on her nose. Gideon had to stuff the word “adorable” where she’d buried “endearing,” hoping both would die without sunlight.

“Wow, the great Gideon Nav admits Christmas is a bit much. Where’s the calendar? I need to write this down.” Harrow crossed to the display that had been inflicted with the most Christmas fervor and started fixing it. Gideon started on another one nearby.

“I meant the levels people went to today for an out-of-season celebration. Christmas itself is still amazing.”

“I don’t get it. It’s not like you’ve ever had a great Christmas. How can you love it so much?”

Harrow said the words offhandedly, with no vitriol, but they still hurt Gideon. It was true she’d been dealt a shitty hand, an orphan from birth, living with distant relatives who hated her until she was five, and then being bounced from foster home to orphanage to foster home.

Even when her foster families hadn’t been terrible, they weren’t exactly rolling in dough, so Christmases weren’t gift-filled, idealic celebrations. She got along pretty well with her last foster family—she’d aged out of the system a few months back—and still hung out with them, so she was actually looking forward to celebrating Hanukkah with them this year. Despite not being familiar with the holiday trappings herself, it was still likely to be the most normal celebration she’d ever had. She made a mental note to remember to look through the shop’s Hanukkah inventory to see if there was anything she could buy to contribute to the family celebration.

Gideon shrugged and tried to concentrate on cleaning rather than her feelings. “Doesn’t make Christmas any less pretty. I love the colors and the lights, the *gayly* wrapped presents and gingerbread and eggnog. Plus,” she hoped her tone wasn’t too obviously fake casual, “sometimes you long for something you’ve never had. All of you normal kids who had normal childhoods with loving families who could afford real gifts, it’s all just ... normal to you. But to someone who has never experienced it, it’s ... magical and shit.”

It was too quiet in the now-empty shop. The bustle of customers long gone. But on top of the comparison from the rowdiness of earlier in the day, now even the sounds of Harrow tidying were gone. Gideon dared a quick glance, then did a double take. Her enemy-turned-coworker-turned-something-not-quite-friend stood stock still, a wrinkle between her eyes, brackets of white around the corners of her mouth, and fingers clenched in fists.

She’d never seen Harrow look like this before, and she didn’t like it. Harrow had always hated her, and the feeling had been half mutual for most of their growing-up years. They’d

sniped at each other since they'd been sat next to each other the first day of school, and their last names had kept them in close proximity alphabet-wise since then, allowing them to butt heads on many occasions. It wasn't until they started working together that Gideon had let go of what anger she had felt towards Harrow. Now she saw her as prickly, unable to easily make friends, and therefore someone who pushed others away to protect herself. But Gideon saw how she acted with her parents, and with her little cousins who visited the shop. She had even softened to Gideon during the months they'd worked together, though probably more out of sheer exhaustion from dealing with her constantly than any real feelings of warmth.

But this ... this was. Pity. And pity was something Gideon Nav did not need. She'd seen her fair share of pitying looks as an orphan. It made her angry for some reason she couldn't name.

"Don't feel sorry for me Nonagesimus. I'm doing just fine," she spat. "I don't need your pitying looks. I don't need your helping hand. In fact, I don't need you at all. I don't need anyone." She whirled to cross to the furthest side away from Harrow. For just a moment, she froze at Harrow's parting volley.

"As if, Griddle. I don't pity you. I don't intend to help you at all. In fact, most of the time, I don't even think about you."

They had spent most of their lives fighting with each other. But for the first time, it actually hurt.

## **August**

A steaming mug was thrust under her nose as soon as Gideon's sneezing fit had ended. She jerked her head back in surprise but leaned back in when she whiffed the soothing aroma emanating from the mug. Lavender, lemon, and honey, her favorite when she was feeling ill.

"Go home before you infect the customers." Harrow seemed to be trying for a sneer, but she looked slightly concerned as well.

In the month since their last fight, they hadn't said more than three words to each other in a given day. Gideon hadn't known how to end the silence, so she had let it continue unending. Not that it mattered as far as work was concerning. Knowing each other for so long, they scarcely needed to look at the other to get the point across. Plus, Harrow's mom had been witness to years of group projects ending badly and had kept them separated as much as possible, unwilling to start World War III in her beloved shop.

They spent most of their time ignoring or scowling at each other, only speaking when completely necessary. So why was Harrow breaking the silence now? If she was tired of Gideon's germs, she could have asked her mom to send Gideon home.

"I'm fine," Gideon replied, warily taking the mug and wiping at her nose with her free arm.

Harrow grimaced and pulled a tissue from a nearby box. "This is disgusting. No one comes to a Christmas shop to buy ornaments covered in snot."

“Well that’s a lovely picture to paint,” Gideon growled, her hoarse voice not allowing anything softer, as she took the proffered tissue.

“The same could be said of you. My mother said she can take the rest of your shift. Get some sleep and vitamin C, Nav.”

“You’re not my boss, *Nonagesimus*. It’s just a minor cold. I can work.”

“And as I said before, you’re infecting the customers and putting them off Christmas completely.”

“You should be cheering for me. Sounds like a world you’d love to live in, with no customers and no Christmas.”

Harrow sighed. “You’ve made it through half your shift. My father said we can pay you for a full one. You won’t be destitute if you go home now, okay?”

Gideon paused in wiping her nose. “You asked your dad to pay me for a full shift so I’d leave.”

“You look disgusting, and I knew you wouldn’t leave if it meant losing money. I’m doing myself a favor. Your nose is grossing me out.”

Without her consent, Gideon’s mouth ticked up in the corner. She could tease Harrow for her softening attitude, but that was likely to cause another fight, and she was far too tired to deal with that. Not to mention she was tired of their recent silence in general. She missed their normal bickering—the tiffs over which lights were best (Gideon of course preferred cheerful colored lights, while dull Harrow favored white-only ones), the fights over who got to choose the music playlist, Harrow’s bossiness over displays. Gideon had come to realize they’d never really hated each other, they’d just pretended to because fighting was more fun. At least it was for her.

She sighed, trying to look annoyed. “Fine. But only because the customers don’t deserve my icky germs.”

“Thank God.”

“But I’ll be back tomorrow.” She narrowed her eyes and pointed threateningly. Harrow just rolled her eyes.

As she headed for the door after gathering her things, she saluted Harrow, unable to leave things on too positive of a note, despite being glad that they seemed back to normal. “I think your heart grew half a size today, my Christmas Grinch.”

Harrow scowled. “Bring that mug back tomorrow, fucker. It’s not yours to keep.”

Gideon just winked and walked out the door.

**September**

It took four songs for Harrow to realize Gideon hadn't turned on her normal cheerful Christmas playlist.

"What is this?" Harrow asked, her gaze suspicious as she cocked her head to listen to the music piping from the store's speakers. "It's not Christmas music."

"It kind of is," Gideon replied. "Or, at least, it's the less Christmassy songs from Christmas albums."

"Why?" Harrow narrowed her eyes.

Gideon tried to shrug nonchalantly. "Even I get tired of the usual Christmas music after a year and a half of it on constant repeat." What she didn't explain was that she had wanted to do something for Harrow, since she'd been the one to take the first step in getting their relationship back on its regular footing, but knew her prickly frenemy wouldn't accept any sort of normal gift, especially not from Gideon. And she really was getting a bit tired of Christmas music.

"Oh."

Harrow stared for another thirty seconds, then went back to stocking menorahs.

Gideon took it as a win.

## **November**

"What's your favorite Christmas song?" Gideon asked one slow afternoon. There had been a dearth of customers all day because of their current rainy weather, and she'd already finished restocking and dusting. Now there was nothing to do except wait for someone to need Christmas things who was willing to brave a torrential downpour. She slouched against the counter while Harrow sat on the stool behind it, looking likewise bored. At least, she had looked bored until Gideon asked her question. Now she looked confused.

"What kind of question is that? You know I hate Christmas."

"Yeah, well you also want to fuck it, so ..."

Harrow rolled her eyes. "Fuck you."

"You keep offering, but I see no follow through," Gideon teased. "But seriously, there has to be at least one Christmas song you don't hate. I know it's not 'Fairytale in New York' or 'The Little Drummer Boy.'"

Apparently just as bored as Gideon, Harrow seemed to give the question real thought. "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," she finally said. "The version from the movie."

"Huh? What movie?"

Harrow's eyes grew three sizes. "What. Movie. Gideon Nav, you are a Christmas fiend, but you've never seen *Meet Me in St. Louis*?" She looked entirely too distressed by this idea.



Looking around, she pulled her tablet out from under the counter, setting it up and motioning Gideon to the stool beside her.

“I know the song. Judy Garland, right? So it’s from a movie?” Harrow nodded and waved again to the seat.

Gideon tentatively took her post, but just as the movie was starting up, Harrow made a soft “oh!” and jumped up to hurry to the back room. She emerged a few minutes later, proudly carrying two steaming mugs. She shoved one in Gideon’s face, almost slopping hot liquid over the side and allowing Gideon to catch a whiff of the peppermint tea blend she and Mrs. N. both loved. Despite the disgust she constantly proclaimed for the drink, Harrow’s mug also contained the same blend. Gideon smirked but said nothing, instead deciding to comment on the film itself.

“This doesn’t look like a Christmas film.” She gestured at the opening scene on the screen.

Harrow gusted a loud sigh. “It’s a vignette piece, covering a year in the life of the family. Christmas is only one small part.”

“Well that at least makes a little more sense. I can’t imagine you liking a whole movie about Christmas.”

Harrow hushed her, her eyes glued on the tiny screen in front of them.

Gideon dutifully shut up and sipped her tea, but her eyes weren’t on the screen. Instead, they were on the complex young woman next to her.

## **December**

The employees from the shop sat around a table, telling stories and laughing as the Nonagesimuses served their yearly Christmas meal. Queen’s “A Winter’s Tale,” played quietly in the background, and there was a cheery tree in the corner of the Nonagesimus’s living room. It was lively and festive and everything Gideon loved about holidays. The year before had been her first time being a part of such a celebration, and she’d been looking forward to this one for three months. She’d done her share of storytelling earlier in the meal, but now she was quiet, distracted by the woman in black who sat two chairs down and was also keeping silent.

Not that Harrow’s silence was a surprise. She still didn’t get along too well with anyone else in the store, apart from, weirdly enough, Gideon herself. Their Christmas movie watching had continued, with Gideon mentioning that her favorite was *Die Hard*, which had confounded Harrow so much that Gideon said she had to watch it. From there, they’d continued through the classics, with Harrow bellyaching that they were too saccharine for her tastes, though she hadn’t minded the zombie Christmas musical they’d watched the week before.

With the films as a bonding tool, they’d finally progressed from frenemies to tentative friends, though they still bickered. Gideon hoped that was always a part of their dynamic. Saccharine didn’t fit either of them, despite Gideon’s own love of all things Christmas. Still,

she wondered if there could be something more between them. The way their glances caught sometimes ... She *thought* there was something there. But how did one bring that up with their ex-enemy?

Mr. N. guffawed at something one of the others said, and Harrow rose discretely from her chair and left the room. Curious, Gideon followed. Grabbing both their jackets, she saw Harrow slip out to the front porch.

She was staring at the lights on the house across the street when Gideon stumbled out the door, disoriented by the wine she wasn't used to drinking. She shrugged on her jacket and handed Harrow hers. She took it but didn't give a thank you or otherwise acknowledge Gideon's presence. No matter. She was too used to Harrow's moods to be bothered by the lack of speaking.

After ten minutes of not talking—it couldn't be called silence because one of the neighbors had "The Little Drummer Boy" playing on repeat with lights that flashed in time. Even Gideon found that annoying—Harrow said softly, "My grandmother died four years ago today."

"Oh." Gideon didn't know what else to say. She hadn't exactly had family that she could mourn. She'd never known her parents, and the relatives who had kept her when she was small had been complete assholes. So, she just stood there dumbly, hoping Harrow would keep going. Fortunately, she did.

"Stroke. She was only sixty-eight. She was healthy. Then one day, she collapsed. She never woke again."

Gideon shuffled a little closer, leaning her shoulder against Harrow's in what she hoped was a supportive way.

"She loved Christmas even more than my parents. She's the one who opened our store. Forty-two years ago."

Beginning to understand things, Gideon paused, then dared to ask. "She loved *Meet Me in St. Louis*, didn't she?"

Harrow nodded, mostly hiding the tremble in her chin. Gideon looked away.

"I loved Christmas too, when she was still around."

Recalling a memory of a pint-sized Harrow drawing Christmas trees on her homework for three months straight, Gideon hummed. "Oh yeah. I'd forgotten."

"Just like my parents seem to have forgotten today's date."

Gideon whipped her gaze back to Harrow. "No. Of course not. It's just how things worked out with everyone's schedules. They wouldn't forget—"

"They haven't mentioned Nan all day. They forgot."

Gideon bit her lip. She couldn't say for sure that Harrow's parents hadn't forgotten, but she wanted to comfort her friend in some way.

"Sometimes it's hard for people to talk about loved ones they've lost."

Harrow sighed and gave a tiny shrug but said nothing.

Hit with an idea, Gideon said "wait here," then rushed back into the house. When she returned mere moments later with their wine glasses, she caught Harrow hastily wiping tears from her cheeks. She turned away slightly, until Gideon bumped her shoulder and offered up a glass. She frowned but took it.

Gideon raised her own glass and waited for Harrow to do the same. After both were in the air, she cleared her throat. "To Harrow's Nan, who must have been a super awesome lady, given she opened a Christmas shop."

Harrow's glass trembled slightly, but she kept it up and nodded.

"To a woman who shared her love for the holidays with her family and customers, who taught Harrow to at least love the best Christmas movies, even if most of them are black and white or technicolor."

Harrow's shoulder's shook, and Gideon worried until she saw that she was fighting a smile. So, she continued.

"To a woman who must have been strong and smart and someone I probably would have loved to know."

"She would have liked your stupid sense of humor," Harrow murmured.

Gideon gave a dramatic gasp. "Is that any way to talk about your dearly beloved grandmother, Nonagesimus?"

"She never took anything too seriously."

"Well then, to the woman who never took things too seriously." She shifted her glass over to meet Harrow's. They clinked musically, and both drank.

It was quiet again, apart from the too repetitive "rump-a-pum-pums" drifting from down street. Unable to take the serious silence, Gideon leaned further into Harrow's shoulder and stage-whispered, "Do you think we'd get arrested for destroying that sound system?"

Harrow gave a watery chuckle. "Oh my god, can we please? It's been driving me batty for a *month*."

"Let's do it."

\*\*\*

When they returned to the table ten minutes later, stupid song box smashed to pieces and the two of them giggling like mad, Mr. N. gave them a suspicious glare, but said nothing. Gideon looked over to her co-conspirator now seated next to her to see her face glowing with wine and mischief. Paired with the dark red lipstick, she looked—dare she say—kissable. Feeling brave, she grabbed the mistletoe that was part of the table’s centerpiece and held it over her head and raised an eyebrow.

Harrow’s face went slack, then she flushed further. She leaned in just a little. Gideon, taking that as a yes to her tacit question, closed the remaining distance. There were no fireworks, but she still couldn’t wait for a second kiss. Harrow, biting her lip, seemed to feel the same as she pushed her way back in, and this time they only parted when a someone pulled Christmas cracker. They both jumped and backed away, surprised to find the whole table watching them.

Finally, it was Mr. N. who proclaimed, “It’s about time,” and the others erupted into clapping and whistling.

Harrow, her face now resembling a tomato, buried her face in Gideon’s shoulder and muttered something unintelligible.

“What?”

“Merry Christmas your arse,” she ground out.

Gideon guffawed, remembering Harrow’s sour face when they’d discussed the song so many months before.

“You love it.” She nosed into Harrow’s hair, loving the way it tickled her face, and put an arm around her shoulder.

Harrow straightened and let out a dramatic sigh but didn’t attempt to wiggle out of the embrace. “Maybe it’s not as bad as I’ve made it out to be.”

“I knew you’d come around. Merry Christmas, you cheap lousy f—”

“Do you want this to be the shortest-lived relationship ever?”

Somehow, Gideon wasn’t worried about that happening.

## End Notes

I hope you enjoyed my silly little story. I adore Christmas (though not as much as my neighbors who have had their Christmas tree lit up in their house since about November 5th. WTAF people?) and needed more Gideon/Harrow fluff in my life, so here we are. Happy holidays to you all!

You can come babble excitedly at me on Tumblr [@vateacancameos](#) or I'm sometimes found lurking on the locked tomb discord as nutmeag sixième.

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