

battle sirens

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/6360697) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/6360697>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Pendulum/Knife Party , Electronic Dance Music RPF
Relationship:	Gareth McGrillen/Rob Swire
Characters:	Gareth McGrillen , Rob Swire , Ben "Verse" Mount , Paul "El Hornet" Harding , Kevin "KJ" Sawka , Deadmau5 , Joel Zimmerman , Peredur Wyn ap Gwynedd
Additional Tags:	ultra 2016 , pendulum returns , knife party - Freeform , Coming Out , Fluff , Riding , Anal Sex , Anal Fingering , Shower Sex , sex in odd places , lots of fucking sex , drum and bass , Fluff and Smut , Smut , Smutty , Marriage , umf 2016
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2016-03-26 Updated: 2017-01-31 Words: 19,763 Chapters: 5/?

battle sirens

by [GunshotBride](#), [Xygenscenic](#)

Summary

Pendulum has just played the show of their lives, giving Ultra Music Festival it's most successful ending in history. Rob and Gaz head back to their hotel to crash and "sleep for 1000 years"...

Notes

As always, I'll remind y'all this is a work of fiction based only loosely in reality. If we ever find out our work has been shown to the "characters" in question, we will not forgive, nor forget. Such behavior is detestable. This is for the fans, for their enjoyment only as the subjects of said fiction have expressed their discomfort. Please respect them and us and keep this to yourselves. Thanks!

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

freefall

His ears are still ringing from the screaming, every cell vibrating with the excitement of the crowd. Miami is hot this time of year, probably 70 degrees after dark, and on the stage it is hotter still. Fireworks punctuate the end of Ultra 2016, but Rob is far away. His hands are frozen in a claw-like death grip on the Ztar. He cannot move, can hardly breathe—frozen like a deer in headlights, grasping for purchase as his mind threatens to teeter into an abyss... what's at the bottom? He doesn't know, but he is overwhelmed with the idea of it.

A small eternity passes. The entire stage has gone dark. The crowd has not stopped cheering. Gareth had known from the start that his voice would end up shot by the finale. He knows it's not nearly bad as Rob's, however. Speaking of which, it's time for them to leave the stage, has been so a while. He hands his bass off to a crew member, and in a few quick strides, lands himself at the center of the stage to bring their beloved vocalist and front man back down to earth from wherever he goes at the end of a set.

Hooking his hand in the crook of Rob's arm, he gives his friend a little tug. It's way too loud to try to speak with him, so telling him it's time to leave like this will have to do. Rob barely responds, managing a weak grunt. He blinks several times, the abyss still taunting him, calling out his name in dulcet, harmless tones. Only the continued pressure of his friend's hand and a coaxing roadie, removing the strange midi controller from his grasp snaps Rob's mind back to reality. He is still loaded with adrenaline, every nerve lit ablaze by the vibrations of the crowd and his fellow band mates. Rob moves with surprising swiftness, making eye contact with Gaz through the dimness and grasping his sweaty face with two long-fingered hands. Their mouths are pressed together before anyone can react or call a ceasefire.

Gareth is completely taken aback by Rob's mouth all over his. Anywhere else, sure, but on stage of all places? Rob has always been the one to advise—no, to insist upon caution and absolute discretion. At least by now, he's sure the show has stopped streaming online. So what the hell?

They're still plenty hyped and what better way to end the perfect show than with his man in his arms. Thick limbs snake around Rob, and he pulls his lanky friend's body up against his own. Rob's arms respond to the gesture *he'd* begun by looping long arms around Gaz's neck. Their bodies are hot underneath layers of leather and fabric, aching for release—or a nap. At this point, the adrenaline is still too prevalent to tell. Perhaps this is the abyss Rob has so craved and feared.

The kiss doesn't last long. It can't, really. Gaz is the first to break it, pulling his mouth away and lowering Rob's hands. They're shaking. The ginger has nothing to say, not that it matters either way as the crowd's roar is still deafening, so he simply squeezes those talented hands, tugging Rob toward their stage exit and heading toward the shelter of backstage.

Rob follows, keeping their fingers laced with Gaz's behind the man's back, tailing him like a puppy or a child. His mind is entirely elsewhere, pupils blown, lips a bit swollen from the

contact. He has leapt off the edge of that eternal tower built from the stones of everything he's ever done—the music, the fans, the hype, every performance as Pendulum, all of it gone with their kiss. It's remarkably freeing, but his heart is still pounding. Someone has to have seen. These people are not blind. Will the tower crumble as well?

From the bottom of the tower, standing alone in the abyss, Gareth stands, arms outstretched, more than happy to catch Rob. Even if things do get out, he isn't entirely sure he cares. They're likely well overdue to come out, anyway, and how much can a bunch of satisfied fans care that they're together? The tower is strong. It will stand. All he wants right now, is Rob, and a nap. Preferably together. Holding his partner's hands tight, he leads them both backstage to meet with the rest of the band.

When Gaz comes to a halt, Rob stops too, laying his head on the man's back, right between leather-clad shoulder blades. The heat radiates off him and his t-shirt is clinging under the jacket, but everyone is sticky, so no one cares. Rob presses his face in further, holding tightly to Gareth's hands.

“Everyone saw you two,” Perry points out, arms crossed over his broad chest. His concern is only for their friends' privacy; the band has known for years. After *The Island*, how could they not?

"So?" Gareth responds, comfortable speaking for the two of them, since Rob seems busy. Rob's spirit, his aura, maybe, feels content. and *Rob* is the one who did it, so until *he* shows signs of worry, Gaz will be just as content. "We're fine."

The ginger's tone seems insistent, so Perry raises a hand and backs off the issue entirely. KJ, sweaty and panting, offers a double thumbs-up. The former has a flight to catch in the morning and the latter is staying with his current band at a different hotel, so they take off with promises to keep in contact regarding future projects and disappear in the mess of stage hands and tear down.

“Can we go...?” Rob mumbles from behind his friend.

"Yeh, les' get going."

The idea, of course, is to hop in bed as soon as possible. By his tone, Gaz is positive Rob's feeling the same; he's coming down off the adrenaline high and the weariness shows. So with the skinny fellow in tow, Gareth starts walking. "Y'did great tonight."

For some reason, that compliment means more than the roar of the crowd ever could. It reaches him in a way the love of his fans simply cannot, pleased as he might be by their enduring fervor.

“Just... holding my color,” Rob responds in a mumble that's barely above a low whisper. Maybe Gaz will get a kick out of him, maybe not. It's his way of telling the man those three words that are just too scary to say aloud, soft landing or not.

It puts a dumb grin on his face, but he'll keep his words for when they're in the hotel room, tempting as it may be to say it out loud. For now they just need to actually get there. To do

that, he'll have to lead Rob, because *Rob* isn't firing on all cylinders by any stretch of the imagination. The adrenaline has begun to drain and he is feeling the ache of... loss? He can't place it, not now; he's too tired.

They weave their way through the crew members backstage, Gaz flashing his pass to keep the movement smooth. He's always amazed at how many people it takes to run this kind of show. Two body guards end up escorting the pair of them out the back exit—in case of fan intrusion—to the shuttle that will take them to their hotel.

“ Great show tonight, guys... can I get an autograph?” One of them asks. The other punches him. Gaz nods, shrugging.

“ Sure,” he takes the offered pen and, in his messy, lefty scrawl, writes *Rob & Gaz* . Rob grunts, raising a hand from behind Gaz to give his blessing to the dual autograph. The bouncers are too distracted with the signature, scrawled across a copy of *Abandon Ship* to notice when Rob's elegant hand slides back down to entangle his fingers with those of his partner.

“ Thanks, man!” Calls one of the guards, but the cab has pulled up and Gaz is ushering his friend inside.

Finally, they're off their feet, able to take a much deserved seat. The once-again bass player sighs noisily. "I nearly forgot how tiring it was, playing like that.."

"I missed it," Rob admits quietly, scooting into the seat next to Gaz. He's still got one of the ginger's hands in a death grip, heart racing as he has now realized what he's just done. Reality has caught up, as she is wont to do, and Rob is left wondering about the consequences. In his pocket, his phone is buzzing madly.

"So did I," responds Gaz with a grin. He doesn't miss the exhaustion that accompanies liver performance. Opening his mouth to speak again, he notes the buzzing in Rob's pocket, and wants to assume it's just a metric fuckton of fans pleased with the show. He'd really like to believe it, with all his thumping heart. "Y'gonna shut that off?"

"Wot?" Rob croaks, voice a shadow of its former self. He digs into his pocket and produces the flashing device, angrily indicating texts—one or two from Joel—and tweets—mostly from fans—and a missed call. "Yeh." And off it goes.

"It'll be dead by the time we get to the hotel anyway," reasons Gareth. Rob's action reminds him to do the same with his own. To that end, he produces it from one impossibly tight pocket and shuts the thing off. "Shame Ben couldn't make it. We've gotta tell 'im all about it."

Rob nods, leaning heavily on Gaz's shoulder as the shuttle picks its way through heavy traffic. He squeezes his partner's hand once more and shifts a little, groaning at the protest of his joints. This shit has never been a cake walk and it hasn't gotten any easier with age, but he truly loves it. Rob mulls this over and so much more as they are dropped off at the hotel. His mind is in freefall, so Gaz does the talking, and the walking, and just about everything else until they reach their room door.

"Finally..." The sentiment is mutual, though it's Gaz's mouth that does the exclaiming as he shoulders his way past the heavy door to their two-bed suite. Rob trundles in after Gaz, staying closer than is necessary for no real reason other than comfort. They're both incredibly sweaty still, though, and soon the proximity becomes too much. Rob peels himself off his partner and drops his lanky body on *his* bed. Their tour manager still hasn't noticed, or maybe he doesn't care.

As Rob's back hits the bed, Gareth removes his jacket, tossing it onto the nearest chair. His shoes are next and then his shirt, dropping himself onto his own bed. He sighs with the contentment of sore muscles and a decompressing spine. Soon, the internal debate begins: should he shower before he sleeps? ...Does Rob want to shower before *he* sleeps?

"I need a shower," Rob grumbles as if in acquiescence to Gareth's unasked question. The air conditioning is drying him out and pushing the Aussie toward crusty. He does not appreciate this, but cannot bring himself to sit up, suddenly crushed under the weight of what his phone holds for him when he turns it back on. He abhors the little device as much as he adores it. Technology is rotten.

"Then lets shower, love," Gaz throws the idea out there, tacking on an affectionate nickname mostly to garner Rob's waning attention. It's going to be a chore to get *himself* up, much less Rob. He is assured that if he isn't the one to do it, neither of them will, however. To that end, he forces himself to his feet, wandering over to the bed his friend is lying on, offering Rob a hand.

Rob's own hand responds by flopping limply into Gareth's grasp, the arm behind it roughly the consistency of al dente spaghetti. He hurts all over, or maybe he doesn't hurt yet, but his muscles are promising him pain. The shower will help. He squeezes hard and pulls himself upward, fighting the urge to cry out, as it will not only harm his throat, but make him look like an utter cunt. Pulling Rob the rest of the way up, the ginger gets the noodly man to his feet and starts toward the bathroom, baby steps.

"A hot shower'll help," Gareth assures Rob with a gentle squeeze.

Sharing showers always does wonders for them. There's a level of intimacy in it that a tumble between the sheets cannot provide. The vocalist looks forward to these, appreciating the soothing nature of the steaming water; it'll be great for his throat *and* his spirit, a rare combination.

Gareth leads the way into the bathroom, and first thing goes to start the water. Yes, this will help, a nice hot shower. It's never failed to put them right to sleep and right now, above all else, they need sleep. Once the water's ready, he peels off tight pants and steps right on in.

Sweaty or not, Rob's pants fall right off him. He wrestles his way out of his confining, long-sleeved shirt as well, letting both lie in a heap on the floor as he follows his friend into the wonderfully warm water. The ginger has set it just right, knows exactly what they both need. And why not? It's certainly been long enough; they've had time to learn each other's idiosyncrasies. Things like water temperature and how they like their eggs are second nature to the two of them.

Gareth's arms draw Rob close, soon as the vocalist is all the way in and stable. After a show like that, he just needs to be held. For his part, Rob leans into the grasp, laying his head on his partner's shoulder as the water soaks them both. He is shaking now, the exhaustion overtaking every cell in his poor body. Feeling this struggle to remain vertical, Gaz adjusts his position to better support his friend, realizing this is how it's going to go for the duration.

"C'mon, Rob. Just a couple minutes more, and we can hop in bed."

Bed sounds good, *great*, even. Rob leans on and clings to Gaz as if he's the last man alive. To the skinny fellow, his friend *is* the only man alive, the only man he needs. He presses his mouth to the corner of Gaz's, smiling as he does so, exhausted but happy to be in this place with him. It puts a grin on Gareth's face to be kissed like this, so he returns the gesture, offering a chaste peck to the other man's lips.

"Y'know, I think t'night's show made me fall in love with you all over again."

He's sure that if he doesn't say those words now, they'll both fall asleep and he'll forget. By way of response, Rob's face flushes, though perhaps it's the hot shower water causing the chromatic anomaly on his gaunt cheeks. He sniffs heartily and purses his lips, searching for the proper response. Evidently, there isn't one beyond once more pressing their mouths together, just as he'd done onstage, but this time with less panicked urgency and more languid heat.

The fact that he has *Rob Swire* at a loss for words threatens to make Gaz laugh, except his mouth is busy with Rob's at the moment. He can't bring himself to do much more than grasp those bony hips at this point. Something about the way Rob is on stage just drives the ginger up a wall. He's hard, but his friend is exhausted, so he leaves the situation be. There will be ample opportunity another time.

Under the warm spray, all the *vocalist* can focus on are his friend's fuzz-free lips. He wraps his arms around Gareth's neck for the second time this evening and keeps a firm hold on him, relishing the here and now, unwilling to face what will be. As much as *Gaz* is enjoying the here and now, the two of them really should be getting some sleep. Without breaking the kiss, then, he manages to reach back and shut the water off. He holds their lips together a moment longer before pulling just an inch away.

"We're gonna fall asleep in the shower if we stand here any longer, mate."

Gaz is right, of course, and though they haven't showered properly, it's enough to wash the layers of sweat away to a point where both are comfortable sliding between the sheets.

Rob nods slowly, groaning as he presses against his friend, not wanting to leave, but understanding that a soft, cool bed and air conditioning are awaiting them both. With one arm around the slender man, then, his friend reaches out to yank the shower curtain open. Stepping out, Gaz grabs himself a towel, and releases the other man so he can go dry off.

"That's better, innit?" Gaz offers gently. Rob nods again, still slow, a bit dazed, but becoming more aware of his surroundings. He clutches the towel with claw-like hands and dries his hair first, moving it down the rest of him. He's a little hard, too and can't help glancing at the

source of his arousal. With next to no hair for the bassist to dry, *he's* done in a jiffy, collecting their clothes from the bathroom floor and affording Rob an excellent view of his rear end and the magnificent skull tattooed on his back.

"Finally time to sleep," Gaz sighs noisily as he leaves the bathroom, prompting his partner to toddle after him, lamenting his near-arousal and wishing to return to the transcendental unawareness he'd earlier achieved after the concert. Understanding his surroundings and the consequences of his previous actions is not turning out to be so simple. He groans despondently.

While Rob is moping, Gaz is being productive. He removes everything from the pockets of their pants to dump the pile of sweaty clothing onto the chair his jacket and cap are hanging on. They'll need to be washed, of course, and he spotted a laundromat on the way in... not that their concierge thing-a-ma-jig doesn't cover that, but they never do black just right, and sadly that's all Knife Party has taken to wearing. His attention soon turns as it always does to Rob, who's...not happy about something.

"What's up?"

Distracted, preoccupied, worried, all of those words come to mind immediately when Gaz asks the dreaded question. Rob doesn't want to ruin the buzz for either of them, but he will eventually have to face the music, as it were. He shrugs, moving past Gareth to tug back the sheets and drop himself in the closest bed. It's not *his* bed, but then that makes him wonder why there are two in the first place. Have people *really* not noticed?

To Gareth's knowledge, and in his long experience, it can't be good if Rob's not answering him. To that end, he wanders up to the bed and lays himself down with his lover—and that's really what Rob is, at this point, along with a whole host of other, very important titles. He scoots himself closer to spoon Rob, an arm tossed carelessly over his midsection.

"You can tell me." The ginger offers softly. "You really *ought* to."

"It's us, mate, we're a PR nightmare—well I am," responds Rob quietly. He doesn't really understand the appeal of hiding who and what they are from their fans, beyond his usual rule of not wanting to spread his personal life around. But Gaz is his onstage partner as well and if someone finds out, they'll spread it like wildfire. They have to get in front of this. Rob turns over to face Gaz, to punctuate his fears.

"Are y'really gonna let the media 'n' fans an' shit tug at us though?" Gareth's question comes just as quietly. His hand slides up Rob's back, to play with small bits of the vocalists jet black hair between a couple fingers. Gaz has a point, of course. They've been so far removed from the fans as Knife Party, he's sort of forgotten how it feels to be an immovable object in a sea of writhing fanatics. Part of him has missed it, of course, else why would he go back?

"...we've always been able to keep our personal lives out of it, despite their best efforts," Rob points out gently, "what if we can't keep doing that?"

"Then we keep it plain an' simple," it's all he can think to do anyway, "like, yeah, we're a couple, next question, y'know? Nobody's gotta know what happens behind closed doors."

“ They don't *have* to know to guess,” Rob hisses, abhorring the idea of his personal life splashed twenty feet high for everyone to scrutinize. Then again, isn't that part of performing? Aren't they always 20 feet above the crowd, plying their trade? Who's to say this isn't part of it? Enduring this shitstorm will be the single bravest thing Robert Swire Thompson has ever done, aside from dropping his whole life and making the flight from Australia to the UK. He reaches out to lay his hands on Gaz wherever he can reach, as if to draw strength from the man.

"Then let them guess, we don't hafta throw 'em bones," Gareth sighs, laying a hand on only one of Rob's, he's running out of ideas. "Everything will work out fine, I'm sure..."

The only bone throwing Rob is normally interested in is between his partner's thighs, but right now, sex is far away in his mind. At the forefront, the only pressing matter is the incessant beating of his cruel heart, reminding him he's still alive and that he will have to deal with all of this, sooner rather than later. Shadows claw at the edges of his vision, manifestations of his fear. He shakes them off and squeezes his eyes shut.

“ ...sort of a... one step at a time thing,” he mumbles, feeling himself slip toward oblivion.

"Let's just take it slow,” Gaz suggests. "Things'll fall into place, they always do.”

Wrapping both arms around his partner of about twenty years, Gareth leans his face closer to Rob, just to rest his forehead against him. "But for now, why don't we just relax? We played a killer show t'night, you deserve to sleep for like...a thousand years, love."

Rob will never admit it, but he aches a little inside whenever Gaz calls him that. He fades slowly into sleep with those words, that affection as his last companion. Tomorrow will come, that much is certain, but with some sleep, he'll be ready to face it.

all I need

Chapter by [Xygenscenic](#)

Chapter Summary

Gaz and Rob awaken in their hotel room to find the world unchanged, but something is on Rob's mind and seems to have been for a while. Will today mark a turning point in their relationship? (maybe have lunch before making any rash decisions, boys)

Chapter Notes

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

Dawn shatters the peace they've created with their sleep, their soft touches, gentle embraces, lancing its way heartlessly through the crack in the heavy hotel curtains. Rob fights the pull of the light, wresting himself away from awakening and tumbling instead, back toward sleep. And then realization, like a freight train, hits him head-on and bloodshot blue eyes snap open.

Meanwhile, Gareth is sleeping like a rock, not a clue in his head regarding the distress of the man next to him. Being the heavy sleeper he is, the ginger is content to keep snoring, not even having bothered with setting a timer the night previous. It'll take more than a ray of sunlight to wake *him*.

"Gaz!" Rob hisses, jabbing the thicker man in the gut with a knuckle; his voice is shot, so the sound comes out as a horrid croak. Gangly limbs are entangled in his friend's arms and legs and Rob has very little room to maneuver. His hair is mussed beyond its usual level of fuckery. This is morning in the Thompson-McGrillen household, whether in London or some hotel in Miami.

It is the entanglement that has Rob most on edge, however; familiar as it is, he cannot reach his phone this way. His sleeping bear of a partner will just have to clamber the fuck out of slumberland and join Rob in the eldritch horror of reality. To that end, Rob continues to stab at him with that bony knuckle of his.

"Hnn?" Gareth grumbles, brows knitting at the jab. He lazily brings a hand up to rub at the spot his partner has poked. "Wot..? Wot is it?"

The ginger pries just one bleary eye open just a bit to try to see where the fucking fire is, but upon observing no such thing, shuts it again. Meanwhile, Rob is wriggling his way free of Gaz's grasp, reaching for the side table where his phone is lying, face down, poised like a cobra to strike and kill him with agonizing venom—sometimes called "consequences." This whole grown-up thing is really rotten.

Elongated fingers wrap around the device in time to experience the recoil of still being wrapped in Gareth's arms. He falls back into the cradle created by their bodies, phone in hand, heart thudding just a bit too fast.

Deeper in the warm cradle, Gaz has not had the fortune to witness Rob flailing and reaching for dear life toward his phone. He does *feel* the man wriggle in his arms. Of course, in order to help his temperamental lover, he doesn't do a damn thing. Sometimes it's fun to let Rob ride the struggle bus a while. Serves the controlling prick right. What *does* concern Gareth is the fact that Rob, the opposite of what one would call a "morning person" or even sometimes "human," is awake. Of the two of them, *he's* always the one up making breakfast, feeding the cats, getting the house in order, etc, by the time the tortured genius trundles his way out of the bedroom.

"S'not like you..wot's'a matter..?" Gaz grunts sleepily, just now actually putting an effort into keeping his eyes open.

"My phone's blown up," Rob responds bitterly, though with a tone of little surprise. He holds the device up so Gaz can see it better and indeed almost every social media app, messaging app and even his voicemail has exploded with little red indicator numbers.

"Well of course, we finished off *Ultra* last night.." It's only natural. It's happened after every other show they've played in the past. Why is Rob reacting like this? Is it because—

"I *kissed* you, Gaz, *on stage*," Rob croaks, punctuating this by squeezing his phone in rhythm with the words, as if it will force anything referring to that act of adrenaline-fueled indiscretion out of his mobile device. Someone has to have noticed! There is no way something like that had gone completely under the radar, no matter how exhausted the Ultra Music Festival crowd had been. And what of the stage crew?

"Yeah, I remember that vividly," the bassist sighs, rolling his eyes and shutting them again to try to maybe catch another moment of sleep. "Go on then, lemme know what you find."

How is Gaz not flipping his lid? He's too calm and Rob is becoming more agitated with each second that passes. His mind and heart are both racing and it's threatening to ruin whatever pleasure their return concert has offered. Hesitantly, Rob pulls up his twitter feed first, addicted as he is to the app. Every single message is tagged #pendulumlive, or #pendulumreturns and is followed by words of praise, adoration and adulation.

Though he has promised himself he's going to try to sleep more, Gaz can't help but open his eyes every now and then to glance over Rob's shoulder, just to see what kind of messages he's getting, they're getting, and so far, nothing is out of the ordinary.

"I don't see what you're getting so upset over," he mumbles, bordering on annoyed at Rob's paranoia.

"You're the cunt who proposed," Rob shoots back with early morning acidity. He narrows his eyes at the screen and continues scrolling. When Twitter reveals nothing, he moves on to Instagram, Facebook, and eventually his own texts. There's one from Mattie, reminding them of the DJ set this evening, but other than that, it's all clear. Rob releases a breath he only now

realizes he had been holding. With what he understands to be a sigh of relief, Gareth rolls over, his back now to his partner.

“Nothing out of the ordinary then?”

Maybe if that’s the case, he can get back to sleep...if it’s even possible at this point. The ginger has a feeling his partner won’t let this go. He hates when he’s right.

“No,” Rob shakes his head, his tone a mixture of confusion and... disappointment? He does not understand his own nebulous feelings at this point. Does he want some fan to notice? It really is not an option if appearances are to be kept, “but maybe there ought to be.”

“Come again..?” Gaz grunts, surprised. That doesn’t sound like Rob. The ginger rolls over onto his back, unable to help himself staring at the man, rather concerned. “What’s *this* now?”

Just a few moments ago, Rob had his guts in a twist over this, and now he’s suggesting *what* ?

“I mean if we don't get ahead of this... Gaz it's been a year and change,” Rob mumbles, setting his phone down and turning back to face Gareth almost too quickly. He makes one more movement and the dark haired man is draped over his partner.

That’s quite the change of heart in what feels like an *instant* . Gareth has no idea what to think of it; he’s dumbfounded. Staring for a moment at the ceiling, he’s still trying to process what Rob had said and more importantly, what he means.

“So...you want to announce *us*, finally..?” Gareth raises a brow, this is so...unlike Rob. For his part, Rob is beginning to wonder what *is* the real him.

“No, I don't *want* to,” he specifies, inching to straddle Gaz's hips, elbows on either side of the ginger under his armpits, fingers folded across his broad chest. “We *need* to. We owe it to ourselves to come clean.”

It's no secret Rob is the cagey one of the pair, but Gaz doesn't exactly splash *his* personal life across social media, either.

“It would be one more thing off our shoulders, wouldn’t it?” The bassist brings his hands up to rest behind his head, thinking hard on the proposition. “How would you suppose we go about doing this, then?”

All at once, Rob seems to realize that this whole thing is, indeed on him. Gaz has always allowed him to take the lead on just about everything, musically, personally, and physically. For this, the vocalist is grateful as his control freak nature wouldn’t do well without princess-level treatment; he really *is* spoiled. At least his royal highness hasn’t scared *Gareth* away. Rob wouldn’t know what to do with himself. He ducks his head, laying it on his own hands and humming, thinking, processing. Twitter is too impersonal and Facebook is for the band, as is their site, Knife Party’s included.

“Social media seems sort of...shallow,” he concludes, lifting his head and gaze to meet his partner’s. There’s a red mark on his forehead where he’d been resting, knuckles digging in. “When’s... have we got an actual interview in the near future?”

“Iunno, we don’t do interviews as Knife Party, but we can ask Mattie for the Pendulum ones...gotta keep the hype goin’ or whatever.”

“*Didn’t*,” Rob reminds him, “remember the phone interviews we did for Abandon Ship...?”

“Those don’t even count,” Gaz sputters, recalling some of the embarrassingly sentimental things he’d said during his. And he’s right, it’s not really a fair comparison, as those had been sort of a fluke, following a long and complicated set of circumstances and a PR snafu, or five. Anyway, it had hardly been a trend-setting set of interviews, that’s for certain, but it does set a precedent and Rob is, for once, willing to roll with it. Knife Party isn’t just a side project anymore and Pendulum is back, possibly for good; the logistics on *that* are still being worked out by a veritable cavalcade of lawyers.

“All I’m saying,” he continues with some hesitance, “is that...maybe we reinvent this...whole thing. We’re back, sort of, and...I want it to be different.”

“You want..Pendulum to be different?” Gareth offers, trying his best to understand his frazzled friend’s fuzzy logic. It’s not a bad angle, fortunately. Rob has never been good with PR, but he isn’t stupid. The world is finally ready for them, after all. Why not reinvent?

“I think so, yeh, sort of,” Rob seems a little befuddled by his own decision to even voice this to Gaz, but the more he speaks and cogitates on it, the surer he becomes. “Yeh. This vision...it’s ours, y’know? All of ours, but, I guess I’ve always sort of held onto it as my own, so I hide it all... all of it but the music. I’m not saying we’re gunna be *Keeping Up With Thompsons*, but maybe we could just... get it outta the way?”

To this, Gareth nods, but sits himself up. Sure he’s enjoying their talk and laying down, but he’s awake now, so might as well get up and take care of his morning routine. Rob rolls off obligingly. He’d been laying on Gaz’s half-hard cock, but he’s so distracted by this whole situation, he’s not really even thinking about morning sex, which is odd, for him.

Either way, they have a little time to consider it and in Rob’s mind, the decision has to be mutual. They will be exposing themselves to a lot of scrutiny that way, and very likely not all of the responses will be positive. The fact remains, however, they’re married, have been for more than a year, and have also been hiding it. That sort of thing weighs on a man.

Gaz has assessed that they’re finished talking for now, and as he’s free of the lanky man on top of him, throws the covers off himself and tosses both legs off the edge of the bed. Time to get dressed! So with a stretch upward and outward and a moan, the ginger is up and headed to his bags.

“So, if you’re planning on doing this through an interview...” He trails off, much in the same way Rob usually does; the cunt is rubbing off on him. The question remains: how will they go about that? The closest they’ve ever actually been to talking about relationships is the one

time he joked about an oddly-worded fan question about marriage... Way before he *seriously* popped the question.

“It’s... not my best plan,” Rob admits, turning to his side, watching Gareth. The sheet is draped over him, covering his body from the waist down, leaving a bit to the imagination, not that Gaz hasn’t seen it before. He’s not aiming for seductive, however; Rob is still deep in thought. The distance in his eyes is evident to someone who knows him as completely as his husband and friend of twenty some odd years.

Gareth spares Rob one more glance, lying on the bed that way, caught deep in thought, gaze and mind probably off in a different dimension. Sometimes, Rob spaces out that way and it takes a sharp gesture to bring him back—it’s been happening a lot recently, in fact. Gaz isn’t sure whether he should be worried or not as he goes about grabbing himself some clean clothes from his bag. They’re the same as always, tight, graphic, black.

“Speaking of Mattie, do we have anything to do today?” Not that their tour manager had been the subject of conversation at all, but Gaz uses his name to get his partner’s attention. On the one hand, the ginger doesn’t feel like checking his and on the other hand, it’ll bring Rob back down, to the here and now where he belongs.

“Just a ‘good job last night’ message,” Rob promises, offering a weak smile. At least he’s conscious enough to respond properly. “I think Paul wants us to go with him to a set tonight, though. Mattie mentioned something about *that* too, bless him.”

“We’d better do that then.” But, that’s *tonight*. “Wot’re we gunna do with our whole day, mate?”

Rob has a few ideas, now that the initial fear has passed. No one had seen the kiss, evidently and they now have a battle plan for the future. This is good. It’s a step in the right direction—several, in fact.

“Miami’s a nice town; why don’t we... go out?”

A date in Miami with his husband sounds like a great idea. Anything as long as they get to take it easy after a show like last night’s. So tugging on a clean pair of undergarments, Gareth peers back to his best friend again.

“Sounds like a plan, if you can find shit to do nearby. I don’t wanna *walk* the day away.”

Beaches have too much sun and people, shopping has too many people and nothing to actually put *on*, but eating... Eating is always good. A restaurant for lunch, then maybe the hotel pool where there’s enough shade to hide and back to the room for... a nap.

“Let’s get lunch,” is Rob’s verbal expression for his plans.

“Just lunch?” Gaz confirms as he pulls a clean shirt on. Same as always, black and covered in some band logo. Once he has a pair of pants in his hand, he brings it back to the bed, to sit on the edge to pull them on.

“Or whaddevah,” Rob mumbles, sliding toward the other side of the bed. His bag is on the opposite side of *his* bed, so he must abandon the sheet’s protection to reach it. Regardless of how he feels toward Gaz, the man still insists on being covered a majority of the time. It’s not necessarily modesty so much as discomfort being exposed and potentially being seen by someone who *isn’t* Gaz. He crawls over the unused bedding and finds his feet on the other side, stooping to get into his luggage. Mostly black, as usual, though he’s chosen to mix it up with a white Deftones t-shirt. Rob is a regular fashionista.

After Gareth’s fight with yet *another* pair of impossibly tight pants, his magnificent thighs are appropriately shrink wrapped, and he’s ready to be seen by the public. He’s spent the whole time trying to come up with something they can do *plus* lunch. At this point, he’ll probably be better off looking it up.

“Th’ beach out of the question?” Gareth jokingly asks his partner across the room. Rob’s only response is a rise of one eyebrow and a sharp exhale of breath from his nose. He’s tugging his own pants on by now which, while tight, are hardly the sausage casing his partner has chosen.

“Let’s just have lunch and then we’ll talk,” Rob chuckles, keeping his eyes on his partner. The tunnelling in his peripheral is probably from exhaustion, being unable to focus properly and all. Rob finishes dressing and carries on with Gaz, because acknowledging that level of exhaustion will have his partner refusing to take him out, insisting on rest.

“Gotcha.”

Nodding, Gareth gets up off his ass to grab his wallet and phone. “What’re you in the mood for?” Though he’s sure he can make a guess at what Rob wants right now. Unfortunately, that’s not, strictly speaking, edible. The skinny DJ is going to have to settle for sustenance that is not dick.

“Italian,” Rob responds cheekily, “like when you proposed.”

He *can* be romantic, when in the proper mood. Maybe Gaz has hit him up at the right time. Alternatively, it’s a ploy to get into those tight pants. Either way, it’s a happy ending for the both of them.

“Fuck, I had my money on *Mexican*,” he laments. Well the thought is sweet, and if that’s the case, the ginger would much rather get Italian. “Let’s look up some good Italian joints in Miami then.” Then practically throwing himself back onto his bed, he goes straight to his phone to look a place up. Rob can’t help laughing at Gaz’s predicament. The ginger knows him very well, but he can still throw a curveball once in a while.

“Yeah, that’s right,” Rob snorts, “got *that* from my copy of *His Needs, Her Needs*.”

“Did you *really* read that?” That coming from Rob is rather...funny. Considering the two of them have spent about their whole lives together, he hadn’t thought Rob would *need* to consult a book. “Kay, I think I found a place.”

Sitting up, the ginger brandishes his phone, as if the dark-haired vocalist can even see his phone screen from there. Rob rolls his eyes and snorts.

“No you cunt, I don’t need to read a fucking marriage self-help snooze fest to figure out how to entertain myself around *you*,” he scoffs, coughing into his hand as the rasp returns with a vengeance. Blue eyes are downcast behind thick lashes as a hacking fit commences. Rob drops back onto the bed to finish it off, the sound ugly and harsh.

“I think that’s my cue it’s time to shut you up with *food*,” Gaz surmises, disguising his worry with humor. Bringing himself to his feet, the ginger stows the phone in a tight pocket, and heads to his partner’s bed to collect the other man, taking Rob by the wrist and pulling him back up. “Don’t get so caught up shit talking me that you throw yer voice out,” the thicker DJ warns, dropping Rob’s hand once the man is up. Rob snatches the ginger’s hands back and stares him down.

“Don’t tempt me.”

Chapter End Notes

We're trying to keep these chapters short to make sure y'all stay interested. How's it workin' for ya? We all good? Excellent. Glad to have you along for the ride.

night and day

Chapter Summary

Rob and Gaz go out for lunch and Rob allows little hints about their relationship to slip to their waiter. Maybe he's ready to be up front and public with it after all... They've got a few hours to kill before the Pendulum show, however and lunch doesn't occupy their whole afternoon. {:

Chapter Notes

I'm going to go ahead and dedicate this chapter to a VERY special buddy o' mine. This ones for you... you'll know who you are by the... climax.

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

Gareth's efforts to locate an appropriate Italian restaurant within walking distance of their hotel have not been in vain. Though it's only about half a mile away, however, their penchant for wearing black is catching up with them. At least Rob has a white t-shirt on; that much has saved him from immediate heatstroke. Fanning himself helplessly, he bitches quietly the entire way, snatching Gaz's hat when the location is in view.

"Should've shaved," Rob laments under his breath as they begin crossing the street.

"Anything else you think y'shoulda done while you're adding to the list?" The thicker man is not pissed by his partner's non-stop bitching just *yet*, but he might soon be getting there.

"Yeh, maybe bought a pair of shorts," Rob hisses, drawing closer to his partner.

Luckily for Gareth they're walking into the joint presently, so if Rob has any *more* complaints, at least they'll have food with which his face instead.

"A booth at the back, please," Rob requests the minute they pass the threshold. There are seats and tables out front, as well, in the Miami heat, but right now, the Aussie wants AC and privacy. Their waiter obliges, nodding solemnly as if he understands it all and then swiftly leading them thereto.

Rob makes a mental note to give "Charlie" a decent tip, bigger if he leaves them be, as the shake in his hands upon setting their menus down tells the producer all he needs to know about their celebrity status in this town. As they settle themselves, Rob passes Gaz's hat back and requests lemon waters for both of them. The atmosphere is classy and quiet, with almost

no one occupying any of the indoor tables. Rob feels like he can finally think again as his gaze settles on Gareth and stays there, a soft half-smile playing on gently curved lips.

With his hat back, Gareth whips the thing right atop his head where it belongs. Oh, how embarrassed he is to be without it, though Gaz is not about to voice *that*. Rob doesn't need any shit talking fuel. Instead he opens up the menu and has a look at their house pasta.

"The penne looks good," Rob muses absently. He isn't really invested, but the heat still has him, so he'll be unresponsive for a little bit. The request for water had burnt the last of his energy. Blue eyes scan the menu, the long fingers of one hand curling around the side. His remaining hand is folded neatly in his lap.

"Yeh, sure does," the bassist hums, though he's going to keep skimming the menu until he's sure on something to eat. He makes note of Rob's preference, however. On the other side of the table, Rob's eyes have stopped scanning. He's deep in thought once more and Gaz knows the look; he also knows not to interrupt. Eventually, the dark-haired vocalist will gather his thoughts enough to form actual sentences. It might take a bit, however and the waiter, Charlie, is returning.

In the meantime, Gareth has his pick of a meal and drink, and turns his attention to their waiter. Charlie was it? That's the name he thinks he saw.

"Rob," Gaz mutters in an attempt to snap his partner back to reality. Rob is having none of it, mind far away. His partner will have to order for the both of them as their waiter inches up, stammering, the bags under his eyes rivaling Rob's and indicating a few sleepless nights, perhaps spent enjoying the festival they've just concluded.

"He'll take the penne, marinara and heavy parmesan cheese," chirps the ginger as pleasantly as he can, hoping to distract their waiter from his spaced out companion. Rob is drifting off, again. Gaz makes a mental note to scold him for that one later, "and I want... how's your pasta primavera?"

"It's goo-it's good," stammers Charlie, clearly debating whether or not to ask the pair of superstar DJ's for their autographs or not.

"Then I'll take your word for it," responds Gaz genially, snatching Rob's worthless menu from his hands and passing both of them to the waiter.

"C-could... I don't wanna be a bother... could I have-maybe have, y'know..." Charlie has the menus clutched to his chest as if they're the only things keeping his heart inside his ribcage.

Gareth had expected nothing less of an afternoon out in Miami the day after the show, honestly. Not that he minds, it could be much worse. This kid seems pleasant.

"Sure, gimme th'pen."

Holding a hand out to their waiter, he glances between him and Rob. Maybe he can snap him out of it with something to do. Indeed, with the absence of the menu, Rob has returned to

reality and is watching their waiter out of the corner of one eye. He'll sign something, sure, but he'll be cagey and cranky about it.

“Yeh,” he grunts, “I'll sign.”

Charlie produces his ticket booklet which is, surprisingly adorned with a Pendulum logo. This makes Rob smile, just a little.

The bassist receives the booklet from their waiter, and once he has the pen, opens the thing up to scribble his name and a knifehead down. Once that's done, he passes both things to his partner. Who, thank goodness, seems to be on this plane of reality again.

“Enjoy the show last night?” Rob asks Charlie, oddly pleasant, given their circumstances. Food always puts him in a good mood, as does the promise thereof, evidently.

“Y-y-y-of course I-I brought my b-b-my boyfriend!” Charlie chatters excitedly. Rob nods, adding a knife head to his signature.

“Yeh? Me too.”

Charlie's eyes go wide. Much in the same manner as the statement has baffled their waiter, it's also caught Gareth's attention. Is he saying he also *enjoyed the show*? Or that he *brought his boyfriend*? The question puts a sly grin on Gareth's face, but only briefly as they still have company.

As Rob hands the ticket back, the ghost of a smile plays on his lips and he offers a sidelong glance at Gaz before returning the pen. Their little fan has gone red as a beet and stumbles away from the table to return the order to the kitchen, still stunned they've spoken to him, much less hinted... but had it been anything at all?

“You like that, huh?” Rob grunts, more than a little amused.

“Is this what you meant by getting the news out?” Gareth keeps his eyes on Rob, who seems pleased as all hell with what he just did.

“Just blurting it in an interview seems sort of...out of context,” Rob observes, since they have never been particularly open about their personal lives, at all. “Maybe it *is* the best way to... come clean, or whatever.”

The dark-haired vocalist shakes his head, sighing helplessly. He's trapped halfway between wanting to be done with it all and keeping it so deep under wraps, he forgets it himself until Gaz is inside him.

“Wouldn't exactly be out of context if the question comes up though, would it?” Though going about it this way does seem like it's working rather well...with Charlie, anyway. “Maybe we should continue like this, and see how things go.”

Any excuse to avoid awkward interviews is welcome. Rob nods, appreciating the young man's response to his offhanded, innocuous comment.

“Sure,” he nods, “random fans won't go public for fear of offending us, but they'll whisper.”

He might be purposely far removed from their flock (for reasons of mental health, mostly), but he is acutely aware of how the whole system functions.

Well it's one way to get the news out. Maybe by the time it spreads through the fans, it'll cushion the impact of them revealing the news over an interview. The bassist nods, and taps his fingers against the table, which eventually triggers the ginger to look at his own hands, more specifically the rings on thick calloused fingers.

“Y'never hung onto the ring I gave you at Holy Ship...” he mutters.

“It didn't fit,” Rob shoots back, though they both know for a damn fact it's because he had not been ready to allow the fact of their marriage to become public. Hell, he hadn't been comfortable revealing their relationship. A marriage would have been much bigger news. To back up his verbal claim, however, the vocalist holds up both nimble-fingered hands.

“Why haven't I bothered to fuckin' buy you another ring yet?” Gareth grumbles, tugging one of his skull rings off to hold it out to Rob. “Y'sure it won't fit even yer thumb?” It's probably a dumb thing to ask, but he has to get some sort of size, somehow. Rob takes the object and slides it over each finger.

“My thumb... no, no it's too big. Maybe a chain?”

It's oddly comfortable, this conversation they're having, the exchange of a ring and the soft tones. It's all Rob can do not to lean across and kiss the man.

“A chain sounds like a good idea, until I buy you something proper. Y'gotta fuckin' remind me when we get home, mate.” But does he have a chain? The only one he can think of is the one currently around his neck. Which he makes obvious by laying a hand on. “You wanna borrow mine?”

Rob shifts, eyeing the chain on which Gareth's fingers now rest. Can he do such a thing? He's unaccustomed to having anything around his neck, not since high school anyway. But if it means keeping a symbol of their union close to his heart—literally and figuratively.

“Yeh,” grunts the dark-haired producer, “I'd like that.”

Reaching over to take the ring from his husband, Gareth retrieves it and then slides his hands behind his neck to get the chain free. It takes a moment of struggling while Rob looks on in amusement before he's finally able to loose the thing. Once he does, the ginger strings the ring with the chain, and hands the whole unit to Rob.

“You can like, tuck it into yer shirt,” Gaz suggests, since he knows Rob's not one for jewelry. Wrapping nimble digits around the gift, Rob pulls the thing up close to his eyes, just looking at it for a moment before repeating Gaz's earlier action in reverse. The gaudy skull ring dangles in the no man's land between Rob Swire's chest and the table as he leans forward to pat his best friend's shoulder amiably.

“You’re a good man, Gaz,” he grunts, “too good.”

“Only for you, love.” Gareth admits with a small smile. He leans back in his seat to cross his arms and look out at the rest of the restaurant. He *really* needs to buy a proper ring. Rob’s face has flushed at the redhead’s use of such an affectionate title. It’s the third time he’s heard it in two days. Gaz might be the more outwardly romantic of the two of them, but all those songs, with their heart-wrenching, enigmatic lyrics...? Those have always come from the vocalist’s heart.

Before they know it, lunch has been served. It’s piping hot and smells excellent. Rob is famished, as he always is after a show, and has to remind himself to slow down or he’ll upset his stomach.

Finally, *food*. Gareth shuts his trap long enough to start his meal. They’ll talk more later. He’s not about to distract the other man from eating, because he’s sure if he does, Rob’ll float away in the wind.

Like a front loader shoveling up raw earth, Rob tosses the food into his mouth. The producer is *sort of* trying to eat with some decorum, given they’re in public, but it’s so good and he’s *so* hungry. They hadn’t even had sex the night before and he’s famished. The concert had taken the last of whatever Rob possessed on reserve.

“Leavin’ a big tip,” he grunts between bites. “Good job, i’nnit?”

“Definitely,” the redhead responds. As they eat, Gareth digs his phone out, to look at what they have planned for today. “So, Paul’s playin’ a set t’night. We going?”

Bobbing his head up and down enthusiastically, the food refueling his vigor for breathing in general, the skinny man-turned-black-hole affirms that yes, his agenda includes attending Paul and Ben’s set. If nothing else, he wants to see Ben, make sure he’s doing all right. They’re a family, after all. Not that Rob doesn’t love his own family all the way back home, but these guys have comprised a good bit of his life. He *cares* for them, though showing it isn’t his forte.

“Get there early, have a look around,” he suggests, “then maybe ‘ave a go at the tables when they’re ragin’ too hard to notice us.”

The man’s blue eyes reflect a wildly impish inferno within that dulls only when he’s hungry or irritated. Thanks to their kind waiter’s swift service, Rob is neither of these things and his penchant for mischief has returned.

“We’re gonna hijack their set,” Gareth confirms, stuffing the phone back in his pocket and turning his eyes to his food. When was the last time they did *that*? Surely nobody going to see *them* will mind that Knife Party drops in.

“Yeh,” Rob responds, another smile spreading across his lips. He feels somewhat lighter than he has in ages. Maybe Gaz can feel it. He seems to be grinning himself. As the last penne piece disappears between those curling lips, Rob focuses once more on his husband instead

of his food. The struggle had been a strong one when he had been hungry, but it always was and the ginger must understand, because they're still together.

"Can't get enough stage time thanks to last night, can yeh?" This the bassist says with food in his mouth, because he'd like to finish his meal as much as he'd like to talk. "So we've nothing to do *after* the show. Wot'd'ya suppose we do *later*?"

For this question, he brings his eyes up to meet with Rob's. The dark-haired DJ knows his partner's tone. He sees the sparkle in green eyes and knows what the ginger is thinking. Thank heavens he's thinking the same.

"Why've we gotta wait 'til *after*?" Rob whispers, leaning forward over his plate to emphasize his suggestive eyebrow wiggle. He sits back after a moment, unable to hold the hilariously humorous, seductive pose he'd been attempting. "What I mean is," he elaborates, "we've got *all* afternoon."

"So after lunch, it's back to the hotel t'get ready for that show," Gaz summarizes vaguely. 'Among other things' has been heavily implied by both men. It's a delightful sensation in one's chest cavity to have one's heart speed up measurably with anticipation.

Now that their afternoon and evening have been planned out, Gareth's eyes are back on his plate. It's about time he finishes his food up, the sooner that happens, the sooner they can get back to their hotel room, since Rob has already *hoovered* his penne.

"Check, please?" Rob calls as soon as Charlie begins hovering nearby. The waiter makes tracks to honor the DJ's request and soon reappears with the little slip of paper that will free them from their lunch. Gaz is about done and Rob is inspecting the bill, digging for his wallet when a flash of movement catches the corner of the dark-haired man's eye. He looks up, thinking perhaps it's another fan, or their waiter, but no one is to be seen. Charlie must have changed his mind about re-engaging the pair in conversation, that or the occasional fluttering at the edges of Rob's vision are indicative of extreme exhaustion. The latter is most likely.

Gareth has finished his food by now and he allows his gaze to wander out to the rest of the restaurant as Rob pays for the meal, just to keep from *staring* at his partner. The ginger makes a mental note that *he* will pay next time.

"C'mon," Rob grunts, already standing on the other side of the table, offering his hand. He wants to get going, eager to return to their room to enjoy each others' company. Taking his partner's offered hand, Gareth stands to leave their booth, and they're on their way. For much deserved relaxing until evening.

The return walk is much quicker than the one to actually find the place. Rob has his own sunglasses on this time and has not stolen Gareth's hat, figuring if someone's going to recognize them, they're going to recognize them, disguise or no. His form is kind of difficult to cover, wiry and scarecrow-esque as it is. Next to Gaz, he's a fucking beacon.

By the time they reach their door, poor Gaz has Rob all over him, lips pressed here and there, hands wandering over the man's body and the ginger with hardly a hand to swipe their keycard. He manages, bless his soul and they're finally alone, Rob's back pressed to the door

as it closes behind them. *This* is the sort of “relaxing” both men have been envisioning since the topic had been broached at lunch.

Finally they’re alone. It takes Gareth only a second to kick his shoes off and then loop an arm around his partner’s waist to pull him close. With nothing witty to say, he fills the silence by simply pressing his lips to the vocalist’s. Rob wraps his arms tightly around Gaz’s neck, pushing his hips forward to meet the ginger’s.

He wouldn’t mind getting down and dirty against the door, or the floor, or wherever really, but the bed might be easier against his back. On the other hand, he could also straddle Gaz in the hotel chair near the balcony doors. The possibilities are endless, but time isn’t. They want it, both of them, now and hard.

It’s obvious just how eager Rob is, but they’re not about to go at it without lube. Gaz pulls himself out of the kiss just enough to speak, green eyes moving slowly from his partner’s lips to icy blue eyes.

“So’re we taking it to th’bed? Or have you got something *else* in mind?”

He *would* go to grab lube from his bag, if he wasn’t caught in Rob’s vice grip, but here he is. If he can convince his partner to move it along, they can really get the ball rolling.

“Go,” Rob demands. He’s always demanding things. Maybe Gaz likes it, maybe he doesn’t, but god bless him, the ginger always seems to oblige. Releasing his grip on Gaz, Rob leans back against the door and watches the other man from under terribly thick lashes, awaiting his next move so he can follow suit.

“You pick a spot, an’ I’ll grab th’lube.”

There’s the plan, out in the air. So there Gareth goes, to go grab his bag. But now he’s curious, they could go at it in a number of places here, where’s Rob gonna want to do it? The stick-thin DJ saunters as calmly as he can into the hotel room, trying hard not to think of how many people have actually fucked in here. No, that’s a mood killer, guaranteed.

“Been a long while since we’ve fucked in an actual bed,” he observes almost casually. Rob’s favorite place is the shower, but that comes with its own hazards and he’s still a bit tired and sore from the show. They’re going to have to take it easy.

“You wanna do it *there* then?” The bassist has finally fished the bottle from his bag, gesturing to the bed with it. He stands, straightening himself up and approaches Rob. “It’s up to you.”

Their relationship has progressed so steadily that such conversations are commonplace, completely and utterly normal. It’s a comfortable sort of thing they’ve created for themselves and their marriage has only served to solidify this.

“Bed’s fine,” Rob grunts in his half mumbled way. One of his magnificent hands slides up and around behind Gaz’s head to pull their mouths together once more. He does this without disturbing his partner’s hat, an acquired talent.

Rob uses this grip to guide them to their ultimate destination, stopping only when the back of his knees hit. It would expedite the situation if they both undress before going at it, but both DJs are more than willing to let the chips (and clothes) fall where they may.

Naturally shutting his eyes into the kiss, Gareth tosses the bottle of lube to the bed in order to lay a hand on Rob's back. He then leans forward to lay the vocalist back onto the bed.

Rob is always surprised at the other man's strength, the way he can simply manipulate the slender producer's body and put it wherever he wants. The motion is always gentle until the vocalist demands otherwise. Sliding his other hand up and over Gaz's shoulders, meeting the first which has already made purchase.

With Rob lying back on the bed, Gareth takes this chance to lay a leg on it, to better prop himself up; he'll straddle the guy later. For now he's gotta kick this off, which he does by bringing a hand down to Rob's groin, palming him through his jeans. The touch is rough, forceful, but not brutal. It's enough to let Rob know precisely what his ginger friend is about to do and, to be perfectly honest, the anticipation is what really gets him going.

Groaning and gripping the coverlet with one hand, Rob reaches forward with the other to wrap his long fingers around the cloth of Gareth's shirt. He tugs at the man, demanding his presence as immediately as the man is willing to give it.

"Hurry it up," he hisses.

"We've been waiting for this *how long*, and you're not going t'let me take my time with it?" A grin spreads across Gareth's face, he knows it hasn't been *too* terribly long, but, hey. He likes watching Rob go nuts, as he takes his grand old time undoing the dark-haired man's pants.

The dark-haired DJ knows his partner is fucking with him. It drives him insane, makes him rock solid before Gaz has even properly laid a hand on him. The groping is fine, but it's never quite enough. They're not in high school anymore and dry humping just doesn't do the trick.

"C'mon," Rob whines.

"Just can't wait a moment more, princess?" Gareth teases as he finally tugs the fly of Rob's pants down, next is his own, which he gets up to do himself, since his partner is so impatient.

Name calling is commonplace between them. It's never gone past light dirty talk, however. Neither Aussie is into bandage or role play, but rough sex is *always* on the table, sometimes literally. As Rob moves to wiggle out of his pants, however, the man comes to realize that he's not going to hold up well if they go at it like he wants. He's sore, incredibly so, and not how he'd prefer to be.

"*Might* have to go easy," Rob admits between grunts as he removes his pants.

"That's no problem," Then Gaz thinks, how would this work best for the (extremely sore) both of them? As he drops his pants and looks at the bed. "Y'wanna ride me an' take it at your own pace? It may be easier."

Rob thinks about it for roughly half a second before nodding, “sounds good.”

He shifts a little to shimmy out of his pants. The shirt is left, but Rob doesn't honestly *feel* like taking it off, so he doesn't. Now it's just his undergarments, soft, blue and white striped cotton numbers, that are between his nethers and open air.

“Very nice.” The ginger comments, gesturing to the only thing covering Rob's lower region before snatching the bottle up and going to sit himself near the head of the bed.

“I know *you* like ‘em,” Rob responds, “but the fact of the matter is *I* do.”

And he does. The DJ has, ever since college, had a penchant for soft cotton panties. They get Gaz going too, which is of course half of the goal anyway. Chilly blue eyes watch his partner as the ginger takes up a comfortable position with his back against some pillows against the headboard. He follows shortly after, crawling up close enough to lay his lips on Gareth's.

With Rob so close, he leans in to return the kiss. This time he reaches up to take his *own* cap off, just to be sure it's out of the way. This is gonna be good, because afterward, they can have a shower and relax before Paul's show. The timing is excellent.

“Gimme that,” Rob grunts, snatching the lube from Gaz's hand and toying with it a moment. It won't take but a few moments to prep himself; they haven't exactly been chaste lately. But safety first, when it comes to this sort of thing. Working his way to straddle the ginger, he slicks up two fingers and pressing his mouth to Gaz's once more, presses them inside himself, stifling a groan with his partner's lips.

It's not as much fun for him when Rob does all the work, but at least it's getting done. The younger man occupying his lips once more, Gareth figures he had better prepare himself as well. That of course means mindlessly searching for the bottle of lube while taking his dick out of his boxers. He's hard as a rock, unsurprisingly.

And Rob is getting there, massaging himself as he stretches and slicks up his hole. He can hardly wait to ride his husband and then collapse next to him. The dark haired DJ loves the act itself, obviously, but sometimes laying next to the person after it's all said and done is reward in and of itself. He adds a third finger, pulling his lips away just a moment, long enough to moan.

Once Gareth had finally found the lube, it takes him only a moment to cover his cock thoroughly, slicking *himself* up. The ginger is quite accustomed to doing things while his eyes and mouth are occupied. Wiping any excess on the bed sheets, Gareth then slips his hands up Rob's shirt, while tugging it up as he goes, because he's sure they *both* would prefer to keep clothes clean.

In order for Rob to disrobe completely, he'll have to remove his fingers from his hole.

“Gimme a sec,” he mutters, pumping himself a few more times before removing his lube-covered fingers and raising both arms above his head. Settled where he is, their cocks are pushed together, creating a pleasant heat and friction.

Once Rob's arms are up, Gareth lifts the shirt off him, tossing the thing to the floor before repeating the action on himself. He chucks his own shirt into the now growing pile with Rob's.

"Y'ready?" Though the ginger's sure he'll go and sit himself down whenever he is, it's best to ask. Likewise, Rob appreciates the gesture. He pushes himself up, so his chest is pressed close to Gaz's face as the ginger's cock is just underneath him. His heart is racing, the sheen of sweat already coating his flesh.

"I'm... gotta put it in," he grunts between gasps. Rob reaches behind himself and grasps his friend, guiding the slick tip to his ass, running the head along the crease before pushing it toward his hole. He's ready all right. With just a little force, he pushes it inside himself, groaning.

Laying his hands on Rob's sides, Gareth keeps his eyes up on his partner. It's been awhile since they've done it like *this*. He can always count on the skinny DJ to come up with *something* to keep things fresh.

"Careful on your voice, love," the ginger warns, knowing for a fact the other fellow is not yet *fully* recovered from their show last night. *He* wasn't at 100% either, but sometimes these acts of intimacy were all they had to recharge.

"I know," grunts Rob in response as he sinks down, impaling himself on the thick organ. He bites down on his lower lip and curves his back just so to take the full length, settling a moment so as to adjust. Honestly, without Gaz's warning, Rob would be a lot more vocal just now, though he knows better. It's too bad he has a big hunk of a conscience between his thighs right now. What a bummer.

Gareth *hopes* Rob knows and isn't just *saying* that to appease him. The last thing he wants is for the vocalist to completely lose his voice because neither of them can stay off each other longer than a few days.

"Take it slow," the bassist sighs, only because *fuck* is he tight. Rubbing about the other man's hips, he begins to move his thumbs in deep, kneading circles. Rob is still tense, or maybe he has become tense due to the intrusion of the other man's cock. Who knows? But he'll need to relax if this is going to be enjoyable.

"Remember the time we did this... in the studio?" Rob grunts, beginning to lift himself and completely disregarding his partner's chiding. Who needs it, anyway? He's always liked it rough and doing this makes him feel better... safer, somehow. He drops down a moment later, slowly, but with a bit more force than before, tucking his head into the crook of Gaz's neck and latching on with his lips, tasting the salt of exertion and reveling in it.

"We've done it at least a couple times in the studio," the ginger reminds his friend. That being said, he *does* remember how good Rob's voice had sounded in there. Rolling his head back, he moans, simultaneously giving his partner more access to his throat. Rob takes the opportunity to bite down, sucking perhaps a bit harder than he should, aiming to leave a mark.

To be fair, the skinny DJ is thinking of the time they'd "accidentally" recorded their shenanigans. In the haze of sex, his mind has managed to cobble together a fantastic montage of every single fuck-fest they've had in their in-home studio, however. Something about the acoustics makes it that much more grand. With those thoughts in mind, Rob begins to roll his hips, just a little, testing himself, ascertaining whether he's comfortable and energetic enough to start really moving.

Normally, Gaz *would* remind Rob they have plans tonight. But honestly, at this point, he could care less. So what if he's got a hickey? They'll be in a dark club and if anything, they're meaning to come out and be done with it anyway. So.. no problem. His hands move up to clutch Rob's sides, as the bassist bites his lip. His partner's hands find their way to his soft-haired head as Rob begins to find a rhythm. He knows he cannot keep up a frantic pace for long, but riding is one of his favorite positions. They'd do it more often but for the energy it consumes.

"Should've opened the window," laments the skinny man between labored gasps. It's getting warm, very quickly. He feels a bit of sweat sliding down the curve of his back to the crack of his filled ass.

"Yeah, then we'd *really* be public." The ginger grins, knowing how Rob *loves* being vocal. He loves it too, but not to the point where he'd want Rob shouting it out a window.

"That's--it's not what I meant," Rob clarifies, his hips beginning to roll at a forceful pace. He can feel the stiffness in his thighs, warning him he'd better finish up, or Gaz will have to do the work. Maybe it's a good thing the window is closed; it's warmer outside than it is in here, surrounded by air conditioning. Still, a fan might be nice.

"Yeah, I know. But we're in *Miami*, it's way cooler in here if you're looking to air the room out."

This, Gaz says with a little hitch in his voice, it's odd to be talking so casually while he's balls deep in Rob's ass. But they've done it before and will likely do it again.

It's remarkable how the ginger can verbalize what Rob had just been thinking. The dark-haired DJ works himself up and down on that thick cock, even as he wonders after the depths of their relationship.

"It would be... fun to do this on the roof," he groans as his cock rubs on Gaz's chest, hard and begging for release. His thighs are getting tired.

"I mean, sure. If it were in the dead of night and you were gagged er some'n."

Gareth shrugs, feeling heat build in the pit of his stomach at the thought. If they are guaranteed absolute privacy, he is sure Rob will totally go for it. But for now, they're fucking here, on the bed, in a relatively nice hotel room. Gareth wraps one hand around Rob's dick, to give him some attention as the man bounces on him.

The springs have begun to creak with their rutting, but the headboard has yet to forcefully contact the wall. Rob aims to fix this, rocking his hips forward a bit more as Gaz manages to

coax a jet of precum from his rigid cock. The skinny man feels his insides contract as his spine tingles with as shudder. He's close, but this whole 'Rob does the work' thing isn't doing it for him. His legs hurt bad enough without their extracurriculars.

By the feel of things, Rob's getting there all right. Maybe he should take over? He's not sure whether or not he should, however, because things seem to be going fine. Rob hasn't bitched... and Rob *always* bitches when things *aren't*.

"How're you holding up?" the thicker man asks quietly, eyes trailing down to Rob's dick. The dark-haired DJ nods a little, grunting out a reply that sounds something like "pretty close."

The tightness in his balls alerts Rob to the proximity of his climax and thank heavens for it. His legs can't take much more. With Gaz's fingers wrapped around his cock, he ought to finish any moment. The heat between them is intense, building to an incredible crescendo, with a drop to rival one of their songs as Rob comes helplessly between them, splattering seed all the way up his lover's chest and jaw. He bites back a sound louder than an ungainly squawk and a grunt as he rides out his orgasm.

"Holy *fuck*, mate," snickers the ginger as he reaches up to wipe some of the stuff from his face. They're *definitely* hopping in the shower after this. Getting his partner there will be the trick, jelly-like as he has become. Rob is hanging limply on Gaz at this point, draped over him like a wet noodle, panting helplessly, the ginger's hard cock still impaling him. It's a satisfying, if sweaty position in which to find oneself.

That's Gareth's sign that he's got the okay to finish off. To that end, he wraps an arm around his lover, sitting up a little straighter. Through a tremendous feat of strength in combination with his slender partner's minimal weight, the thick ginger shifts, bringing his legs underneath them both, parting his knees just a wee bit and adjusting their position to lay Rob on his back. Close as he is, it should not take even a moment more to finish. He starts bucking his hips, rolling them savagely, pistoning his cock hard into Rob.

The bed begins to creak again, their headboard finally slamming into the wall, weaving its telltale symphony. Gaz knows it's his partner's favorite sound and Rob confirms this by grasping onto him with claw-like hands, likely leaving pleasing marks on his back, and whimpering as his man drives into him. This is the skinny man's favorite part, truth be told. It makes that abyss from yesterday seem eons away, and he knows *exactly* where he is and where he wants to be. The contrast is extraordinary, between the way Rob feels onstage and the way he feels when he's alone with his husband, connected in the deepest, most physical way he knows.

Atop Rob like this, it's hard for Gaz to deny what he feels for the man, not that he's had to do *that* in many years. He is, without a doubt, a man in love. The difference between fucking and actually making love is astounding to the ginger. Because of that difference, it only takes Gareth a few thrusts more to finally reach his climax, finishing hot in Rob's ass, since Rob himself is always so hellbent on barebacking.

The feeling of being filled and satisfied is always a high, a plateau Rob has yet to breach with anything else, save perhaps finishing an album, but lord knows *that* phenomenon is rare.

Production is fucking exhausting, not to say this *isn't*, but no one's waiting for the release of their sex tape. The intimacy they share in these moments is just for them and it feels so good.

After a romp like *that*, Gareth's considering convincing Rob to ride him more often. He, too is satisfied, pleased to the core and completely, totally and madly in love with the man beneath him. Pulling himself out, the ginger lays himself down on the mussed up sheets next to his partner. After a moment of silence, he speaks quietly, so as not to disturb the afterglow.

"...we've gotta shower after this," he whispers, pressing his forehead to the slender producer. Rob nods, his body ablaze with overstimulated, sensitive nerves, every muscle threatening soreness, his ass sadly empty of his partner's thick cock and leaking its milky contents. He is sweaty, limp and satisfied, his personal favorite feeling in the world. Slowly, he turns over, entangling long legs with Gareth's, nodding once more at the shower comment, unsure if he'd responded before, hazy in the descent toward slumber.

Sure... shower... later.

Chapter End Notes

I'm going to go ahead and let y'all know that my co-author and myself know that this is hardly a completely accurate, scientific portrayal of homosexual male intercourse. This is **HARDLY** a how-to, or a manual of any kind. This is part story, part **EROTICA**--so we're gunna take some.... how you say, artistic liberties with the whole shebang. Please enjoy it for what it is and know that neither GunshotBride, nor myself are gay men. We understand just enough to titillate and I like that word because it has "tit" in it.

ONCE AGAIN THIS STORY IS NOT TO BE SHOWN TO ANY ARTIST MENTIONED, EVER. EVER. EVER. IF YOU DO THIS, YOU ARE A SHAMEFUL BEING AND WE WILL DENY INVOLVEMENT. WE DO NOT WISH TO UPSET OUR FAVORITE PRODUCERS. EVER. Capiisce?

sunlight splinters

Chapter Summary

Deadlines, appointments and contracts are the ingredients that make up the life of an on-tour musician, DJ or otherwise. Knife Party's "day off" is no exception and their extracurricular activities have just about made them late.

Chapter Notes

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

Rob awakens first, hours later, slowly coming to after his whole body has shut down from the exhaustion of lovemaking and the previous evening's show. Evidently one night's sleep had not been enough, but he'd hardly anticipating sleeping a solid five hours. His eyes shoot to the clock on table between their beds. The display reads:

"Gaz! Six thirty!" He hisses harshly, wiggling violently to awaken his partner from yet another fantastically deep slumber. The room still stinks of sex and so do they, fairly stuck together by salty sweat and cum. It's disgusting, though not repulsive, which is an odd combination.

Rob continues to writhe, disentangling himself from the mess they've made, watching the clock move from 6:30 to 6:31 with little response from his partner. The words "for fuck's sake" are forming on his lips as the ginger's green eyes finally begin to crack open.

"W'zzat..?" Gaz mumbles, because what's so special about six thirty? Nothing he can remember right now, so it's probably nothing important.

"The set?" Rob hisses, irritated that his half-sleeping lover is not immediately a rocket scientist upon awakening. He extricates himself from Gaz's arms and legs and Rob subsequently tumbles his skinny ass off the edge of the bed with a thud.

That *thud* is enough to make Gareth open his eyes, and barely sit himself up, rubbing palms against his eyes.

"Oh fuck--yeh, th'set. When's that?" Supposing he should *probably* get up if Rob's making a fuss.

"Nine," responds the skinny man, already on his way to the shower. 9:00 would be an easy deadline, except that they have a relatively lengthy drive ahead of them in potentially heavy traffic. Mattie will have acquired a car for his delinquent charges, but that's useless if they're not *in* it. In moments, the shower is running and Rob is in it, shaking off the dizziness of exertion, sleep, and standing too quickly. It will be good to be surrounded with positive energy all night, safe and rejuvenating.

Gareth's eyes follow his naked partner as he's on his way to the bathroom, and supposes he'd better clean up too if they're going to get there on time. Gareth shuffles through their pile of discarded clothing, kicking his boxers aside and heads to the bathroom, knowing for a fact Rob won't mind that he steps right in. So it's just what he does, stepping into the already hot shower with Rob, who's wasted no time beginning to clean himself.

"So.. how long d'ya think we have to get ready?" Asks the still half asleep bassist.

"Fifteen minutes, maximum. I looked at my phone just now," a feat he'd somehow accomplished between the bed and the bathroom, "and I've got three messages from Mattie and one from Paul."

He's not panicked, per se, just irritated that his sleep had been interrupted by an event he's already planned to attend. Rob has no one to blame but himself for not setting an alarm.

Rob always has the shower so damn hot, but he's not about to complain right now. That's a topic to bitch about in the bathroom of their own home, when they *don't* have things they're expected to do.

"Did'ja *read* any of said messages?" Gareth presses further, because if they're not late yet, nobody can be complaining that they *aren't* someplace yet.

"Paul was wondering where we are and Mattie just wanted to let us know he's got a car," he responds slowly, "and maybe I'll... text them back when I'm clean."

The water, the heat of it, always soothes Rob in his deepest core, slowing his mind to a crawl. He turns to wrap his arms around Gareth, sighing into the crook of his neck.

"You'd better, I d'nno how we're gonna get to the show on time without that car."

With Rob's arms around him, Gareth reciprocates. He'd love to take just a bit longer than fifteen minutes, just to thoroughly enjoy the shower with his lover. He knows they don't have time, however.

Rob is thinking the same, but it's their own fault for sleeping too long. Oh well. Evidently, their bodies had needed the recovery time. He feels excellent, a little sore, but no longer weary. The water washes away the sweat and filth, and the nap had washed away his exhaustion. The whole afternoon has been a win-win and the evening looks promising.

They stand in here for a few minutes, and Gareth's sure that's more than enough time to wash sweat and cum away, so he pulls away to shut the water off, since they're tight for time.

"If Paul asks why we're late, I'm telling the truth," says the thicker man as he tugs the shower curtain open. Rob is aghast for half a moment, before he seems to recall what he'd done onstage not 18 hours previous.

"That's cruel," he points out, following Gaz and grasping for a towel.

"It's not like he hasn't already suspected it," Gaz reminds his lover, snatching a towel for himself. The ginger starts drying himself off. Good thing he has taken his clothes off to keep

them clean before they'd gone at it.

Rob moves around his own bed to pick out some new clothes, all black, most likely. He grumbles about how they might go about coming clean to their closest friends, who probably already knows anyway.

“What do you think, huh?” Rob stands, holding two equally black shirts, “this one, or this one?”

Gaz was just tugging boxers on when Rob asked him the question, and he turned his head.

“Eh.. that one,” he gestures vaguely. It could’ve been either, though he’s leaning toward the one on Rob’s right side. Either one looks fine, and he’s sure it really doesn’t matter which one his lover chooses. Anyway, Gaz is much more focused on getting back into tight pants. He really can’t help himself at this point. Despite the weight he’s lost, he still seems to find proportionately tight pants.

Rob detects Gareth’s lack of interest in which shirt he wears and so arbitrarily chooses the one on the right, tossing the other side. A t-shirt is best for this Miami heat anyway. Day or night, it’s hot in Florida and in a packed club, it’ll be doubly toasty.

“I think I need this,” he admits quietly, “the crowds, I mean... just getting out and being around so much energy is good for me.”

“Really..? But when we’re home you’re usually coming up with any excuse you can pull out of your ass to stay home when you don’t *have* to leave.”

It’s an odd thing to hear from Rob, but, suspicious as Gaz is to hear he feels good, the ginger cannot fight a smile as he pulls his shirt on and adjusts it.

“Remember that old saying about gift horses?” Rob responds, giving Gaz a gander at his best bitch face. “Don’t complain.”

It’s near impossible for Gareth to be at all intimidated by that face anymore. It lost it’s touch ages ago, two years into their friendship, probably. Rob had a lot to sneer about in high school.

“So, y’text Mattie about that car yet?” Gareth asks, dressed and positioned on the edge of the bed, eyes comfortably stuck on Rob. The latter retrieves his phone and fiddles with it, thumbs dancing across the screen which throws a white-blue glow on the pale man’s face. Rob’s tongue has a habit of sticking out when he’s texting. It’s endearing, if nothing else, and he doesn’t even realize he’s doing it.

“It’ll be around in ten minutes,” comes the response after a few sent and received text messages.

“Oh good, a few more minutes to sit around and wait.”

Or should they be heading down to the lobby and waiting there? Whatever happens, Gareth’ll let Rob decide, he’s usually the one in control eighty percent of the time anyway. True to

form, Rob straightens and smooths his shirt. Lobby it is, evidently.

“C'mon, we can talk on the way.”

He rarely suggests talking; it usually just happens, so this must be important to the skinny DJ. He stuffs his hands in his pockets after ensuring he's got his keycard for the rooms computerized lock and heads through the heavy door to the deserted hallway. The lights are dim and the carpet is soft, befitting a higher class of hotel. Rob does enjoy the slight pampering, though he misses his own bed and studio. For now, he'll save the bitching for Gaz, who always takes it with grace and a pinch of salt. Anyway, Rob is only expressing what they're both feeling.

Standing, Gareth makes sure he has his phone, wallet and cap on the way to the door with Rob in tow, y'know, all of the basic needs. Securing the latter, he pats the top of his own head as if to reassure himself. They've made the right choice, of this he's certain. He's never *been* more certain of anything or anyone in his whole life. Leaving their room quietly, he starts for the elevator ahead of Rob.

“Let's take the stairs,” suggests the goatee-bearing disc jockey, gesturing over his shoulder, the opposite direction from Gaz's current path. Something about the hallway leading to the elevator has disturbed him, though he cannot pinpoint it, “‘cause to be honest, that way looks a *lot* like the Overlook.”

Gaz won't make fun of him for this. He's always sort of antsy in these hotels, especially after dark. They always request a room at one end or the other, to avoid such a thing. Sadly, this time, their end is not near the easiest way down. Hopefully, the ginger will forgive Rob. The hallway is silent, carpet muffling their steps as they change direction.

Looking back towards the elevator, he finds it a bit odd Rob would rather take his time going to the ground floor, considering how he had been fine taking the elevator when they returned after lunch. But he'll do it, so he won't be awkwardly standing at the bottom of the stairs watching for Rob to catch up.

“Y'okay mate?” The ginger asks on their way there.

“When... hotels get quiet,” Rob responds quietly, shrugging. He's not giving his partner the whole story, but he can't, since he doesn't know it himself. Just something about the silent hallways when people have either settled in for the night or vacated, out to party.

That's a bit vague, it gives Gareth nothing to go on, but he won't pry. As usual, he leaves the other man to his own devices. Whatever makes him happy suits Gaz just fine. Quietly following beside Rob towards the staircase, he opens the heavy door for his partner when they finally reach that point, ushering him through with a grand gesture.

Rob smiles at this, heading immediately down the stairs, but sparing a minute glance upward, toward the roof access, bolted and locked above them. He's always wanted to try doing it on a rooftop. The thought settles itself at the back of his brain as they descend.

Gareth follows right behind his partner, briefly glancing up the stairs as Rob does, though his thoughts are more along the lines of ‘ *what’s he looking at* ’ than anything else. So thinking nothing of it, his eyes are quickly back down on the stairs themselves.

“It’s good to be back,” Rob admits as he turns the corner and heads down the next flight. He doesn’t need to speak loud, as the acoustics in the stairwell are phenomenal. “You know, sort of back.”

He finds himself chattering a little and then humming Hold Your Colour, one of his favorites to perform. It’s got a lot of memories attached, for both of them. The humming soon turns to singing.

From Gareth’s perspective, it’s nice to hear Rob so chipper, especially given their recent escapades. Gaz would join in, if he wasn’t enjoying just listening to Rob sing so much, so he allows the man to continue in peace, grinning from ear to ear.

Rob scuttles down the last set of stairs and shoulders his way through the door. The lobby is mostly quiet at this time of the day, the occupants of the hotel out and about to attend a party, or crash one. He can see the car outside the doors and turns to beckon Gaz, who’s a bit behind him. There’s a chill in the stairwell, feels like the air conditioning is out of wack or something. A shiver runs down Rob’s spine as he waves at his partner.

“C’mon, C’mon.... Jesus ya got like three stairs to go.”

Well shit, the ginger didn’t think he was lagging *that* far behind. It didn’t take him long to catch up to Rob, anyway.

“Hey, d’ya see me telling you how fast *you* ’ve gotta to bolt down the stairs, mate?” Gaz retorts. He gestures up the stairwell with a wave of his hand, he heads out the door. Rob’s mind has moved out of retort-earshot anyway. There’s no talking to him when he’s this excited; it’s a rare occurrence.

Rob’s hands are comfortably in his pockets as he strolls across the unoccupied lobby, carelessly tossing a half smile at the nearly sleeping receptionist, who’s obviously at the end of her shift. She shifts her rounded face from one palm to the other and flips at page of her book, her made up lids threatening to close at any moment. She doesn’t even gesture back as he makes his way toward the transparent front doors. The car is, indeed, awaiting them and ready to go. He looks over his shoulder, as if to ascertain whether or not his partner is actually following.

Seeing the car, it takes him only a couple seconds to catch up, and walk right passed Rob, then *straight* to the driver side door. It’s a nice ride and the concierge who’s driven it seems pleased as punch to hand the keys over to Gaz, who honestly looks like the more competent driver of the two.

“I’m driving.” Though by now it should be obvious, since he’s climbing in the driver’s seat.

“Great,” Rob grunts, knowing it’s for the best, but unable to express true joy in this level of humidity. The concierge has moved around to open the door for Rob, who raises a brow. “Ah,

thanks?"

"It's my pleasure, Mr. Swire," responds the man, whose sharp, golden name tag reads--well, nothing. It hasn't got a name. A strange chill runs down his spine as he meets the man's eyes.

"Yeh," Rob manages, spying something he's not sure he likes in those eyes. The nametag SNAFU victim's fingers brush Rob's as the DJ takes the door from him and settles into the car that's frankly way too nice for either of them. Those digits are clammy and cold, almost unsettling, though Rob attributes it to air conditioning.

Once the ginger is buckled in, he starts the car up and doesn't waste a moment flicking the AC on whilst watching his partner, waiting for him to strap in.

"You've got directions, right?" Hands on the wheel, he's itching to start driving, but safety first. The door closes as Rob settles in moments later and, with hesitating fingers, pulls the buckle outward and fastens both ends, blue eyes transfixed on something outside.

"Huh?" He grunts, mind completely elsewhere, long fingers folded in a tight, interlocking grip in his lap. Presently, he pulls his gaze away from whatever has had it trapped and refocuses upon his partner. "Wot'd y'say?"

"D'ya know where this place is? I don't wanna drive 'round Miami all night, mate." Or is Gaz going to have to look this up himself? What's Rob's mind on to space him out. "What's up?"

"There's a GPS on this thing, right?" Rob suggests, pulling himself back to reality alongside the curb and disregarding Gareth's second question. He leans forward and begins touching buttons on the vehicle's monitor, punching in the address of the venue Pendulum will be playing. Paul had seen to it Rob and Gaz will have no choice but to attend, texting not only both of *them*, but Mattie as well, with the address.

It's sort of adorable watching Rob mess with buttons. He's not used to being in one of *these* cars. Cabs and such are their usual method of movement. So once it has the route calculated properly, Gareth starts driving. On his way out of the hotel parking lot and onto the road. He lays his right hand between them, facing up and open, calling for his partner.

Rob notes its presence and debates a moment, toying with the idea of teasing his husband a little. Rather than be a shit head about it, however, the skinny, delighted DJ wraps his fingers around Gareth's hand. He tilts his body over, lifting the pair of hands to his mouth, pressing his lips to the fingers that are so intricately entwined.

Sparing a second to glance over at his partner, the ginger grins as he turns his attention back to the road. He occasionally looks to the GPS between them. It's difficult, for some reason, to take his eyes off Rob. Something about the man is... glowing? The skinny man seems more at ease than he has been in a while. Traffic has slowed them to a stop and the crowds move this way and that in the Miami night when one of them finally breaks the silence.

"Wot?" Rob grunts suddenly, noting the pointed stare. "Road's that way."

“Th’road doesn’t exactly matter when we’re not moving,” Gaz observes, gesturing to the roadblock of other cars in front of them. He then decides to return his eyes to the road, if only to keep Rob at ease. It's so much nicer for the both of them when the anxious DJ is at peace.

Rob seems to be quite content to lay his own gaze on his husband and leave it there, as if looking elsewhere will cause him to miss something important, as if Gaz is the most fascinating thing he's ever seen. They're going to be late, but Rob has ceased caring, lost in his exploration of the ginger's face.

Gareth drives the car only as slow as traffic is forcing him, while looking to Rob every now and then. The fact that the dark haired man is just staring at him forces a sheepish smile to his lips.

“What are you *staring* at?” The ginger asks as he begins to laugh.

“Nothin’,” Rob grunts, equally sheepish in his response. He hates being caught at this, but it’s not often he can just watch Gaz. His partner is, without a doubt, the best looking man he’s ever seen, and obviously the hottest he’s ever dated. How he has managed to hang onto the ginger tightly enough to convince him into marriage is beyond the withdrawn DJ. According to their GPS, their hellishly slow ride is almost over, however and so Rob forces himself to stop making Gaz uncomfortable with his creepish staring, opting to watch his own legs, as if to make sure they’ve not gone anywhere. Something about staring out the window of a slow-moving car is far too cliché for him.

One more look at the GPS, and Gareth nods to himself.

“We prolly woulda been there *three hours* ago had we walked, but I s’pose the car’s a lot less crowded than the sidewalk.” Of course it’s horribly exaggerated, but the bassist says it this way in hopes of cracking a smile out of Rob.

“Last thing we need is a mob ‘f eager fans,” Rob mumbles with a half-cocked smile. They manage to secure their reserved, VIP parking spot at last and the slender DJ is more than a little relieved to be in the shelter of the club’s private garage. It is a bit quieter in here, even as venue security comes to collect them. He’s unaccustomed to having someone get his door for him, especially since that someone isn’t Gaz.

“Thanks,” he grunts quietly, standing and stretching.

Hopping out of the vehicle, Gareth’s quick to join up with Rob, but then as they’re in the company of other people, he lays a hand on his throat, suddenly embarrassed to think about the hickey Rob laid on him earlier, he hopes it’s not too terribly noticeable.. But then to seem a bit calmer about it, he makes it look as if he’s just rubbing his neck.

“Y’ready to crash a party?” Gareth asks on their way to the nearest staircase.

“Let’s do it,” Rob returns, smiling fully, ear-to-ear and with a little sparkle in his eyes. He reaches out for Gaz’s hand and they ascend together, as a team, as it has always been and hopefully always will be, with the bass as their guide.

Chapter End Notes

we debated how to end this chapter--well, Mar's a good partner, so we didn't really debate so much have a three or four sentence discussion and then decided to cut 'er off here... the juicy bits will keep coming (just like Rob, bless him). This one's a bit short, but I promise, it's been done on purpose. To keep the stress down, we've elected to set no deadlines and make no promises about posting. Thanks for your patience.

shellshock

Chapter by [Xygenscenic](#)

Chapter Summary

Out of the frying pan and into another, similar frying pan. It's time for the Pendulum DJ set. Paul's invited the guys and they've GOT to make this appointment.

Knife Party is greeted with the expected level of enthusiasm from Paul, Ben, a handful of stage techs, and the low roar of the crowd. They're waiting for the set to begin, which means Rob and Gaz are not late. Rob jams an elbow into his partner's ribs and leans up to whisper into his ear.

"Just in fucking time... unless they waited for us," his voice is laced with satisfaction and an air of victory. By the looks of everything, they haven't delayed a second, because after a massive, powerful bear hug from his old friend Paul "El Hornet" Harding and a tight, corded, muscular squeeze from Ben "Verse" Mount, both men head out to their places onstage, leaving Gareth and Rob relatively alone, for the time being. They'll be expected to make an appearance eventually, but for now, they're free to take in the scene. There are drinks and snacks in the VIP lounge just offstage and it is toward this area Rob is sorely tempted to make a beeline.

Leaning in to Rob, Gareth picks up the conversation, shaking his head.

"I doubt they waited, maybe we've just got impeccable timing." Besides, why would they postpone a show *just* for them? They're celebrities, but they're not *that* damn important.

Rob nods, "yeah, I'm sure that's the case."

The sardonic humor which characterizes the man is heavy-handed this particular evening, jovial as the man is post-sex/nap/shower. He's was always in a better mood when he's gotten some. Gaz is always happy to provide.

Gareth's eyes, meanwhile, are glued to Rob. He can't help but feel a bit fuzzy inside seeing him so happy for so long. He's had a smile on his face practically the whole day.. well, the ever since lunch, anyway. He hopes this lasts a while. Rob Swire is the most beautiful thing he's ever seen, especially when elated.

Up front, Paul is putting the crowd through their paces already, opening with an upbeat track and allowing the tired and wired Ben to woop them into a frenzy.

"Glad he's feeling better," Rob comments offhandedly, thought he can still hear some congestion in the man's voice.

“Oh right, I still gotta scold him for not bein’ at Ultra las’ night!” Gareth points out, nodding to himself. “Thanks for reminding me.” Thanks to him, he had to MC the *whole* show, which just *hadn’t* felt right without Ben.

“You’re a *fine* hype man,” Rob assures him teasingly, “leave ‘im be... and give it a sec, we can’t just make our grand entrance without being--”

He’s about to say “announced,” when El Hornet does just that, mentioning in an almost offhanded way that they’re playing host to a couple of very special guests and that those guests ought to feel free to come forward whenever they please. That means “now” in MC talk.

Thankfully, Gareth catches this despite also listening to his partner talk, gesturing with a nod of his head towards the stage after Paul speaks. He takes Rob by the wrist, and leads him right along, waltzing up there with him in tow. Rob raises his free hand as the crowd goes absolutely insane, rivaling the noise of their closing show at Ultra.

“I’m gunna be deaf after this,” Rob shouts into his partner’s ear. Though his mouth is inches away, he still has to raise his voice to the level of a forceful holler to be heard.

“Doubt it.” Considering the life *they’ve* lead, they’ve seen this sort of setting all before. With the way *they* play their music, if Rob was going to go deaf, it would have happened already... and it nearly did. But it wasn’t thanks to loud music, ironically.

Finally, they’ve reached the safety of the turntables and their good friends, Paul and Ben. El Hornet is soaking up the applause he knows is only half for him. He’s the one who’d discovered these two budding DJ’s back in their early years, back home, back in Perth. It’s such a long way from here. Rob is keenly aware of all of this and more as he, too, pulls positive energy from the crowd, allowing them to replenish *him* for once.

With his hand wrapped around Rob’s wrist, Gareth lifts their hands to the roof, if only mainly for the applause. Partly to embarrass Rob in front of a ton of people, but hey, time to mess with a set, right?

Under the multicolored lights of the set, Rob’s flushed cheeks are invisible. He can feel the pulse of his blood, hammering through his veins, heading every which way, making him hot, making his heart thump, making him smile. Rob tosses a wave with the other hand before both are lowered and he’s allowed to touch the table. El Hornet claps him on the back and shouts:

“It’s good to have you lads here!”

“Good t’be here,” Rob responds. “Really is.”

Gareth’s eyes are on Rob and Paul, mostly Rob, but who can blame him? With a smile like that, it’s all he *can* stare at. He can’t put the words on just how good he feels, he’s even forgotten to let go of his partner’s wrist. Only when Rob gives a small tug, indicating he wants to mess with the table is Gaz forced to let go.

Rob sneaks a smile at him that might be considered scandalous, if republished in high definition. He has not married this man for no reason, that's for certain. As he lays hands on the table, he watches Gareth's move as well, marvelling at how easily they work together, how fluid.

At this point, it's only second nature for Gareth to be able to hear the music as Rob does, to just be able to guess and feel out what needs tweaking. Whatever's reachable from his side, he tends to, it's not often he has to reach over to his partner's side of the table to change something. But when he does it's not an unpleasant experience, which usually means they likely brush hands, at the very least.

Rob leans over and communicates to Gaz that they ought to shift the bass a little for the next line, gesturing across to his friend's side. He nods with approval when the ginger carries out his idea flawlessly, venturing a minute smile.

Sure he may not be the one that *makes* the majority of their music, but he always knows where he's going with it and what he wants to hear.. Unless of course it's *Begin Again*, sitting though the production of *that* was stunning, and hit him like a freight train. He usually has to take a step away from the table when that plays over huge booming speakers. Luckily though, they're not at that point yet, so until they do, he's working the table.

Gareth is a remarkable man, in Rob's opinion, able to sense the motion of a song and the intent before it even happens. Their sets flow well because of this kinetic desire to move like a booming river, together, wild and yet in a general forward direction. Rob has the urge to kiss his partner, but holds back in favor of discretion, especially given his slip the night before.

Once the ginger feels he's done his part for this bit of the song, he takes a step back, to let Rob do his thing. This is normally the bit where he would start shouting at the crowd, and he would, had he not destroyed his voice yesterday. Anyway, it's not their show. There's some relief in that, being able to enjoy themselves with no expectations.

Well, that's not entirely true. Everyone expects Knife Party to put on a show, but it's not *their* show, which relieves immense pressure. Rob is enjoying himself, relieved that they're amongst friends again and just as happy to step back from the table to allow Paul to take over.

"Got 'em hyped for me, mate," Paul conveys, pressing his mouth to Rob's ear to do so, "thanks for comin'."

"Anytime!" Rob shouts back, nodding. He withdraws a little ways, meeting up with Gaz and, in the darkness, their fingers entwine.

Once they've left the tables to the other two, Gareth found himself tempted to go to that VIP lounge. But first, he takes his hat off to put it on Rob's head. Not for any reason in particular, other than he felt good enough to be without the thing right now. Leaning into Rob, Gareth talks into his partner's ear.

"Can I buy you a drink, superstar?"

“You think I’m that type of guy?” Rob’s mock offense is always entertaining, to the both of them. “Gimme one drink and I’ll go home with ya?”

Gareth is always coming up with more creative ways to indulge Rob’s needy personality. The ginger never complains. He’s an angel, pierced and wrapped all up in denim and leather and Rob is absolutely head over heels. He cannot pinpoint when this affection began, but he knows where it’ll end--tonight, at least.

“I was hoping, yeah. I can buy ya *two* if it’ll seal the deal.” Raising a brow, he hopes maybe adding to his offer will further entice his already-interested partner. It’s not as if Rob has anywhere *else* to spend the night in Miami.

“One’ll do,” Rob promises, taking Gaz’s arm. Together, they descend the back stairs to the VIP lounge. No one is present and the alcohol flows freely. It’s ideal, for both of them, isolated, quiet, equipped with snacks... yes, it is indeed ideal. Rob settles himself on the couch and crosses long legs. “Impress me, stud.”

“*Shit*. We have the bar all to ourselves? Right then, don’t mind if I do.” Maybe if they’re lucky, Paul and Ben will join them after their show, which it still dully booming in the distance. But for now, he’s looking for drinks for those present, ie his husband.

“I had a thought, Gaz,” Rob spouts suddenly, waving his hand about as he does when he’s enthusiastic about the topic. “Hear me out.”

He’s formulating aloud, as he often does when faced with a difficult choice. This isn’t the usual “where should we put the drop” dilemma, however, and requires a bit more nuance.

“Go on.” The thicker man insists as he continues going about fixing them both a drink, though nothing that’s about to get them shitfaced.

“The fellas are all in town, right?” He doesn’t wait for an answer, watching Gareth’s back as the man works. “We need... just... a night to go out to dinner.”

It’s not entirely clear where Rob is going with it, but there will be a point to the end of this meandering path he’s taking. Gaz knows him well enough to realize this and so is unlikely to try and force the man to hurry along. Instead, he finishes mixing their drinks silently, and brings them both over to where his partner is seated, planting his ass on the couch next to Rob. He hands the dark-haired man his drink. The DJ receives it gratefully, still mulling over where he’s going and piecing it together as he speaks.

“We gotta tell ‘em,” Rob finally concludes, “about us... about all this. I know they *know*... but not all of it, not... this.”

He gestures between them helplessly, unable, for some reason, to convey the word “marriage” properly with his worthless babbling.

“About...” Gareth responds, lifting a hand, wiggling his ring finger with the skull adornment, symbolizing the word ‘marriage’ for Rob. Though, just like his partner, not using the actual word. This is going to be an issue for them. It will take time. Gaz is willing to wait.

“Yeh--that,” Rob nods, glad his husband understands him, even when he doesn’t understand himself. Obviously, he knows where he wants to go with this, but is hoping Gaz will fill it in *for* him. Won’t that be nice?

“I’m sure it won’t be that hard, mate... The guys are like family.” They’d already guessed the two-man DJ duo had gotten together, unprompted. So he’s sure admitting *this* sort of news will go over well. They watched the two of them kiss on stage, though between the adrenaline, flashing of fireworks and the intermittent darkness, how *much* the band had seen is up for debate. On the other hand, *Paul* has had a front seat to watch their love bloom.

“This’ll be a cakewalk,” the ginger assures his partner.

Their relationship has been almost 20 years in the making, a few more days hiding should not make too much difference. For some reason, however, in Miami, finally surrounded by their friends, feels a unique pressure to “come clean” about the whole thing. It just seems right.

“After the show,” he offers, “Ben and Paul, at least... we’ll start there.”

“Well of course. You already said you weren’t wanting to come out on stage.” For now though, they drink. Rob and Gaz put their feet up and listen to the soft boom of the other men’s music in the adjacent room, comfortable sitting as they are in the lounge.

After a moment, Rob stirs, shifting his position and settling on Gaz's lap. His thin legs are spread wide over his partner's muscular thighs. He feels vulnerable and protected in the same motion. Right now, in this moment, Rob could care less if they are interrupted. His adrenaline almost craves it.

“Easy,” Gaz warns. “I mean, maybe not like *this* , right?”

“Don’t care,” mumbles his partner, leaning in and pressing their mouths together. The energy of the crowd always pushes Rob to the limits of endurance and sanity. He’s at the edge the moment they leave the stage, always, without fail. This time, it’s not their show, but he’s still full of adrenaline and excited. Normally, the ginger wouldn’t mind, but given their proximity to people who might spread the wrong message, he’s hesitant. He disengages and grabs Rob by the chin.

“Baby steps,” he insists, firmly. “You’ll thank me.”

Rob knows for a fact his husband is right, but it irritates him nevertheless. Grudgingly, he crawls off and wanders away, checking out the VIP spread. He’s a little hungry; lunch has been hours past and this grub is delectable. Grabbing a plate, he begins filling it. Slowly, Gaz stands, stretching, admiring his best friend’s figure and the amount of food he can pack away without gaining a pound. He tugs at his own hip self-consciously. Unbeknownst to him, the gesture doesn’t go unnoticed.

“Y’r not fat, mate,” Rob mumbles, cocking his head and pushing a small sausage into his mouth. “Best hips I’ve ever straddled, t’be perfectly honest with you.”

Gaz's face goes as red as his hair and then some. He should be accustomed to this shit, but every time Rob compliments him, he feels like a young uni student again, discovering what it's like to be loved for the first time. Rob is a blessing, whether he realizes it or not. The knowledge and realization brings a flutter to his heart. He wonders if all couples feel this way.

"Who's second best?" He asks, playfully, beginning to fill his own plate, all traces of self-conscious fear gone, banished by his lover's crooked smile. Together, they make a formidable duo, banter and all.

"Mmm that'd prolly be... eh, y'know it'll jus' get ya riled up," Rob teases, knowing Gaz is well aware there's no one else.

"Fightin' words," responds Gareth, finishing his pile and sauntering back to the couch where Rob has already perched. He's picking at his food like some kind of ill-tempered vulture. Gaz is in love. "Mind if I...?"

"Well," purrs Rob, "I *was* waiting for someone, but 'e bailed... might 's well take his place."

"What kinda bloke leaves a guy like you hangin'?" Gaz responds, tossing some small sweet in his mouth. "Damn shame, that."

"Real tosser," confirms Rob with a flick of his wrist. Before the banter can continue, however, the stage sounds filter loudly into the room as the VIP door opens. Ben and Paul enter, sweaty, flushed, and grinning. The roar of the crowd tells Rob and Gaz all they need to know.

"Fucked up, didja?" Rob grunts.

"As usual," Ben chirps, tossing his hands in the air. "Total failure. Not a single cheer."

"The Swire has spoken; we are not worthy," says Paul, pressing the back of his hand to his forehead. "I might swoon."

Rob and Gaz are now looking at each other, however, the mirth of the moment passing as they exchange the knowing glance that tells the other man what must come next.

"Oi, mind if we... before you two start eatin'," Gaz interjects. Ben and Paul both freeze, suddenly realizing their friends are not, in fact, playing.

"What's goin' on, mate?" Ben ventures, almost afraid to ask. He hopes it's not one of their mothers. Sickness in a family really eats people up.

"Nothin's wrong," Gaz reassures them, "but... we do sorta have an--"

"Announcement," Rob fills in. "That... should've been err... we should'a said some'n a year ago t'be perfectly honest."

He's mumbling again, the way he does in interviews where he's uncomfortable and trying like hell to pass the buck off to Gaz. Usually, his partner would oblige him, but the ginger

backs down, knowing this is a message Rob must deliver on his own.

“About a year ago...” Rob starts, swallowing hard and pulling himself up to his full height, if nothing else to make himself feel bigger than the terror inside him is allowing. “Ah... Gaz... he proposed.”

End Notes

I'm so grateful to my faithful, energetic, beautiful, talented co-author for helping me accomplish this. Believe me folks, there's more to come and you won't be disappointed.... all 13 of you.

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