

If you need me let me know, I've been waiting

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by [puff_the_magic_dragon](#)

Summary

Five times Harry and Carlos *almost* have a moment and one time they do. But this time make it Harry's POV.

Companion fic to *It's you and I and the space between us*.

Notes

Helloooo my friends!

This fic is, as stated above, a companion fic to 'It's you and I and the space between us' by Hotwheels_kin. So to start this off, I *highly* suggest you go over there and read that one first, if you haven't yet, because it's great.

A *massive* thank you to Hotwheels for not only beta-ing this but letting me write it in the first place, you're ifc was so good I couldn't help myself :)))

Love Ya B.

Enjoy the fic, y'all

- Inspired by [It's you and I and the space between us](#) by [vyxcordia](#)

I.

Harry Hook laughed loudly as he met Gil's strike dead on, the sound of it intertwining with the crash of metal on metal, just as he'd always known it.

They had been at Auradon Prep for a while now, but it had yet to feel comfortable to Harry. It was too claustrophobic, too stuffy. Harry needed to feel free; to smell the salt in the air; to taste the dirty, brackish water that surrounded the Isle. He had none of that in Auradon. The only time Harry felt truly at home these days was when he had a broadsword in hand, sweat dripping into his eyes as he dueled his friends. Or when he was teasing a certain freckle-faced VK just like he always had back on the Isle, when they were kids and all there was to life was finding your next meal and avoiding the wrath of your parents.

Harry's mind caught on the thought of Carlos, remembering him as a kid, terrified and shaking every time Harry got close.

Even that had changed though. Carlos was less scared, more sure of himself and less easy to spook. He intrigued Harry in a way he hadn't back then. In a way Harry wished he wouldn't. Carlos had been on his mind far too often lately and Harry didn't exactly appreciate it.

Mind distracted, Harry was caught off guard as Gil swiped down with his sword, coming back to himself just in time to raise his hook and catch the blow. Harry needed to focus or he was going to lose his head, and he liked his head very much where it was. He let Gil land a few more strikes before switching to offense, cackling as Gil struggled to keep up with his frenzied slashes, the other boy quite surprised in his abrupt change in tactics.

Their swords clashed loudly as Harry swung hard. Gil caught it but just barely and, losing his balance in an attempt to keep up, he fell back landing on the floor with a *thud*. Harry nearly doubled over with laughter.

"Hey!" A voice yelled from behind him. Harry swung around, lifting his sword level with the speaker's neck. He chastised himself for not hearing the door open, for being too distracted to hear the footsteps. This never would have happened back on the Isle. If it had Harry would have been dead before he got the chance to draw his sword. Harry Hook was getting rusty.

"Yer interruptin' our little practice session." Harry growled, recovering quickly. A grin spread across his lips as he saw that scared look on Chad's face. The princeling laughed, trying to cover his fear, and pushed the sword away from his throat with a gloved hand.

"You're interrupting our big practice session."

Harry narrowed his eyes, his gaze not leaving Chad's even as he clocked the team behind him. He wondered what they'd do if he advanced on their friend.

"Hey, let's not." A new voice spoke. Harry knew who it was even before the pup stepped between them. Carlos, ever the dog whisperer, must have seen Harry's hackles raise, and decided to take it upon himself to keep his teammate safe.

But, as Carlos lifted a hand until it hovered right over Harry's chest, eyes gazing up at him with a look that *begged* Harry not to do anything... rash, Harry couldn't help but think that maybe the pup was trying to keep *Harry* safe from the princeling's daddy's wrath.

Godmother knows that Harry would be booted from Auradon Prep without a second thought if it kept the wannabe king happy.

Carlos let out a breath as Harry let his sword arm drop, and looked over his shoulder at Chad.

"There's room for both of us to practice." Carlos said, this time to Chad, leaving no room for argument. Chad, of course, tried to argue anyway.

"What, are we just going to let anyone join Tourney because they won't get out of our gym?" He whined, eyes turning to Carlos now that Harry wasn't an active threat. Carlos' eyes hardened at the suggestion that Harry and Gil were less than, but his posture stayed relaxed. *'No cowering anymore.'* Harry thought as Carlos shrugged.

"Harry and Gil are plenty good enough to join Tourney. I don't love to admit it, but they both kicked my butt in sword fights back on the Isle." Carlos said, not backing down. Harry frowned at the memory. He didn't like to be reminded about when he and Carlos were at each other's throats. He preferred to think of them as hesitant friends, not enemies. Anymore.

"It's true, I was there. Carlos ran outta there faster than he ran away from Dude for the first time." Jay's voice and the team's laughter broke Harry out of his stupor. He looked over his shoulder to see Jay standing next to a now upright Gil, arm slung around his shoulder.

"Come on, we should give them a chance." A girl said from the group of teenagers. Harry recognized her from the Isle, and from around campus. He wasn't sure of her name but he was pretty sure she was the daughter of Mulan and an all-around badass.

Even with all her badass-ery, though, Harry couldn't help but laugh at her idea. Him? Harry Hook? A part of the Tourney team? Unlikely.

"Thanks for the offer, but Tourney's a wee boy's game. I don't have time to dance around with your little rapiers." He said, lazily lifting his sword to poke at the bag of thin fencing swords on Lonnie's shoulder. They were twigs compared to the width of his broadsword.

He heard Carlos sigh, drawing his attention back to the boy, not that it was ever far off. Carlos stood with his head in his hands, obviously exasperated. Harry felt the unexpected need to distract him, to try and make him feel better.

"But I do have time tae give you the rematch I'm sure you've been dreamin' of, Carlos." He said, reaching behind him to grab Gil's sword with his hook. "Just tae remind yer bum what the floor feels like." He held out the hilt to Carlos. Carlos' expression shifted from exasperated, to annoyed disbelief as he bristled and, though that wasn't the reaction Harry was aiming for, it seemed his plan to distract Carlos had succeeded.

The pup grasped the broadsword firmly and, despite it being nearly as thick as his forearm, wielded it with ease. "Alright," he said, "but I've been practicing, so don't say I didn't warn

you.” He twirled the sword in his hand gracefully. Carlos shifted into dueling stance as his team cheered for him.

“Kill ‘em, Harry!” Gil shouted and Harry knew he didn’t mean it literally — anymore — but he shot his friend a glare over his shoulder, unable to stop the surge of anger and fear he felt at the thought of Carlos getting hurt.

“Can we take it down two notches there, Gil?” Harry growled, turning back to Carlos and mirroring his stance. “En Garde!” He said with a thick layer of sarcasm.

Harry’s body moved automatically as he quickly attacked with an overhead swing, putting his weight behind it. Carlos caught Harry’s blade with his own easily, the clash of swords signaling the *real* start to the duel, but the force of the strike left him rattled and Harry went in again for another swipe before the pup could recover.

“Don’t say *I* didn’t warn *you*. ” He said as Carlos parried a few more strikes before surprising Harry by dropping with a ground sweep aimed at his calves. Harry jumped just in time, chuckling happily as he felt the breeze of the blade passing just beneath his feet. It had been a long time since he saw that move.

Despite his earlier hesitation, Carlos was fighting back a smile, Harry could see he was having fun. And, well, if the pup found him entertaining, Harry may as well put on a show.

He jumped up onto one of the boxes that filled the room, pushing off of it and letting gravity pull him back down to Carlos. It was a move he wouldn’t have tried if he hadn’t known Carlos could block it. Call him crazy — as many of the students at Auradon Prep did — but he’d never risk a direct blow to the head with a broadsword if he didn’t think his partner could take it; not in a real fight, definitely not in a duel, and *definitely* not when that partner was Carlos.

In the end, Carlos got his sword up in time, just as Harry knew he would. However, he surprised Harry by pushing up to meet the blow, sword held at an angle, and Harry’s sword slid loose, knocking him to the ground.

In the split second it took Harry to look up, Carlos had kicked his blade from his hand and had his own sword leveled with Harry’s nose. Harry looked up the blade to the hilt, then up to Carlos’s face. The pup looked ready for anything, except maybe surrender, because when Harry slowly raised his hands, Carlos looked surprised. Harry watched the shift intently, a smile growing on his own face.

“Well, I’m impressed,” Harry whispered after staring a second longer, breath coming hard. Carlos let out a quiet, breathy bark of laughter, tossing his sword back to Gil. He offered Harry a hand up and Harry took it willingly, surprised when the pup pulled him to his feet almost effortlessly. Harry couldn’t help but notice Carlos’ hands were somehow soft even with the calluses of an accomplished swordsman. Harry shook his head, trying to remind himself to focus. Carlos was speaking.

“The team would love to have you.” He said and Harry was almost tempted for a second by the look on Carlos’ face. But no, Harry reminded himself, if he wanted to keep his thoughts

off of Carlos he couldn't be seeing him everyday. Harry smirked, hefting his sword, trying to pretend that he hadn't almost said yes. "You mighta bested me with a broadsword," he said, grabbing Gil by the scruff, "but Tourney's still a wee boy's game." And with that, he pulled Gil out of the gym.

II.

Harry hated parties. Well that wasn't necessarily true, Harry actually loved parties. He loved getting tipsy on bad ale while badly singing a sea shanty, one arm around Uma, the other around Gil. This wasn't that.

Harry hated *royal* parties, or "banquets" as the heros called them. He hated stiff clothing and even stiffer company, he hated having to pretend to be polite and well raised. Most of all, Harry hated watching as Carlos was chatted up by some out of town princess, her hand tucked into the crook of his elbow as she batted her eyes flirtingly at him. She wasn't a good flirt. Harry could do better. *He* could be flirting with Carlos instead of slouching against the wall in the dark corner by the buffet table, just as he had been since Gil wandered off with Jay, and Uma disappeared presumably to find Fairy God-Daughter.

Harry wasn't upset they'd left him. He was happy they were happy. Harry *was* a bit jealous. A bit... lonely.

He was pulled from his self-pity-party as the princess started to drag Carlos over to the buffet table and into Harry's earshot. Carlos was saying something about the Isle, but the princess obviously wasn't listening as she interrupted him for the upthenth time that evening, each time Carlos had visibly gotten more uncomfortable.

'For a princess,' Harry thought, 'she has terrible manners.'

"I heard on the Isle you didn't have any fruit. Have you ever tried apple pie?"

'Aye, and hated it.' Harry remembered the way the pup's nose had crinkled as he had forced himself to swallow the fruity dessert. He had watched from across the cafeteria as Carlos adamantly refused to take another bite. Harry wasn't a stalker, he didn't obsessively watch the other boy, he was always scanning everything around him, looking for potential threats, it was something a kid learned to do on the Isle. More often than not, though, instead of finding danger, his eye would catch on curly hair and freckles.

The princess was shoving a piece of apple pie into Carlos's hands. At least she had had to release Carlos in order to grab the plate. "You have to try it. It's divine!" she proclaimed, and Carlos looked so torn between being polite and telling the truth that Harry decided it was time the pup got rescued.

Harry Hook was no knight in shining armor, and Carlos was far from a damsel in distress. But they could play the roles if it meant getting out of an uncomfortable situation without anyone getting hurt — emotionally or physically.

'Uma would be proud.' he thought, remembering how his friend was always telling him there were ways around problems that weren't the point of a sword or words that cut just as sharply.

Harry pushed off his wall and out of the shadows.

"Carlos isn't really an apple pie kinda lad." He said. Carlos jumped as Harry slung an arm over his shoulder. The pup was only startled for a second, however, and Harry was surprised as the other boy sunk into his side. He was even more surprised when he realized how much he liked the feeling of Carlos tucked under his arm, pressed against his side. It felt differently than it did with Uma or Gil.

The expression on the princess's face was a weird mixture of the flirty looks she had been shooting at Carlos moments before and fear. It was a look Harry was used to seeing on fellow students when they caught sight of him, boys and girls alike. When they wanted a badboy to bring home to disappoint mommy and daddy but couldn't decide if Harry was *too much*. They normally concluded he was.

"Aren't you Captain Hook's son?" She asked after a second, her voice like tinkling bells. She had a striking resemblance to Queen Ariel and Harry was reminded of the warnings his father used to give him, warnings of beautiful mermaids with beautiful voices and what they did to pirates. *'Siren.'* Harry thought. "Did a crocodile eat your hand too?" She asked again, cutting off Harry before he even got a chance to answer.

Harry wanted to laugh at her, maybe raise an eyebrow and pretend to be insulted or intimidating. Instead, he tossed his hook in the air, watching the light glint of the metal as it twirled.

"I only wish." He said, catching the hook by the handle. He reached out with it, spearing a chocolate cupcake he knew Carlos would love, holding it up in front of the other boy's nose. The pup grabbed it, stuffing it into his mouth immediately. Harry couldn't help but smile down at him, something warm growing inside his chest.

"You... wish your hand was eaten by a crocodile?" The princess asked, her face slightly green. Harry's smile turned sharp.

"A hook is much more useful than a left hand." He said, reaching out to stab a full strawberry, popping it into his mouth. The fruit was sweet, but the leaves added an unpleasant texture. Harry decided he wasn't going to eat the tops next time.

"I don't think you're supposed to-" The princess started, but Harry ignored her. After all, he *did* know how to eat a strawberry correctly and his patience was running out. The girl had too much to say.

"Carlos and I have some business tae attend, don't we, dear?" Harry asked, winking down at the boy still tucked against his side. He had smudges of chocolate around his mouth and Harry wanted nothing more than to wipe it off. Except maybe to lick it off, he could almost taste the chocolate on his tongue. Harry forced himself to look back to the princess, shooting her a smile that was far more friendly than the last. The princess looked disappointed.

'Good.' The possessive side of his mind thought, *'The lass finally gets that he's not available.'* Harry decided it was time to stop denying that he liked Carlos. Now that he could accept that, maybe he could move on.

"We do? We do." Carlos's reply came a moment delayed. Harry glanced down at him to see a slight blush beneath his freckles. Harry didn't know if it was from the pet name, the wink, or the chance of a rumor starting that *the* Carlos de Vil was in a relationship with resident thug, Harry Hook, but he liked the look of it nonetheless.

Carlos dropped the plate he still clutched back onto the table and nodded at the princess, then let Harry lead him away leaving the princess to disappear into the crowd.

Harry led him to a balcony he had scoped out earlier as a possible exit route should he get too bored and wanted to escape without Uma catching him. The cool air was refreshing.

"Chatting with sirens now, are we?" Harry teased as the doors closed behind them. It was spring now and the air was crisp, but no longer freezing. If Harry closed his eyes when a cold breeze blew he could almost pretend he was back on the bow of his still docked ship, daydreaming of the day the crew could break free of the barrier and sail to the ends of the earth.

Carlos's laugh broke him from his fantasy and brought him back to the present, though, he couldn't lie and say standing alone, one arm around the pup, with the noise of the party locked behind the glass panel of the doors was too bad either.

"If sirens now talk your ear off instead of singing." Carlos joked making Harry chuckle slightly. "Thanks for getting me out of there." And Harry was reminded of the reason they were out there, alone together, in the first place. Reminded him of why Carlos was even *allowing* him to hold him close to his side.

Harry cleared his throat and let his arm slip from Carlos's shoulder, though the way the pup stayed pressed to his side until Harry stepped away almost made him change his mind.

"No problem. I'm actually on my way out." Harry lied. He hadn't brought Carlos out there just to run away. He didn't really know why he brought Carlos out there at all, actually. "Party's a bit too stuffy for me. Now keep yerself outta trouble." He said, surprised that when he looked back to Carlos's face for one last glance, the pup seemed almost... disappointed. Harry reached out to touch without even thinking about it, to smooth the furrow between his brows. He caught himself at the last second, diverting to awkwardly pat Carlos's bicep instead. Then, he jumped over the railing, successfully putting himself out of touching distance, landing in the bushes below.

"Wait, Harry!" Carlos called from above. Harry looked up to see him bent over the ledge. "How did you know I don't like apple pie?" Carlos asked and Harry panicked for a second. He couldn't just tell Carlos he'd been watching him for the past few months, he didn't want to scare the poor pup. He also didn't want to come off as a creep. Luckily, Harry Hook was good at lying, being a VK will do that to you.

“When you always have chocolate all over yer face, it’s easy tae tell yer a chocolate fan.” Harry said after a second, it was more of a redirection than an answer, but it would do. He turned on his heel, intending that to be their goodbyes, but then paused, remembering the smudges of chocolate he’d refused to let himself wipe off. He looked back to Carlos, gesturing to his own face. “You got a wee bit on you right now.” He said grinning in the moonlight as Carlos realized what he meant. He looked embarrassed as he lifted a hand to rub at his mouth.

Harry slipped away while Carlos was distracted, deciding it was in his best interest not to wait and see if the pup got it all off. Knowing that if Carlos hadn’t, the likelihood of Harry climbing back up the balcony to take matters into his own hands was far too high.

Later that night, Harry couldn’t get the memory of Carlos pressed against his side out of his mind. He didn’t understand Carlos’s reaction. Everything in Harry’s brain told him that the pup should have flinched away or been supremely uncomfortable. They were VK’s; physical touch was normally followed by stinging pain. So why was Carlos so ready willing to melt into Harry’s — his former enemy’s — embrace, and why did it take Harry pulling away for Carlos to detach himself from the pirate’s side? Harry didn’t know.

Then he remembered what it was like before Uma and Gil, back when Harry would have given anything for a pat on the back, everything for a hug. When Harry had started initiating physical contact with his friends they were hesitant at first, but Uma and Gil humored the young Hook, and soon the pirates of the Revenge became the most physically loving group on the Isle. He only now noticed that Mal’s group hadn’t followed suit.

Sure, sometimes he’d see Jay ruffle Carlos’s hair or maybe sling an arm around them as they were walking, other times Evie would squeeze the pup’s hand or kiss his forehead. But those instances were far and few between.

Harry decided he needed an excuse to give Carlos de Vil a hug.

III.

An opportunity came around less than a week later as Harry was complaining to Gil, yet again, about the rust slowly creeping across his hook.

“I bet Carlos could fix that for you.” Gil said, interrupting the rant he had heard at least five times at this point. Harry’s eyes snapped up from his hook to find Gil not paying him much attention.

“How could the pup fix this?” Harry asked, waving his hook in the air. Gil looked up at him.

“...the pup?” Gil asked, confused, and Harry realized he’d never called Carlos that out loud before. Luckily for Harry’s sanity, Gil decided not to question it and instead shrugged. “He’s

got a 3-D printer, it's super cool and he's always printing things for his friends. He fixed Jay's favorite gaming controller, and Evie's sewing machine, and my-"

"Can you give me 'is number?" Harry interrupted, sitting up from where he was sprawled across their joint room's couch. Gil nodded and unlocked his phone, quickly sending Carlos's contact to Harry. "Thanks mate."

If Gil said anything else, Harry didn't hear it. He was too busy making a plan. Get his hook fixed and give Carlos a thank you hug. Not only would his rust problem be taken care of, but he'd be able to give the pup some much needed physical affection.

Carlos agreed to help Harry fix his hook quite willingly. He had warned Harry that it might take awhile, but Harry found he had no problem watching Carlos watch the machine as it printed new plating for the hook, fiddling with it occasionally. Harry found the other boy captivating, but if you'd have asked him he'd say it was the machine he'd been staring at so intently.

The time passed quickly with Carlos as a distraction, and soon enough the pup was holding out a newly plated hook to Harry.

"Good as new." Carlos said, letting the light dance over the silver. Harry grabbed it immediately, trying not to leave too many fingerprints as he looked over it. Carlos was right, it was as good as new. Better actually, since Harry had found it in his father's chests.

Harry gave Carlos the biggest smile he possibly could, setting the hook down to pull the pup into a hug.

"Thanks, lad," He said quietly. He pulled away quickly, grabbing his new hook again and tossing it in the air. It was heavier now, but Harry liked it, it felt more sturdy.

"Sure, uh, no problem, Harry." Carlos said awkwardly. Harry looked back to him to see the pup fiddling with his hair, a very slight blush on his face. He remembered the primary goal of this mission, forgotten in his excitement, had been to give Carlos a hug, to try and give the pup more affection. But he'd gone and messed that up by letting go too soon. *'Would it be weird to hug him again?'* Harry twirled his hook, trying to decide.

"Hey Harry?" Carlos asked just as Harry was about to decide that it would be *totally normal* to hug the pup again. Harry looked up, momentarily distracted by Carlos nervously chewing on his lip. "Uh, Evie and Doug are having a movie night at their castle tonight, if you wanted to come. It's just some VKs and Ben." He asked, slightly out of the blue. Harry didn't think they were that close yet, but it was a pleasant surprise.

"Sure. What kinda movie?" Harry asked, agreeing immediately. Carlos visibly relaxed. *'Had the pup been nervous that I'd reject 'im?'* Carlos just shrugged, seemingly speechless at Harry's acceptance. Harry smiled what he hoped was a comforting smile.

“I guess it’ll just have to be a surprise then.” Harry said. It didn’t matter anyway, Harry had already decided he was going. His second chance to be able to cuddle up with the pup.

Apparently, the lil’ pup wasn’t the biggest fan of horror movies. Harry watched from the corner of his eye, pretending to watch whatever cheesy horror the young Isle girl had chosen, as Carlos got more and more freaked out.

The boy was huddled in the corner of the couch, clutching the arm rest and muttering under his breath, telling the characters what not to do. From his reactions Harry gathered that they normally did not listen to him.

Harry had wanted to put an arm around the boy and draw him close as soon as he had started whimpering like a kicked puppy, but he couldn’t work up the nerve. The issue with acknowledging your feelings, Harry was learning, is that it left you open to the sting of denial, and the pirate wasn’t sure if he could handle that. At least not from Carlos, Harry was starting to think that would hurt more than when his father made him walk the plank.

“Don’t open the door... Don’t...” Carlos said, quietly enough that only Harry, who was paying adamant attention, could hear. Harry didn’t have to wait long to learn whether or not the character listened to Carlos’s warning, because a second later the pup jumped, screaming loudly. Harry flinched at the noise before breaking into a laugh.

“Woah, they got me with that one.” Harry lied through his teeth, blaming his reaction on the movie. Carlos glared at him which only made Harry want to laugh harder. He didn’t think the pup would ever be intimidating again, let alone right after he had screamed at a jumpscare.

“I can’t wait for this to be over.” Carlos muttered, his glare shifting into something a lot more pitiful. Harry’s laughter stopped as his heart melted.

“You okay there, Carlos? Yer shakin’ is rattlin’ the whole sofa.” Harry asked. Carlos looked confused then embarrassed, and Harry thought *‘Fuck it, the pup could use some comfortin’.*’ He lifted an arm around Carlos, pulling him close. “It’s just a movie.” He said, probably too softly to be strictly platonic. “Don’t worry yer pretty little head over it.”

He felt Carlos take a deep breath before sinking into Harry’s side just like he had a few nights before. He rested his head on Harry’s shoulder, the pirate’s heart swelling at the simple action. The rest of the movie Carlos barely made a peep, though Harry wasn’t sure if that was because of him or if the movie was just less scary in the second half. Harry definitely wasn’t watching the movie close enough to find out, his attention still completely enraptured by the freckled faced boy pressed to his side as he buried his face in Harry’s shirt each time he was getting too scared.

Eventually the movie ended and was replaced with some sappy romance that Evie liked. Carlos didn’t pull away despite the lack of a reason to be cuddled up to Harry now, and Harry couldn’t say that it didn’t make the warm feeling inside his chest grow tenfold. Although, now that there weren’t any jump scares Carlos *had* stopped pushing closer to hide his face which made this new movie far more boring.

Harry rolled his eyes as the love interests had some sort of misunderstanding on screen leading to them both getting hurt. He sighed and stretched his arms over his head, noting the way Carlos stiffened slightly, as if deciding whether or not to pull away. Harry settled his arm back around the other boy quickly, ducking his head to whisper into Carlos' ear.

"I liked the last one better." He said, his lips *just* brushing the skin beneath the pup's ear. Even in the dark he could see Carlos' lips stretch into a smile.

"Yeah, well I think you're the only one." Harry hummed, letting his eyes fall shut. The sound of hushed chatter around them and the warm weight of Carlos on his chest quickly lulled him to sleep before he could think of an answer.

When he awoke to the sounds of movement around him, he cracked an eye to see the movie had ended and people were starting to leave. But not Carlos. No, the pup was asleep on his chest, breathing steadily, his nose twitching slightly.

Harry smiled at the sight, pressing a slightly delirious kiss into the curls on top of the other boy's head.

He could go home and sleep in his overly squishy bed, just like everyone else. But instead he pulled Carlos' sleeping body tighter to his, perfectly content laying there with his pup weighing down on his chest.

IV.

Harry Hook wasn't used to asking people on dates. Sure, he'd had flings and flirtations back on the Isle, but back then VK's didn't date, they didn't have relationships, they didn't have feelings. Everything was fast and rough and emotionally distant. So Harry was clueless about what to do with his want to take Carlos out, to charm his socks off and kiss him senseless.

He thought about asking Uma how she had approached her lass but if Harry knew Uma, and he did well, he knew that it probably involved a lot of stuttering and flustered pauses. That wasn't exactly Harry's style. One thing he was pretty sure about was that you weren't supposed to ask someone out over text but... well... he couldn't really come up with any other way to do it.

The day after Gil and Jay left, Harry texted Carlos, asking if he'd be up for a broadsword sparring session, under the guise of needing another partner with his other friend out of town. It was vague to say the least and when Carlos responded with a '*sure* :3' two minutes later Harry couldn't help but wonder if he had been clear enough about his intentions. Would texting again clarify that Carlos had just agreed to, what Harry was hoping was, a date? Or should he just wait and see if his pup had caught on...

He decided on the latter even as the voice in his head — that sounded suspiciously like Uma — called him an idiot and a coward.

Three hours later Harry found himself shrugging on a clean shirt and reapplying his eyeliner. General hygiene was something Harry was yet to grow completely used to, back in the Isle it was more uncommon to wear different clothes everyday than it was to wear the same shirt five days in a row; VK's didn't really have the resources it took to change every week, let alone everyday. But now, in Auradon, Harry came to realize that if he wore the same shirt for more than twelve hours he'd be on the receiving end of wrinkled noses and judging glances. Not that he let that stop him most days. However, that night, before his hopefully date with Carlos, Harry found himself wanting to be looking — and smelling — fresh.

Slinging his broadsword over his shoulder and grabbing his hook, Harry was out the door with an extra bounce in his already overly exaggerated step.

As he approached the gym Harry heard his pup's laughter echo down the hallway. Harry smiled to himself at the clear, happy sound. Even back on the Isle, when the two were at each other's throats, Harry had found that sound comforting, an out of place bit of innocent joy. Then he heard another voice join in and Harry's heart fell.

"...captain of Auradon Prep's Tourney team, scared? Not in the slightest." The voice, Mulan's girl, Harry realized, said cockily. Harry opened the door silently, but didn't enter the room. Instead, he leaned against the doorframe, watching as his pup crossed swords with the girl. Harry's happy mood vanished.

"Well Carlos, I see you've found another partner tae spar with." Harry said, picking at his freshly applied black nail varnish. He felt the mood in the room grow heavy, only feeling a little bit guilty for making his pup's smile fade.

"Hi Harry," Out of the corner of his eye Harry could see Carlos' feet move away from the swordswoman's. "I was just, um... I'm ready to spar with you if you are." His pup was trying hard to get back on the pirate's good side, that much Harry could tell. It made Harry want to draw his sword and go on with the night as he'd planned it. But something was still holding him back. Harry had obviously been right in assuming his text had been too vague. Or maybe this was Carlos trying to let him down easy. That seemed like something the other boy would do.

Harry clenched his jaw. He didn't need sympathy or sugar coating to keep his feelings from getting hurt, he was a Hades forsaken Hook. A VK. A pirate. He didn't do emotions.

He didn't do emotions.

"No, no, by all means, continue here. I know how important Tourney is for you."

"Harry, I didn't mean to—"

He didn't do emotions.

"Oh, would you look at that." Harry said, fishing his phone out of his pocket and holding it up so Carlos could see the black screen. "Uma's calling me."

He turned on his heel, Carlos's last plea falling on deaf ears. He knew he was overreacting, the voice in the back of his head was telling him that Carlos didn't do anything wrong, his pup hadn't meant to hurt him. The thing was, though, a lot of things had changed since the Isle, but not Harry's tendency to ignore that voice.

And not the fact that Harry Hook didn't do emotions. But, hell, had he been right. His father's rejection *had* stung.

The pup's shattered him.

V.

By the day of the Homecoming Banquet, Harry had completely convinced himself that Carlos had been, in fact, trying to let Harry down easy; letting him know that Carlos was Very Straight or at the very least wasn't attracted to Harry. It hadn't worked of course, but the intention was there and Harry took comfort in that.

So, despite his broken heart, Harry still found himself watching Carlos from the crowd as the other boy laughed and smiled and had the time of his life on the beach.

The party was... fine. It was better than the last one, no wondering princesses attaching themselves to the pup. Although, that also meant there was no reason for Harry to intervene.

It was fine but it was boring. That is, until the screaming of party-goes started.

Emerging from the sea, much to Harry's surprise, was Uma's dear Auntie Morgana, a sea-witch that honestly terrified Harry far more than the original witch herself. She screeched for Triton, demanding to be taken to him, and as she did she lashed out with her tentacles, grabbing person after person and tossing them into the sea.

Harry could see Fairy God-mother stepping forward at the edge of the chaos, casting spells at the freezing sea-witch. Mal flew over head in dragon form, diving at Morgana every chance she got.

The villain screamed out in pain as Mal sliced a particularly vicious cut across her arm and started to retreat back into the sea, but not before grabbing a few more victims to take with her.

Harry's heart stopped when he saw the messy head of pure white curls sticking out the top of one tentacle's grasp. Before his mind could even process that, yes, that was in fact Carlos getting dragged into the sea by Uma's crazy aunt, Harry's body was moving, pushing forward through panicked on-lookers.

By the time he neared the sand there was no one left to avoid — everyone having run the opposite direction — and Morgana was almost completely submerged, just her head and one lone tentacle above water. Harry hoped it was the one that held Carlos, knowing full well that his pup didn't do well with water.

Harry clenched his hook, diving into the water without a second thought.

The water was freezing and murky and Harry couldn't see more than three feet in front of him, but Harry swam hard knowing full well that he had been the only one to jump in after Carlos. He ignored the tingling in his fingers and the stinging in his lungs as the massive shape of Morgana drew close. Hades damn him if he left these waters without his pup in hand.

Magic was with him, however, because despite the low visibility, Harry could just see a flash of white as one tentacle swung in front of him. Harry lurched forward and grabbed it. He climbed it up to the top of the tentacle, pulling at it with all his might, but the sea-witch refused to release her prize and Harry couldn't blame her. When he got Carlos out of this he was never letting go of his pup again, if only to make sure the boy was alive.

But Harry's breath was running out and all his struggling with the tentacle wasn't helping, the chances of him getting Carlos out were growing slim. In a last ditch effort, Harry lifted his hook. The tip wasn't as sharp as it looked so Harry rarely used it as a cutting or stabbing weapon, but he was desperate.

Harry slashed and the water grew even more murky with blood. He heard the high pitched scream of Morgana. The tentacle loosened, releasing the treasure inside. Harry grabbed his pup and kicked up as hard as he could.

By the time Harry got them to shore Carlos was barely breathing. But he was breathing and that was good enough for the pirate. He fell onto the sand beside Carlos, catching his own breath and trying to remember what he could do to restore the other boy's.

Before he could remember, there was ragged coughing from beside him. Harry sat up quickly, kneeling over Carlos, cupping his cheek. Water from his hair dripped onto the equally soaked pup, as Harry muttered nonsense words, trying to help Carlos through his coughing fit, even though he knew it was more for his own benefit.

"It's alright, pup. I've got you. You're safe." Harry whispered, not quite sure if he believed it himself. Carlos's coughs subsided.

"Am I dead?" Carlos asked, voice raspy. Harry knew Carlos hadn't heard his cringy attempt at comfort or the first thing the other boy would have done was tease him for it. Harry filed that away to be thankful for later, and smiled down at the pup. He had plenty to be thankful for right now anyway. He laughed, unable to completely believe it.

"Not yet, but you almost look it." Harry teased, unable to help himself. His pup's eyes opened, Harry's still raging adrenaline slowing when he saw their warm honey brown.

"What happened?" Carlos asked. He tried to sit up but that only resulted in another coughing fit.

"Easy there." Harry whispered, subconsciously reaching forward to touch, to make sure his pup was really there. "Take your time." He told Carlos but he knew better than to think the boy would actually listen to him, so he helped him up nonetheless.

“Did... did you just...”

“Well somebody had tae save yer skin. Not like Mal and them can swim.” Harry decided not to mention that he would have jumped in after Carlos even if he believed someone else could save him. That he was more willing to stay right there, under the freezing water until his breath ran out, than he was to leave Carlos alone down there to die alone. Instead, he reached out and ruffled his pup’s hair. “Morgana got a taste of this and decided tae let you go.” He said, holding up his hook.

They fell into silence as they started to make their way down the beach, neither of them quite recovered enough to walk and talk at the same time. Harry tried to ignore the feeling of Carlos’s arm around his waist and the thought that this may be the only time he shared such a casual embrace with his pup- *the* pup.

Carlos’s steps faltered and Harry looked down to check on him only to meet the other boy’s eye.

“You saved my life.” The pup — Carlos was not his — said quietly, all the walls Harry had always seen surrounding the boy, gone. Harry decided one last hug was okay.

“Yer welcome, Carlos.” He said, pulling the pup close. Carlos buried his head into Harry’s shoulder, sinking into the hug and Harry wanted to stay like that forever. But he couldn’t, because Carlos wasn’t his and he didn’t think he could take being that close to the boy for one more second without being able to kiss him, and hold him, and comfort him until he forgot about Morgana, and his mother, and whatever else was troubling him. Harry Hook pulled away from Carlos for one last time.

“Now let’s go find yer friends and tell ‘em yer not dead yet.” He squeezed Carlos’s shoulder, leading him in the direction where he knew Mal’s gang would be, searching for their lost pup.

Their pup. Not Harry’s.

+I

At this point Harry was just torturing himself and he knew it.

It was the second to last game of the season and Harry was once again sitting in the middle of the stands, eyes tracking Carlos as the pup scored.

The game had been the opposite of close, Auradon barely letting their competitors score a single point. The clock was winding down and at this point it was more or less a given that Auradon Prep was winning this one. A horn blew signaling the end of the match, the announcer read out the final scores, the fans cheered, and that was that.

But if that was that, why did Harry Hook find himself standing outside of the locker rooms as the stadium cleared out behind him, hoping to see Carlos as he left with his teammates. The

only problem was, Carlos *didn't* leave with his teammates, he didn't leave five minutes later, and ten minutes later he still had yet to emerge.

After running through all the improbable scenarios in his head, Harry decided it was *most* likely that the pup had been in some sort of freak accident and was lying prone on the cold floor of the boys locker room. He pushed off the wall he was leaning on and walked with purpose to the door, about to open it when a small body came barreling out. Carlos ran smack dab into the pirate's chest with enough force to knock the hat off his head. Harry grabbed the falling hat with one hand, reaching out to steady Carlos with the other.

"Woah there!" He said, unable to keep himself from laughing, unsure if it was due to the relief of seeing Carlos alive and well or the stunned look on the pup's face. "Tourney's over, no more crashin' in tae lads." Harry stared at the blush as it spread beneath Carlos' freckles.

"Sorry, Harry." He muttered, looking down at his feet. His head snapped back up suddenly, meeting Harry's stare dead on. "Hey, you know, I'm sorry about that thing the other day with Lonnie. I was waiting for you and she came in to practice." And Harry was frozen for a second. He didn't know quite what to say to that. He didn't quite understand it. Had he been wrong this entire time? Had this whole thing been a misunderstanding? Harry wouldn't have been surprised, he was very good at taking things out of context and bending over backwards to make them hurt him in the worst way possible.

He fiddled with his hat, trying to figure out what was happening. But he had no clue and the pup was waiting so he spit out the first thing that came to mind.

"Awe, don't sweat it. I was overreactin'." He shrugged, realizing in that moment just how true it was. Carlos looked relieved and Harry hated himself for ever making the pup worry about him. "I know you lot have tae practice almost every wakin' moment tae get that good, so someone was bound tae be in there."

"Wait, were you at the Tourney game? Like, watching it?" Carlos asked, astonished. Harry suddenly felt very awkward. Was it weird of him to have gone to the match? He didn't know why it would be, Gil had gone to support Jay... Well, maybe that wasn't the best example, but tons of students had gone so why couldn't Harry?

"...Aye." Was Carlos going to think Harry was stalking him? Harry kept his eyes fixed on his hat.

"Wait, I thought you didn't like Tourney. You're always calling it a wee boy's game." Carlos said, imitating Harry's accent. Harry almost laughed but he was too confused to find it in him.

Carlos was confusing and Harry didn't know what to do with him anymore. In that moment, Harry decided *'fuck it,'* he'd flirt with Carlos just like he did everyone else, maybe then he could find some clarity. He ignored the voice in the back of his head that told him that didn't make any sense whatsoever.

"Well, you sure didn't look like a wee boy out there, knockin' people over and such." Harry admitted, giving up on any and all inclinations to hide his feelings. He looked up from his hat

to smile at Carlos. He saw the pup freeze. What he was expecting next was laughter, maybe Carlos telling him to fuck off, maybe a shove though he knew Carlos was not one to resort to physical violence. What he was expecting next was *not* what he got.

“Harry, I think I like you.” Carlos said and Harry felt his heart stop. *‘He’s messing with ye,’* he thought, *‘or he’s tryna make you feel better about yer idiotic feelings.’* Harry’s brain ran through reason after reason of why the pup would confess something like this, but none of them quite made sense, and with the way Carlos seemed to sink more and more into himself with each second that Harry didn’t answer, only one explanation seemed to fit.

‘He actually likes you, you daft pirate.’ He came to the realization at the same time Carlos started to fidget, turning on his heel.

“Um, I think I’m, uh, just gonna...” Carlos pointed over his shoulder, signaling his exit. But Harry wasn’t going to let himself fuck this up again.

“Carlos,” He said, reaching out to grab his arm. Carlos looked back to him, something like hesitant hope in his eyes. “I can’t lie, you did look a wee bit hot out there on the Tourney field.” *‘You idiot, that was not what ye werr supposed tae say.’* Harry thought back to the romantic declaration of love from the movie they watched not too long ago. That was what he was supposed to do, not some objectifying garbage about Tourney. But Carlos was laughing and his brain went silent in admiration of the sound.

“Well I can’t lie either.” Carlos said, his laughter dying down, “Harry, I really, really like you.” Harry’s stomach did flips. He stepped forward, moving into Carlos’ personal space just slightly. His hand dropped from Carlos’ arm to tangle their fingers together.

“Do you think you’d like tae kiss me?” Harry whispered. He bit his lip, holding himself back until the pup gave him the go-ahead, a task that only grew harder as Carlos’ cheeks deepened with a blush dark enough to make the sunset sky jealous.

“Only if you’d like to kiss me too.” The pup said, obviously too awkward to give a straight up yes. Harry smiled softly.

“I think I would.”

Harry Hook was not familiar with feelings or dates, but there was one thing he knew how to do like the back of his hand. He knew how to kiss the pants off a lad. Harry pushed closer to Carlos, cupping his cheek with his free hand, squeezing Carlos’ fingers with the other. He leaned down, brushing his lips against the other boy’s, holding back a smile as he felt Carlos push up on his toes, closing the gap between them. Carlos’ hand tangled in Harry’s hair, his hat laying at their feet long forgotten.

It was like no other kiss he’d had before, it was slow and gentle, tasting of chocolate and sweets as the pup’s lips moved against Harry’s. Harry breathed Carlos in, committing every detail to memory just in case he woke up.

Much to his surprise, though, he didn’t. And when he pulled back, Carlos chasing his lips, pressing his forehead against the pup’s, thumb stroking his cheek, Harry knew this wasn’t a

dream. Carlos was looking up at him with those warm, mischievous eyes, like Harry was the best thing he'd seen since chocolate cake. Harry thought Carlos should be looking in a mirror.

There was only one thing that could make the moment better.

"Be mine?" Harry asked, unable to look away from Carlos' eyes as his gaze turned into a playful glare.

"I'm not to be owned, Harry Hook." He said, but a smile tugged at his mouth. He leaned forward pressing another soft kiss to Harry's lips. "So long as you'll be mine." He whispered after pulling away.

"Anything for you, pup." Harry replied, knowing full well that it was true. Carlos' eyes widened, unbelieving, his mouth falling open.

"You did not just-" He started, Harry cut him off with a quiet chuckle.

"You can tease me about it later." He said, moving his hand from Carlos' cheek to the back of his head.

Harry Hook pulled his pup in for another kiss.

fin.

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