

## Anything for a Vote

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/901471) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/901471>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Explicit</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">One Direction (Band)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Harry Styles/Louis Tomlinson</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Harry Styles</a> , <a href="#">Louis Tomlinson</a> , <a href="#">Zayn Malik</a> , <a href="#">Liam Payne</a> , <a href="#">Niall Horan</a> , <a href="#">Anne Cox</a> , <a href="#">Robin Twist</a> , <a href="#">Gemma Styles</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Political AU</a> , <a href="#">Arranged Marriage</a> , <a href="#">Alternate Universe</a> , <a href="#">POV Multiple</a> , <a href="#">POV Louis</a> , <a href="#">POV Harry</a> , <a href="#">Complete</a> , <a href="#">Bottom Harry</a> , <a href="#">Top Louis</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2013-07-28 Words: 62,360 Chapters: 20/20

# Anything for a Vote

by [louispalooza](#)

## Summary

Harry was used to his father controlling his life. Everyone in the family was used to it after all the years his father had been in politics. But perhaps he should have drawn the line at an arranged marriage. So why had the sight of Louis Tomlinson made all his defiance disappear?

Louis Tomlinson loved his job. Most people didn't understand why, but he just loved being involved behind the scenes of a political campaign. He was quite shocked however when the senator suggested Louis marry his son to give his campaign that extra edge it needed. He was even more shocked that he had agreed.

## Notes

Thank you for reading and please let us know what you think here or on tumblr ([pocketfuloflouis.tumblr.com](#)). Some of you may prefer to read on tumblr because some chapters have links to relevant visual aids FYI.

Also, whenever Harry talks or texts it's in Bold

Whenever Louis talks or texts it's Italic

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

# Prologue

~Robin's POV~

I am Senator Robin Twist from Vermont. I am going to be running for president. Years ago, I decided that I wanted to run for the 2016 election. It seemed simple enough. I have a phenomenal staff, a perfect wife named Anne, a stepdaughter in college, Gemma, and a stepson named Harry; I just couldn't help but feel that something was missing.

I had many people working for my campaign and getting prepared for the grand announcement eight months from now in February. The problem was, I couldn't figure out what was missing. None of my advisors were any help, so I started watching for others who could come up with a solution to my problem.

I spent a month watching before I finally had an idea of who could give me the answer I wanted: Louis Tomlinson. He has been working on my campaign throughout his three years of college and had excelled to the point where he was hired right out of college. He was young, exuberant, and hadn't been bogged down by years of working in the field. If anyone had the answer, it would be him.

~Louis' POV~

I was sitting at my desk reworking a presentation in order to give it visual appeal and hopefully keep people awake. Next thing I know, the Senator's personal, I mean *personal*, assistant approached me. This was unheard of for first year workers.

"Are you Louis Tomlinson?" He asked and I nodded.

"The Senator would like to see you in his office now." He left no room to question him, so I saved and closed out what I was working on.

I followed him to the Senator's office, and while I may have appeared calm on the outside, internally I was a panicked mess. I have no idea why he would want to talk to me. My work had been good and even if it wasn't, he didn't fire people personally. I didn't have any feuds with anyone else and I had even managed to get a few compliments from the higher ups.

I was surprised when I walked into his office and he looked excited. He has this excited energy to him that would have been contagious had I not been so nervous. The assistant was dismissed as soon as I walked through the door. Then all his attention was on me.

"Hello, Louis. Please have a seat." I sat down immediately. My calm façade must have cracked because he immediately tried to reassure me.

"Louis, you're not in any trouble." That was a relief, but I still didn't understand why he would want to talk to me.

“I have been watching your work as of late and have come to the consensus that you could potentially have the solution to my problem. You see my campaign is missing that edge that puts me above the rest and I can’t quite figure out what is missing. Do you have any ideas, perchance?”

I was stunned into temporary silence. Of all the ideas rolling through my head that had not been one of them. Of course my filter disappeared when I opened my mouth.

*“Are you serious, Sir?”* At least I had remembered to tack the sir on at the end.

“Quite serious.” He responded.

“You see you, unlike your various counterparts, have new ideas. You haven’t been constricted by norms. So yes, I want your ideas.”

*“Then may I be frank, Sir?”* I just wanted to make sure I couldn’t get in trouble before my mind went into problem solving mode and dissolved my mental filter into nothing.

“Of course, Louis. Oh, and no matter what is said, it won’t cost you your job.” I nodded my head in acknowledgement, but I was already lost in my thought process.

I knew what the Senator’s campaign was missing, but I just wasn’t quite sure how he would take the news. He seemed like he genuinely wanted an answer, but politicians were good at keeping a calm façade. I struggled for about five minutes until I decided to tell him; worst-case scenario he shoots it down, so what have I got to lose?

*“Sir?”*

“Yes?”

*“I know what’s missing in your campaign. But first you have to promise to listen to my whole idea before you comment.”*

“Okay, I promise.”

*“So here it is. You know how social issues and gay rights are becoming a really popular topic?”*

“Yeah.”

*“And everyone’s talking about gay rights and supporting it in theory, but not really personally involved?”*

“Keep going”

*“Well, sir, I think you need to be directly involved. And by that I think you need your son to come out as gay.”*

“What?!” He exclaimed. I knew I was in deep shit. I’d probably be assigned to paperwork duty for the rest of the campaign. I just had to wait for the shoe to drop and accept whatever

came out of his mouth next.

“Wait, that’s brilliant!”

*“What?”* This time it was my turn to be surprised. He just ignored me and started muttering under his breath.

“Who would it be? He would have to be involved in a committed relationship, engaged or married. He would have to be involved with someone committed to the politics in order to keep him in check. He would have to already be involved in order to save us the work of having to integrate him into the system. But who could it be...” He looked at me.

“Perfect.” He practically purred.

*“What’s perfect, Sir?”* I was genuinely confused.

“You are.”

*“Come again? I’m not exactly following your train of thought, Sir.”*

“You’d be perfect. You could say you two met up at the office and started talking. It just took off from there; you didn’t mean for it to happen, but it just did. You could keep him in check and away from the alcohol and parties. You already love politics, so that’s a plus. You would be compensated of course, nice house, with him obviously, access to money for all your expenses and a bonus for every year you stay on. It will be perfect!”

*“Excuse me Sir, but what do you mean?”* I was still lost.

“You’re going to marry Harry of course.”

And that was how this whole charade began.

# Chapter One

## Chapter Notes

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

~Robin's POV~

I had finally developed a perfect plan for a flawless campaign. I just had a few things to get in order and it would all be set.

1. I needed to get someone to write a pre-nuptial agreement. Worse case scenario, this would prevent Harry and myself from losing anything major in case of divorce. There would also be a stipulation, increasing the money Louis would get in a divorce, for every certain amount of time they stayed together.
2. I, also, needed an account with a monthly stipend since he will still need a paycheck. I mean he obviously can't keep working for me publicly once their 'relationship' came out.
3. I needed to make sure Louis would follow his role and be able to keep Harry in check.
4. Lastly I needed to tell Harry.

Lucky for me, Louis' family and friends wouldn't be surprised by this relationship. From what I can tell, most of the office already thinks he is gay, whether or not he's actually gay is neither here nor there. They probably wouldn't be surprised if Harry was gay or bisexual. It seemed to go along with his rebellious image. The media might spin it as an 'all he needed was a man to tame him' kind of thing.

My campaign would leave all the others in the dust.

~Louis' POV~

I still wasn't sure why I agreed to the plan in the first place. I mean the pay was great and I wouldn't have to worry about losing my job for the next two to ten years, depending on the outcome of the election and whatnot. It's just the idea of signing my life over and marrying some mystery guy seemed absolutely bonkers. But I had said yes and that was that.

These weren't new thoughts; they were just all colliding at once in a more panic inducing force than they had ever come previously. It's probably due to the fact that Harry was returning from his boarding school today, which means he was coming to the office today.

Everyone around here knows Harry is going to start coming around the office. He apparently came around every summer, something to do with the Senator trying to straighten him out so he could follow into politics.

We were supposed to start with Phase 1 of the Senator's plan: flirtation. Harry would come around like he normally does and we were supposed to flirt shamelessly with each other around the office. We also had to get caught doing it.

That was about as far as the relationship was planned. He wanted the rest to be a surprise so when we came out he could act sincere when he said he hadn't really known about our relationship. Eventually, I had to resign which would be painful, but I didn't have to worry about that yet.

The only timeline set, was we had to be engaged before his presidential candidacy speech. That gave us eight months to get together and propose. Hopefully we could get comfortable with each other within that time, because I'm pretty sure we'll have to move in with each other too.

That was where it could get awkward depending on how Harry felt about the situation. Most guys might seem insecure about this kind of relationship because they wouldn't be able to fake liking another guy. Though, if you talked to anyone from my high school, they'd probably tell you my theme song was *He Likes Boys*. Enough said.

See, I knew long ago that girls were not for me. I wasn't flamboyantly gay, most of the time, but I just never liked girls the way I like boys. Needless to say I have spent a good portion of my life ogling men. That still didn't prepare me for the sight that was Harry Styles.

I had seen a few of the Senator's family photos, but they did absolutely no justice to the boy walking towards me. He was tall and lanky with a head of curls hovering on the line between messy and chic. Then there were his eyes; they were this vibrant green that probably lit up when he smiled. And now I'm trying to think of all the ways to try and make him smile. It wasn't very professional, but I couldn't find it in myself to give a fuck. I'm supposed to be in a relationship, so I might as well enjoy it.

After a polite cough from one of my neighbors, I turned my attention back to my computer. I started to wonder if Harry knew about the plan or not. That was thrown out the window as soon as two hands pressed themselves on my desk on either side of me. Next thing I knew there was a low, slow voice speaking in my ear.

**“I saw you looking. Did you see anything you like?”**

“*M-m-maybe...*” Shit! I was a stammering mess. Way to make a good first impression, Tomlinson.

Next thing I knew I was being spun around and instantly found those green eyes that I was admiring earlier.

**“Well, if you ever make up your mind, here's my number.”**

He walked away leaving me stunned and with Harry's number written in sharpie on my hand. I could here the silence of my co-workers then the shushing of voices as they gossiped among themselves.

“Did you see what happened?”

“That was Harry, the Senators son”

“Is he gay or is this just another one of his antics?”

“Do you think the Senator will fire Louis for flirting or chastise Harry for messing around at the office?”

“Do you think Tomlinson will be dumb enough to call him?”

I got up as calmly as possible, which was fairly unsuccessful and ran to the bathroom. It was in that moment that everything became real. What I was planning to do finally hit me like a ton of bricks.

How could I do this? How could I give up any chance of a social life for the next however many years? How could I give up the chance of a normal relationship? My chances of romance: gone. Any life outside of work was gone; then again I didn't really have a life outside of work.

What about my mom and sisters? What am I going to tell them? ‘Hey, this is Harry, the fake love of my life and we’re getting married so his father can be the next president.’ I think not. My mother would kill me for doing that, this, that... whatever.

But then again, in all of the photographs and video clips of Harry, he never once looked happy. He had a fake smile plastered to his face and his eyes weren't the vibrant green I had seen early when he was flirting. They seemed to have been dulled by boredom, anger, or possibly a touch of fear.

I don't know if I'll ever have romantic feelings for the boy, or if I'm too far-gone already. Either way I hope I can bring a real smile back to his face. That being decided, I just had to figure out how long until I called Harry.

~Harry's POV~

I have no idea why I came onto Louis like that. I mean, when Robin told me about his latest plan to control me, I had full intentions of turning him down flat in some not very polite words. Then I had walked through the doors and seen Louis. I wasn't necessarily gay, but I wasn't straight either; I liked to keep my options open.

To say Louis was hot would have been an understatement. He had a weird sense of style with his skinny jeans and suspenders. His artfully messy fringe hung over a pair of too blue to be real eyes. I fell for the eyes every fucking time. As soon as I had seen his eyes, I was a total goner. So now I was giving in and going along with Robin's plan.

What I did to start this ‘relationship’ will probably cause Robin's head to spin, but I just didn't give two shits about it. It was nothing new to have him pissed at me, but at least I enjoyed this shenanigan.

The flirting had been overt, even for my standards, and whatever plan I had had gone out the window once I reached Louis' desk. I blame my eighteen-year-old hormones for making me go and whisper huskily into his ear, or maybe I should blame the boy himself. Nobody that looks that good should be surprised by a little attention, or a phone number written in sharpie.



It wasn't like I was trying to mark my territory or anything; it was just the closest writing utensil. It's too late to change anything now. It was time to go face Robin and whatever his current tirade was.

"What were you thinking?!" were the words he was greeted with in Robin's office.

**"You said if I was going to agree to go along with your plan, I needed to flirt with him."**

"I did. But I said flirt, not try to jump him on my campaign floor!"

**"Calm down. You're just overreacting... again."**

"Don't tell me to calm down! Wait, does this mean you're accepting my proposal?" He always focuses on his campaign above all else. It amazed me that he could drop whatever else he was thinking about for his campaign instantaneously.

**"Yes. But you have to let me keep Zayn and Liam around."** They were non-negotiable.

"Of course you can keep them around; they are your personal guards."

**"Good. Is there anything else you wanted?"** There was always something he wanted, but I needed to know if he wanted anything at that particular moment in time.

"No, but stay away from the media for a while."

**"Yes, Robin."** He always wanted to keep me away from the media.

"Oh and give these papers to my assistant on the way out." No question, no please just a command he expected to be followed. So typical Robin.

Later, it was all I could do not to pace a hole in the floor. Louis should've gotten out of work by now and I was full of nervous energy over whether or not he would call. It wasn't like he had to call today. There was no rush. We were getting married, but that didn't stop the butterflies from having a party in my stomach.

I jumped about twenty feet in the air when my phone went off.

**"Hello"** I answered, trying not to sound too eager.

"Hi, I wanted to talk to you-"

**"Oh. It's just you, Gemma."** I'm pretty sure she could hear the disappointment in my voice.

"Of course it's me. Who else would be calling you? Unless..."

**"Unless what, Gemma?"**

"Unless you decided to accept Dad's deal."

**"He's not my dad, Gemma. And so what if I accepted the deal?"** The irritation was clear in my voice.

“So what? So what?! You’re potentially giving up ten years of your life for this! For life with some random guy you don’t even know! So what?!?! That’s CRAZY!”

**“Calm down.”**

“Don’t tell me to calm down! You actually accepted didn’t you!”

**“Yeah, I did.”**

“.....”

**“Hello?”**

“I’m still here. I just... ugh! I can’t believe you were dumb enough to say yes. I mean I know I rag on you all the time about helping with dad’s campaign, but that doesn’t mean you should’ve done something this rash! I mean you’re giving up your life to live with some stranger! I mean what are you thinking?!”

**“Are you done lecturing your little brother yet?”**

“No”

**“Well I hate to cut you off”** (I really didn’t) **“but I’m getting another call”**

*“Wait, Harry!”*

**“Bye.”**

\*click\* 1 incoming call

**“Hello?”**

*“Hi, this is Louis Tomlinson from your Father’s campaign. I debated handing out your number to random people so they could crank call you, but then I decided to at least see what the guy with the permanent marker wanted.”* I chuckled.

**“Well I guess it’s lucky for me that you didn’t hand my number out to potential text bombers. I’m glad you called.”**

*“Oh really?”*

**“Yes really.”**

*“And why would that be?”*

**“Because just maybe it’s easier to get a guy’s attention if he is already interested...”**

*“Touché. And just how would you be getting my attention, exactly?”*

**“Well, I could always make a repeat performance at the office...”**

*“Wouldn’t that be a conflict considering you’re part of my job?”*

**“I could be the fun part of your job.”**

We both laughed at this point; we both knew I was his job. The idea of conflicting interest was complete bullshit and we both knew. The flirting and the jokes were the most fun I had had in a long while. What was wrong with pretending this was a normal relationship? The small little voice in the back of my head had to respond to the rhetorical question.

“Pretending it’s normal will only lead to pain.” But I squashed the voice without much thought.

*“So I guess I’ll be seeing you tomorrow.”*

**“You couldn’t stop me if you wanted to.”**

~Louis’ POV~

Harry started visiting daily. Each day he would try and come up with a new and unusual way to try and grab my attention. He did everything from wearing a bow in his hair, to pinching my ass when I wasn’t paying him enough attention.

It was easy to pretend we were actually in a real relationship, and not involved in something designed by the Senator. Everything just flowed. It was easy and nice, until one day when Harry hadn’t shown up. The Senator had to have noticed my distraction because he pulled me into his office.

“Louis, Harry’s gone.”

*“What?!”* I was surprised. I didn’t think he’d disappear without a word.

“Hush, not so loud.” It was a command, meant to be obeyed.

*“What do you mean he’s gone?”*

“He went to college. He will be home for Thanksgiving Break in November.”

*“Oh.”*

“When he gets home you know what you’re going to have to do right?”

*“Not off the top of my head, no.”*

“When he comes home you’re going to have to quit and get engaged.”

*“Of course, Sir.”* So much for that eight-month timeline. As much as he didn’t want to be in the know, he still wanted to be in control. It was counter-intuitive, but I wasn’t going to say anything.

“I know you have each other’s phone numbers, so try and keep in touch so you can start preparing for any personal questions coming your way.”

*“Yes, Sir”*

“That will be all.” I was dismissed.

I can’t believe Harry just left without saying anything! Did Harry just stop caring? Was he trying to cost me my job? I was working double time between the paperwork, and the flirting, and late night phone calls. What had he been thinking?

People are going to notice if he just suddenly stopped showing up and, since we spent so much time together, they would assume it had something to do with me. I could not afford for our relationship to appear to be going down the tubes.

I don’t know what I was thinking. We should have made a plan by now on how to keep up appearances. Just because Harry will be gone for three months, doesn’t mean we don’t have to work on our ‘relationship.’

I just stared at the door trying to breathe through the anger and frustration. I finally calmed down enough to remember that I had his phone number. Then I got really mad because Harry could have easily called me himself. Though at least I could get some answers, so I shot off a text to him.

*Hello*

**Hi**

*How are you?*

**Not too bad, all things considered...**

*Oh, what happened?*

**Well, it would be easier to explain if I called rather than trying to text it out...**

I started having an internal war. I knew as soon as I heard his voice, my anger would fade and I’d probably get sidetracked on my quest for answers. By the time I finished this thought, I already had the phone pressed to my ear listening to it ring.

**“Hello, Louis?”**

*“Yeah.”*

**“I’m so glad you called! You would not believe what’s happened to me in the last 24 hours”**

*“... ”*

**“Lou?”**

*“... What?”* I said hesitantly.

**“Lou, are you okay?”**

*“... No, no I’m not.”*

**“What’s wrong Lou?”** Normally I can keep my cool, but I guess not in this case.

*“What’s wrong? What’s WRONG?! You left me, without so much as a warning, you just disappeared and I had to hear from Robin that you were gone and wouldn’t be home until November! We should have been talking about this beforehand, so it wouldn’t look as bad as you just up and leaving!”*

**“Lou, don’t you think you’re overreacting just a little?”**

*“Overreacting?! I haven’t talk to you since yesterday at the office! We should have been strategizing about how to deal with this weeks ago, and instead you ignore our arrangement and just up and walk away for three months!”*

**“Lou, please let me explain. Life has been crazy for the past 24 hours. Please, just let me explain?”**

And just like that, I gave in. I may kick myself in my ass later for giving in so easily, but for now I just wanted answers. Plus I couldn’t help but to give in to the pleading note in his voice.

*\*Sigh\* “Of course, Harry. Start whenever you’re ready.”*

**“Well, after I saw you yesterday I went home to find all of my things packed up in boxes. So I ran out of my room and my mom ‘informed’ me that of course my stuff was packed up, we were leaving to go take me to college. I was like ‘since, when’ and she was like ‘ever since you got your acceptance letter.’ It didn’t make any sense though; I had only applied to online colleges. Well, it turns out Robin wanted me to go to his alma-mater so he ‘arranged’ it so I could go study there. The stupid part is, I’m going to have to switch to online classes after this semester anyway, because we’re going to be traveling for his campaign! It’s ridiculous! Especially since he didn’t even tell me I was going. What am I supposed to do now? He just uprooted me and sent me away for three months.”**

*“Harry, it’s going to be ok.”*

**“He’s just trying to control me again! I can’t believe he just decided to ship me off without telling me!”**

*“This might be a bad time, but he also told me, we’re getting engaged when you get home...”*

**“You’re joking.”** His tone was completely flat.

*“Um... No.”*

**“Really?! He thinks we’re ready for that! What kind of angle is he playing at? First he sends me away then what? He’s gonna use you as an excuse to come home! I wonder**

**what kind of paparazzi storm he's trying to make... Hey Louis?"**

*"Yeah?"*

**"Just be warned. When I come home the cameras are going to be everywhere and you'll have to be prepared for anything. You know, it's not too late to back out if you don't think you can do it."**

Had it been anyone else, I would have instantly reassured him or her without processing what he or she had said. But from the way the rest of the conversation has gone, I couldn't help but stop and really think about this. This decision would affect the rest of my career, and my life for that matter.

Truth be told, no matter the outcome, people would know me because of our press coverage. But I really wanted to be in politics and the media is a very large part of it. I might as well start dealing with it now.

*"I'll be honest, Harry. I don't know how well I'll do in front of the cameras but I still want to do it."*

**"Are you sure?"**

*"Yeah. I'm sure."*

**"Okay. I'll make sure to call you soon."**

*"I'll be waiting"*

\*click\*

Chapter End Notes

[louispalooza.tumblr.com](http://louispalooza.tumblr.com)

## Chapter Two

~Harry's POV~

I started my first week of school and spent it trying to decide what was worse: college or Robin's house. While most people would be like "Yeah college! I get to get away from home and do whatever the fuck I want!" that was not the case for me.

Since this was Robin's alma mater and he continued to donate generously, everyone kept their eyes on me. They knew he was my step-dad and wouldn't ever let me forget it. It had only been good in the sense that I managed to snag my own room.

People talked about Robin this and Robin that and tried to compare the two of us, even though, as far as I was concerned, we only shared a common location. Frankly, all the Robin attention was getting on my nerves. Even away from Robin, I couldn't get away from Robin.

Because of him, everyone expected so much more out of me. Teachers graded me harsher. Students expected me to be a stuck up, rich prick. All in all I would be better off going to a different college, but that wouldn't continue the legacy.

Robin had gotten what he wished, as always. I was staying out of trouble, because I didn't have time to spend on getting *in* trouble. I, also, know that I need a college degree. If I ever wanted to get away, I needed an education. The only saving grace in my life were my nightly phone calls with Louis.

Most of the time we'd just talk about our days. He would talk about Robin's campaign and work in general, and I would talk about school, classes, and my never-ending pile of homework. Talking to Louis was like a breath of fresh air. There was no pressure, just smooth and easy conversation. He didn't expect anything from me, so I don't have to keep up my 'perfect' façade around him. There are no masks and he will probably never know how grateful I am for that.

~Louis' POV~

My life hadn't really changed much since I signed the contract. I was working just as hard as normal and I still never went anywhere except work, home, and the grocery store. Though to say nothing had changed would be inaccurate. I mean, I may talk to Harry every night like we had known each other for years.

Just because I had something to look forward to at the end of the day, didn't mean I was less focused on work. I still had my eye on the poll. Ha poll instead of ball... yeah it was a stupid pun. But stupid puns made great deflections and made it easier to avoid my feelings. If I examined my feelings that would mean I had said feelings. Like they say in politics: when in doubt, deny everything.

So I did just that. I denied and avoided through compartmentalization. When I was at work I was so focused that King Kong could lay siege to the building and I wouldn't have noticed.

At my apartment I became completely focused on Harry. I talked to him about any and everything. Whether it be telling Harry about something exciting or funny or just filling the air with insignificant details that gave us both some much needed, stress-free interaction.

Our talks started becoming longer as time went on and they also became more comfortable. It soon became all too easy to ignore the start of our relationship. I became completely lost in our long distance friendship, if I can call it that. But like all good dreams, I would freely admit this had been like a wondrous dream, it had to eventually come to an end.

About two months since Harry had left, the Senator pulled me into his office. It was about a month until Harry was going to return to me. Not me, I corrected myself, return home.

“Sit, sit Louis.”

“*Yes Sir.*”

“I wanted to know what kind of rings you liked so I could get someone to start looking for engagement rings.” No pre-amble. Straight to the point with him.

“*Sir?*”

“Yes?”

“*I was wondering if it would it be okay if-if I picked out the ring?*” I was nervous about asking him. It felt important to me that I got to pick out the rings.

“Sure. That would probably be better. It would look more authentic if you picked it out. There is money in your account that you can use to pay for it.”

“*Okay, thanks. Did you need anything else?*”

“No, that will be all.” I walked out the door, never willing to over stay my welcome.

One thing that made me good at my job was that no detail was insignificant, which is why I wanted to pick out the ring, or so I kept telling myself. I’m pretty sure I had a permanent residence by De-Nile at this point.

It took me a while to find an appropriate ring. Lucky for me, Robin knew what Harry’s ring size was, so I could go ahead and order the rings before Harry got back.

About two weeks before Harry’s return, I handed in my resignation. I hadn’t told anyone that I was resigning, so they’d probably be in for quite a shock when they came to work one day and my desk would be cleared out.

It would be easy to do. I was well known for my late night working habits, so it would be simple enough to pack up my stuff and go after everyone had already left. That way I didn’t have to face the equivalent of the Spanish Inquisition of my co-workers either. I was all set, I was just waiting for Harry to get back.



~Harry's POV~

It was finally Thanksgiving Break and I was ready to leave the dorm. It was pretty much deserted since most people left Friday night and I had to wait until Saturday because I was traveling so far.

A part of me was saying I was only so excited because I was going to get to see Louis, but I shut that thought out rather quickly. It was even better because the only plans Robin had made for me were transportation. I didn't have an endless list of bureaucratic nonsense awaiting my arrival.

I'm glad Robin had decided Louis' and my relationship should remain between us. That means no meddling, or prying and a temporary reprieve from security or any other sort of leash Robin would try to impose on me.

~Louis' POV~

I was sitting in my car about a block away from Harry's house. I didn't want to wait outside his house and risk getting caught by the paparazzi. I was anxiously waiting and counting every second Harry was late. It wasn't that I was OCD, it's just that I liked to plan as many minute details as possible. I also liked to have my plans followed to a T.

**"Hey Louis!"** Harry greeted. It was about time.

*"Hey Harry! Do you know where you wanna go to celebrate your homecoming?"*

**"Not really."**

I was hoping he would say that. I wanted to execute my plan sooner rather than later. How I had found the time to formulate my plan between all the time spent at work and talking to Harry, I will never know.

I figured since we were supposed to have a secret relationship, I would have to take him to a more secluded place. I picked the park figuring we were less likely to find people there. Especially since it was getting to be colder with winter fast approaching. I had a pre-arranged path to take and had everything planned to the millisecond.

When we got there, we started walking in silence through the first part of the park. I had the feeling we were being watched but then I just chalked it up to me being paranoid. All I could think about was my impending proposal. Harry seemed to understand my need for silence, because he didn't comment on it.

This was my last chance to back out. The last time I could draw the line and go back to just being behind the scenes. It was my last chance to remain a bachelor and the freedom that comes along with it.

The thing was I wanted to work behind the scenes, but at the same time I wanted to be intricately involved with the center of the campaign. This was my opportunity; there was no

way I would back out now.

When we finally made it to the gazebo, I gathered up my courage and turned to face Harry.

*“Welcome Home Harry!”* Though I should have probably said that sooner... or at least less awkwardly.

**“Thanks.”** The look he gave me made it clear how dumb I sounded but it wasn’t unkind.

*“You see. Well... while you were gone I... While you were gone I got you something.”*

**“Oh Really?”**

*“Yeah. I just...here open it”*

It was kind of a cop out way of doing this, but oh well. I gave him a gift bag with a box inside. Harry opened it and found a pair of matching diamond rings.

**“Louis, is this what I think it is?”**

*“Yes, Harry. In the three months you were gone, we became really close. I realized I’m finally ready to move forward. I think it’s a good time to finally get on with our relationship. I think this may actually be good for all of us. What do you say?”* It was carefully worded just in case anyone was listening.

**“...”**

*“Harry?”*

~Harry’s POV~

I had wondered why Louis had been walking in silence. To be honest, he seemed like he always had something to say, meaningful or not. That made his silence even more obvious. But now it was my turn to be silent.

Louis had probably had similar thoughts to the ones I was having right now, as we walked down the path to the gazebo. He probably thought about this being the point of no return and the pros and cons of getting married.

I was facing two equally frightening choices. If I said no, I could just go back to the life I had been living: cushy life, controlling dad, absolutely no room for independence. Ever. If I chose marriage, I could finally get away.

I was still being forced in front of the public by going on tour. I’d still have to face the endless amount of paparazzi, but I’d be able to move out of Robin’s house. I could leave Robin’s college. I could do more of what I wanted to do. To be honest, I wanted out. Louis was my way out.

**“Yes, Louis. I want to marry you.”**

I put on my ring and helped Louis get his on. I got caught up in the excitement of getting away and picked up Louis and spun him around like a kid clutching a brand new toy at Christmas.

We spent about twenty more minutes walking around and just talking about our future. It was a topic we had never touched on before, because I guess the solidity of our future together hadn't quite been established yet. Before, we talked about many things like how Louis' mom called Boo Bear as a child, but never anything more serious than stories and past experiences.

Now we were engaged and that opened whole new avenues of conversation. It kind of gave me the confidence to talk about things. I didn't have to worry about him leaving or gossiping about it later on.

*"Where do you think you want to live?"*

**"I don't know, just somewhere with a big yard. Where do you want to get married?"**

*"Somewhere outdoors, in the fall when all the leaves are turning red and orange."*

**"Speaking of marriage, what do you want your wedding dress to look like?"** Okay so not everything was a serious topic but he was just so fun to tease.

*"Excuse me?!"*

**"You know, long white dresses, typically with a veil that a woman wears on her wedding day."**

*"I am not the woman in this relationship."*

**"Well I'm taller."**

*"So?"*

**"And you have a more feminine figure."**

*"... Styles, have you been staring at my ass?"*

**"So what if I have?"**

We just stared each other down until I pulled a snowball from behind my back. I lobbed it at Louis and ran straight for the car. He ran to catch up to me, but then tripped and fell face first into a snowdrift.

I was laughing so hard I could feel ice-tears stinging my cheek. Louis tried to get up and shake off as much snow as possible. I could see him trying to put his dignity back together. I could finally breathe well enough to talk.

**"Thanks. This was a lot of fun."**

*"I agree, minus the snow going down my shirt."*

**“Well, you can’t blame it all on me.”**

*“I can and I will! Humph.”* His pouty face was adorable.

**“Aw. Is little Louis being pouty? Is it past Lou’s bed time?”**

*“I am not!”*

I just stared at Louis.

*“Okay so maybe a little. It’s not my fault I get irritated when I’m cold and wet.”*

**“Well if you ever want help with that problem, you know where to find me.”** I added a suggestive eye waggle for emphasis.

Louis eyes went wide and his jaw dropped down, and I was left debating whether his head would implode or explode. I scrambled into the car before he could exact his revenge.

All too soon we were down the street from Robin’s house. At least when I fell asleep, I knew soon, very soon, I would be able to move away from here.

## Chapter Three

~Louis' POV~

I woke up the next morning to the shrill sound of my phone vibrating on my wooden nightstand.

*"Hello?"* I slurred.

"LOUIS WILLIAM TOMLINSON! HOW DARE YOU NOT TELL ME, YOUR OWN MOTHER, YOU WERE DATING SOMEONE, LET ALONE ENGAGED!!!!"

*"Mom? What are you talking about?"*

"It's all over the front page of the papers: Senators Son is Gay and Engaged to a Secret Boyfriend. And it has a picture of the both of you putting on matching rings and him hugging you like there's no tomorrow."

*"Oh SHIT! The paparazzi must have been following us. But I didn't see anyone follow us. I wonder if his father found out yet. I wonder if Harry's alright..."*

"Louis! Are you listening to me?"

*"Huh? What?"*

"I said why didn't you tell me about this?"

*"Well you see, um..."*

I knew I couldn't tell her the truth. She would be outraged by the idea of our arrangement. She would never accept the truth. I had no choice but to lie.

*"How do I tell you this?"*

"Stop avoiding it and just spit it out already!"

*"Well you see, I thought you'd judge him, and accuse him of manipulating me and using me and being a spoiled prick."*

"Louis! How dare you think that about me! I know I'm not always the best mother but I never said one mean or derogatory comment when you finally came out of the closet. I'm not buying this Bull Shit."

I had forgotten how well my mother knew me. She could see through anything I threw at her. Right now I was digging my own grave.

*"Listen, Mom. I didn't tell you because I was afraid you'd scold me for giving my job up for him."*

“You did what?!”

And here was the thing that would haunt me for the rest of my life.

*“I gave up my job. I knew as long as I worked there, we could never really be together. We could steal a few moments here and there, but-”* cue the waterworks *“-it wasn’t enough. \*Sniff\*. My job isn’t enough to risk losing \*sniff\* someone I \*sniff\* someone I love.”*

That was it. I knew that when I die I’m going straight to Hell.

“Oh Honey. Poor Boo-Bear. I’m so sorry, but you still should have told me. I would have helped, but I still shouldn’t have had to hear about this from some newspaper.”

*“I know, Mom, but it’s too late now.”* In more ways than she knew.

~Harry’s POV~

I was eating breakfast when Robin came down and dropped the newspaper in front of me. I was confused, until I saw the pictures of Louis and I from last night. I had to admit, we looked good together. I don’t think that was the point Robin was trying to get across though.

“So I see you’re engaged.” It wasn’t really a question, but I answered anyway.

“Yes.”

“Good. I want you two to go meet with my P.R. staff today so we can have a release or press conference about this soon.”

“But-“

“This isn’t a request. Come in at one o’clock sharp. And please try to look like you’re happy to be engaged, not facing a death squad.”

And with that, Robin walked away. I knew I should call Louis, but it could wait until after breakfast. Apparently Louis didn’t agree. My phone started rattling angrily on the table.

“Hel-“

*“Harry! Did you see the paper this morning?!”*

“Yeah, of course-“

*“I can’t believe they did that! They just followed us and invaded a private moment and plastered it everywhere! And my mother. I didn’t even have time to tell her. She just called me this morning going on and on about how could I not trust her. Ugh! It’s just so infuriating that they would sneak around and do something like this!”* Dramatic, talkative Louis has reappeared from wherever he was hiding last night.

“Louis, you do realize this is what you signed up for?”

*“Well, um, well you see-“*

**“I’m just going to stop you there and inform you that Robin wants us to meet with his Personality Replacement team.”**

*“His what?”*

**“You know Personality Replacement, P.R. team.”**

*“Oh. You do know it’s Public Relations right?”*

**“But Personality Replacement is much more accurate.”**

*“Sure...what time?”*

**“Uh... one o’clock. I think.”**

*“You think or you know?”*

**“Know... I think.”**

*“Okay, and how am I supposed to get out of the apartment with all the pap’s standing out there?”*

**“One of Robin’s drivers is going to pick both of us up so we can arrive together and be all couple-y.”**

*“Okay.”*

**“See you then.”**

*“See ya.”*

**\*Click\***

~Louis’ POV~

I knew I was going to end up in the media. I wanted to learn how to be fantastic when confronted with the media like the politicians. I just didn’t realize I would be faced with it so soon. Now I believe I was insane for wanting to do this.

Paparazzi were fine in theory, but it was a whole other ball game when they were in my face. I’m not sure if I’ll ever be able to make it out of my apartment. Luckily, they were sending a chauffeur over, because I would never be able to navigate out of this mess. Ugh, I was so nervous. The car was supposed to be here any minute now and all I could do was anxiously check my phone and then check to make sure my engagement ring was in place.

When the car finally arrived, I had worked myself up into a frenzy. I made a beeline straight for the black SUV. I was trying to dodge as many cameras and microphones as possible.

When someone opened a car door, I practically dove into it like a baseball player sliding into home base.

**“Nice entrance, Boo-Bear.”**

*“Why thank you... Haz.”*

**“Haz?”**

*“Well if you get to use my childhood nickname, I get to use a nickname for you too.”*

**“Whatever floats your boat, Boo.”**

*“I’m starting to regret ever telling you that.”*

**“You can’t take it back now, it’s already permanently engrained in my brain. You’re just going to have to live with it.”**

*“Ugh... You live to annoy me, don’t you?”*

**“Of course, everyone needs that one thorn in their side, but at least you were lucky enough to get me.”**

*“Whatever you say Haz, whatever you say...”*

We spent the rest of the trip in silence, hiding behind the tinted windows. Everyone let out a sigh of relief when the office was in sight. I guess I wasn’t the only one ready to escape the intimidating SUV. As the security team got into place holding back the press, Harry grabbed my hand and half led and half dragged me past the crowd and into the building.

I had never been to the P.R. room before, but, if the rumors were true, Harry had been there often enough to call it a second home. Harry walked in like it was no big deal. But if he hadn’t still been holding on to me, I would’ve run away from here as fast as my legs could carry me.

I was a behind the scenes guy for a reason. I looked to be in control, to see what was going on and to try and pull the strings just right so everything fell into place. Now I was the puppet, and I wasn’t enjoying the feeling one bit.

It was especially disconcerting to be faced with my own face plastered all over the wall of screens. There were all these people talking about me and how to spin our relationship for the good of the campaign. I was overwhelmed to the point where I had started planning out the fastest route to Robin’s office, so I could get out of the spotlight A.S.A.P.

My thoughts were interrupted by one of the female P.R. agents talking to us,

**“Harry! Louis! Welcome, come in and sit down.”**

**“Where?”**



“Anywhere is fine. I assume you both know why you’re here.”

“Yes”

*“Of course.”*

“Good. Then we can cut the niceties and go straight down to business. Here is the plan. You two are moving in together today.”

*“Bu-“*

“No buts. We already have people at both of your places packing up your stuff. It will be easier to protect both of you. Speaking of which, Harry, Zayn and Liam are moving in to be your around the clock security team. Robin, also, found you two a young personal chef by the name of Niall Horan in order to prevent you from starving. Questions?”

I wondered why Robin was bringing Niall into the picture. But there was a time and place for everything, and this was not it.

“... ”

“...”

“No? Good. We’ve arranged a press conference for later today. You two have to keep your displays of affection PG. Got it?”

*“Yes ma’am.”*

**“But we’ve been separated for so long. I’m just not sure how well I’ll be able to control myself.”**

I guffawed at Harry’s obvious defiance. I couldn’t believe Harry was outright rebelling against the P.R. team. The woman must have dealt with him before, which could explain his boldness, because she managed to maintain her composure and act like he had agreed with her.

“Good. And if you two ever pull another stunt like this again, I will make your lives Hell. Understand?”

*“Yes ma’am.”*

**“Yeah, yeah can we stop with the melodrama, it’s so nineteen nineties?”**

Harry received a glare that could’ve sheered the flesh off a cow, a look that conveyed all her hatred toward us for having a secret relationship, getting engaged behind her back, and all the media cleanups she’s had to do because of Harry. To say she was pissed would be like saying hell was merely warm.

I decided to cut it before he could dig himself an early grave and end up with me buried with him.

*“So what do you want us to say?”*

“I would like you two to go to the interview and be completely silent unless someone asks you a question directly. I would like to mop this up quietly and for you two to stay away from the media unless it is prearranged by someone in this office. So, let’s get started on some of the basics, shall we?”

We spent the next two hours getting drilled by various members of the P.R. team on how to look in front of the public. They went over every possible question, posture and the do’s and don’ts of public appearances. We were going on a live newscast, so there would be no do-overs and any mistake could spell catastrophe.

When we headed back out to the car, I viewed the SUV as a sanctuary rather than the intimidating metal cage I had previously viewed it as. Despite my ever-present love for politics, I don’t think I could have lasted another minute on the campaign floor without having a panic attack or entering into a frustration fueled rage.

It was a short trip to the studio and by the time I had calmed down enough to speak, we were already there. As soon as the door opened, we were whisked away to hair, make-up, and wardrobe. The next time I saw Harry was when we grabbed hands as we were ushered back stage and then followed Robin onto the set.

“Hello this is the six o’clock news. Today we have three special guests: Senator Robin Twist, his son Harry, and his son’s fiancé Louis. Welcome to the studio. Senator Twist, I know social policies have been vital as of late when it comes to politics. How has Harry’s recent engagement affected that?”

“You may be surprised to hear but my policies haven’t changed. I have always stood for...”  
The interview went on like this for a while. They just went on about politics that weren’t nearly as importing as trying to stamp down the mini panic attack emerging in my head.

It had been triggered by the sight of all the camera’s and the fear was making me sweat profusely, which wasn’t being helped by the bright lights shining on me. Soon enough I was focusing entirely on the interview, which was normally a good thing. In this case it was counter-productive because I was spending more of my energy on watching them than controlling my expression and body language.

I almost jumped out of my skin when I felt someone breathing on my neck and then whispering into my ear.

**“Louis, you really should pay more attention when we’re on live television. The interviewer is about to ask us about our relationship.”**

I was about to ask how he knew that, when the interviewer proceeded to turn his attention to us. I made a mental note to thank Harry later for saving my ass.

“So you two seem pretty cozy together over there. I’m sure everyone is wondering how you two met.”

**“Well, I had just gotten off for summer break, so I went to the campaign office to do whatever Dad needed for the campaign. When I walked in, I saw this new kid with red chinos, a striped shirt, and suspenders. At the time, I could only think ‘how can I get him to remember me.’ So I took a sharpie and wrote my name and number on his hand. Luckily for me he called later and we’ve been together ever since.”**

“How sweet!”

At that point, the interviewer started wrapping up with Robin. Harry gave me a stare so fraught with sexual tension, that I wondered if Harry was going to jump me right here, right now. On the other hand, he could just be trying to piss the P.R. agent with his less than PG gaze.

When we got off stage, people clapped us on the back and said things like good job or congratulations or you two are the cutest couple ever. We just kept up our smiles and tried to say thank you to as many people as possible.

I couldn’t wait to go back to my apartment and curl up on my window seat with a good book and... wait. I don’t have my apartment anymore. They moved me into a house with Harry. Shit!

The P.R. team didn’t know we had arranged this relationship through Robin. They didn’t know our engagement was just a carefully composed façade. Well we were actually engaged, but they didn’t know there wasn’t a romantic relationship behind our engagement, just a business deal.

I started to panic. I knew nothing about our “house.” Worried thoughts began rushing through my head. What if they expect us to share a room? Will we have to share a bed? How big was the house? Where was our house? Would everything be in place, or would we be greeted with a giant mess of boxes? One thought kept reappearing in my mind: what the Hell have I gotten myself into?

## Chapter Four

~Harry's POV~

I was way too excited in the car to notice Louis' abnormal silence. I could only think about how this was finally it. The moment I was finally leaving. I was officially moving out of Robin's house and into a place that could potentially become my home.

I got to move in with my hot fiancé, Louis, and my two friends/bodyguards, Liam and Zayn. I assumed Niall was Louis' friend, because otherwise Robin wouldn't have hired a chef. Robin was still trying to maintain some control now that I was out of his domain.

I know that he is moving these guys in with us in an attempt to keep us from going out, partying, getting trashed, and then caught by the paparazzi. There wasn't as much need to leave if we lived with the people we would go out to see. At that moment, I couldn't find it in myself to care. I was moving out.

When we got to the house, I was almost glad we had Robin around for the convenience of it all. He had had a professional crew come in and pack up mine and Louis' things, move them, and unpack them at the house. It was all done in the time it took for us to deal with the P.R. team and do the interview. They had even moved in Liam, Zayn, and, I assumed, this Niall guy.

~Louis' POV~

As soon as we got to the house, I heard someone in the kitchen and knew, immediately, that it was Niall. Before I could make it five steps in, two random guys from the moving staff took us on a quick tour of the house ending in our bedroom. They left us alone to get settled into our room.

Not my room. Not Harry's room. Our room. We were expected to sleep in the same room, in the same bed, with each other. To say I was internally freaking out would be an understatement. While I was contemplating our sleeping arrangements, a voice rang out from the bathroom.

**“Hey Louis! Come in here! There's a Jacuzzi tub, and a glass shower, and his and hers sinks. Or in our case, his and his sinks.”**

I was too busy staring blankly at our California king sized bed to respond. I awoke from my daze when a pair of long arms snaked around my waist and a head came to rest on my shoulder.

**“Are you okay, Boo Bear? You haven't moved from this spot since we walked in here.”** I didn't understand how he could be so nonchalant about this.

*\*gulp\** “Um yeah. I'm fine. It's just been a long day and I'm just worn out.” Honestly, he seemed totally comfortable embracing me and that was just...something to get used to.

**“Okay. How about we get, what’s his name... Niall to make us dinner and then we could go to sleep?”**

*“O-okay.”* Could Harry really mention sleeping together this casually?

*“Sounds good, assuming Niall hasn’t eaten all the food already.”*

**“You’re joking, right?”**

*“Only partially. You’ll understand soon enough.”*

As soon as we got to the living room, I was tackled to the couch by a blonde Irishman.

*“Niall! Get off me!”* I groaned as the wind was knocked out of me.

“But, Louis! I haven’t seen you in ages.” While true, it didn’t make up for the fact that Niall was completely oblivious to my need to breathe.

*“Well you work for me, now, so you’ll be seeing me a lot. That means you can get off of me now and go cook us some dinner!”* I tried to keep my facial expression serious while I bossed him around, but I could feel my smile sneak out. I was happy to see him as well.

“Fiiiine, but that’s only because we both know you’d burn this whole lovely house down if I let you anywhere near the kitchen.” Niall’s tone was light, but serious.

He loved to remind me of my supreme lack of talent in the kitchen. Sadly his exaggerations weren’t exactly exaggerations; in fact they tended to be fairly accurate.

**“You’re joking right?”**

“You wish, man. I’m Niall by the way. Niall Horan. And you must be the infamous Harry Styles, the only boy who has successfully managed to sweep Lou, here, off his feet.”

I felt my face turn bright red at the last sentence. It’s not like I was blushing because I was totally embarrassed by how accurate the statement was, I lied to myself. I was just blushing because-because I was embarrassed by Niall’s attempt to make fun of me; I tried to rationalize with myself. Yeah, I was blushing because of my friend’s lame sense of humor.

Harry joined me on the couch as Niall went off to work his magic in the kitchen. As the aroma of food started drifting out of the kitchen, two other boys drifted in. Harry greeted them from the couch.

**“Hey Liam! Hey Zayn! This is my fiancé, Louis. Louis, these are our bodyguards Zayn Malik and Liam Payne.”**

*“Nice to meet you two.”*

The bodyguards seemed nice enough, but I couldn’t help but feel nervous about the number of people living with Harry and me. It meant we’d never get a break from our charade.

“Hey,” Zayn said with a nod.

Liam smiled warmly as he threw out, “Nice to meet you, Louis.”

I barely registered their pleasantries as I continued to internally ponder how we were going to pass for a head over heels in love couple in private. What if Liam, Zayn, or Niall were expecting a lot of PDA? Could it be called PDA if we were in our own house?

“What’s cooking?” Zayn asked, making it clear their arrival was directly linked to the delicious smells wafting from the kitchen.

“Chicken Parmesan,” Niall called out as he popped his head out into the living room.

“Come and get it.”

We ate dinner on the kitchen island, because I’m pretty sure we all found the large formal dining room fairly daunting. Our conversation consisted of mostly small talk and Robin’s campaign as our two groups tried to merge. As the food started running out, Liam quickly transitioned into business mode and laid down the rules.

- “1. No leaving the house without Zayn or me.
2. No inviting people over without getting our approval first.
3. No non-preapproved outings.
4. No talking with the press.
5. You must go to all meetings with Robin or his team.

Understand?”

**“Do you honestly believe that I will follow al your rules, Li?”** Harry retorted, but as Liam stared him down, Harry burst out with laughter.

**“Yeah, yeah. Whatever you say goes.”**

I shot Harry a look, while I tried to decide whether he was going to follow the rules, break the rules, or see how far he could bend the rules.

“Well then, you are excused for the night. Go get some sleep; you both look like you need it.” Liam’s words were stern, but I could see a brotherly fondness in his eyes as he watched Harry rise from the table.

When I finally registered what he had said, I returned to my worry from earlier: one bed.

I tried to delay the inevitable by taking a shower, but all it did was give me more time to panic. It also brought about another problem. In my haste to avoid the situation, I had forgotten a change of clothes in our room. Where Harry was waiting. I had already thrown my dirty clothes down the laundry chute and I only had my towel. Shit.

~Harry's POV~

I was starting to wonder what was taking Louis so long. I figured he might be somewhat reluctant to share a bed, but the bed was so massive three people could fit in it without touching. It's not that I would mind cuddling with Louis; after all, we were engaged. This would be a good opportunity for us to start getting comfortable with each other in a physical manner.

Louis just seemed a little freaked out about the whole situation, and I just really wanted our plan to work so I wouldn't have to move back in with Robin anytime soon, or ever. I would just have to start acclimating Louis to my cuddly personality. With those previous thoughts in mind, the last thing I expected was for Louis to come out of the bathroom wearing only a towel. As soon as Louis spotted me, he turned beet red and started stammering.

*"I-I-I s-seem to have for-forgotten my cl-clothes..."*

It took all my energy not to burst out laughing as the boy who always seemed so confident, turned into a nervous wreck because he was in a towel. He was looking at me like he expected me to devour him at any moment, like a cheetah pouncing on a gazelle. The fact that I was obviously ogling his figure clearly wasn't helping the situation. But for now, I was still in deep denial over how much I really enjoyed the view.

While Louis returned to the bathroom to hide, I decided I should change now. I'm pretty sure he'd flip out if I changed in front of him. I thought pajama pants and a white V-neck might be a good alternative to plain boxers or my usual lack there-of. Maybe I shouldn't introduce him to the cuddly kitten that is Harry Styles on the first night...

I almost died when he walked out wearing at least three layers of clothing. Yeah, he was definitely not ready to cuddle. I have no idea how he'll manage to sleep with that many layers on. But if he was more comfortable that way, far be it for me to stop him.

**"You ready for bed, Lou?"**

*"Yeah. Do you want me to turn out the lights?"*

**"Nope. I've got it. We have a remote for the lights so you don't have to stumble around in the dark."**

*"Oh. Ok..."* I could still see Louis' outline nervously fidgeting at the edge of the bed.

**"Are you coming?"** I couldn't keep the smirk off my face no matter how hard I tried. I wouldn't acknowledge out-loud how adorable I found him at that particular moment in time.

*"Um, what? Oh yeah. Yes, I'm coming... to bed."* I felt his weight cause a dip in the bed.

**"Good night."**

*"Night."*

I fell asleep rather easily to the unsteady pace of his nervous breathing.

~Louis' POV~

It took forever, but I finally managed to fall asleep due to my exhaustion of the days events finally outweighing my nervous anxiety. Of course it had been about two hours after Harry fell asleep, not that I was paying attention or anything. I laid there rigid for a while, trying my best not to move and staying in what I thought of as my designated area.

After a while I felt extremely hot because of all the stupid layers I put on in a ridiculous attempt to keep some boundaries between us. Now I was regretting my rash decision. Harry was warm. The comforter was warm. My clothes were warm. All of this combined made a really hot and uncomfortable me and it took a couple hours for Harry's steady breathing to help me drift off.

I woke up at about 3 am. As I began to take in my surroundings and realize how early it was, I started to wonder what had woken me up. I was not surprised to find I had stripped off my top two layers while I was sleeping, making the temperature much more comfortable.

I was surprised, however, by the rather warm and good smelling pillow I had wrapped myself around like one of those people in a Febreeze commercial. What was even worse was when said pillow started muttering my name.

**“Lou? Louis? Just because we’re engaged, doesn’t mean you have to cling to me like a boa constrictor.”**

At that, I really woke up from my sleep haze with the realization that I was wrapped around Harry and not a pillow. I was about to jump up and run away, when a strong hand started rubbing my back in soothing circles and a soothing voice telling me to go back to sleep.

I was still too tired to process why I shouldn't go back to sleep on my Harry pillow, so I didn't put up any kind of protest. I re-wrapped my arms around Harry, nuzzled my head into his collarbone, and went back to sleep.

~Harry's POV~

I had had a very pleasant dream last night. Louis and I had accidentally ended up cuddling and when we discovered it, we didn't care and kept cuddling away... Wait a second, that wasn't a dream. I could tell by the weight still pressed against my chest. I silently cursed myself for allowing us to cuddle when I knew Louis wasn't ready for it.

He would not be happy when he woke up. I figured I might as well enjoy the feeling now, because Louis was so uptight about not getting personal, and this just being a job; that would most definitely ruin the moment.

As I laid there, looking at the boy in my arms, my thoughts drifted to an increasingly familiar thought. I sometimes wondered if maybe Louis had feelings towards me too and he had just taken up residence in the land of Denial. The unintentional cuddle had, after all, been initiated by Louis. Of course, maybe he was a natural cuddler too...



I had gotten past the denial stage before I had returned from school. I was no longer denying that I had become really attached to this boy as he had quickly become my lifeline while I was at college. I just hoped Louis would one day stop shoving me under the category of work.

I was enjoying watching the sunlight play off of Louis face, when life seemed to have made other plans for how I was supposed to spend my time. Zayn and Liam came barging in, waking Louis up and ruining the moment.

“All right, it’s time to get up. You two have a full schedule today.” Only years of knowing Liam had let me see the blush that had risen to his cheeks and then quickly disappeared at the sight of us.

*“Huh? What time is it?”* Louis mumbled sleepily, keeping his eyes closed and nuzzling further into my chest.

Liam had, of course, already regained his composure.

“It’s 8 am. You guys got to sleep in enough already. You need to get ready. You have wedding plans to make today.”

The warm weight on my chest was gone the instant Louis had regained full consciousness.

**“What? Already? We just got engaged two days ago.”** I tried to sound normal in order to distract Zayn and Liam from Louis’ obvious internal panic he was going through.

Zayn gave Louis a quick look over before addressing my questions.

“The Senator wants to get started right away. He wants to throw a big wedding to attract attention and get votes, which is why you have to start planning now. And you have to start making public appearances and media appearances, especially since you have to go back to school for three weeks to finish off the semester. To Robin that’s three weeks of lost time so he’s trying to make up for it now. So I say good luck to you because you’re sure going to need it.”

I figured I probably should have been expecting this but I was, honestly, more concerned with how unprepared Louis was for this whirlwind. Liam was also looking at Louis, the concern evident on his face, though he didn’t mention it.

“You should find appropriate attire on the back side of your closet.” Zayn threw out as he and Liam walked out the door, which had me internally groaning.

“Next time we’ll knock. Wouldn’t want to walk in on anything that would destroy poor Liam’s innocent mind,” Zayn continued.

I turned to Louis in time to prevent him from running away.

**“Lou, we’re going to have to talk about this eventually.”**

*“Talk about what? I have no idea what you think we need to talk about. There’s no problem. I’m adjusting just fine. Besides, we need to start getting ready. We’re going to have a long day and we need to look presentable.”*

All of his words rushed out a bit too quickly for them to be the truth. Not that I would have believed him anyway. I had just watched him freak out for a good five minutes, while I talked with Liam and Zayn.

Usually I avoided serious conversations, but I couldn’t let Louis continue to live in denial. And of course I had my own personal dreams that I hoped would come true when Louis came to terms with the situation.

**“You know denial and avoidance won’t solve anything. Our overly long schedule for the day can wait the five minutes we need to talk.”**

*“I still don’t know what you’re talking about.”* Once again, I noted how bad of a liar Louis was as he refused to look me in the eye.

**“Louis, it’s okay if you’re nervous about this, but we have to talk sooner rather than later; letting it fester won’t do us any good. We’re going to be living together and getting married. The sooner we talk, the sooner we don’t have to tiptoe around the elephant in the room. So I’ll go first. To be honest, I had a good nights sleep for the first time in a long time, despite your snake-like tendencies. Well more like because of your snake-like tendencies, but that’s neither here nor there. As far as I’m concerned, sleeping together will only be as awkward as you make it.”**

Louis was looking me straight in the eyes and I was trying to make him feel safe and secure so he would stop freaking out.

*“Wait. So you don’t think this is weird?”* I resisted the urge to roll my eyes.

Of course cuddling with someone I was attracted to wasn’t weird. In all honesty, it was more wonderful than I could put into words, but now wasn’t the time to tell him that.

**“No. I do not think sleeping with my fiancé is weird.”**

*“You know what I mean.”* He was trying to sound exasperated, but it came across as vulnerable despite his effort.

In hopes of getting him to finally process and come to terms with the fact we were going to have to do much more than cuddle behind closed doors over the next few months (and hopefully years if I was being honest with myself), I opened myself up as much as I could.

**“Okay, yeah it’s a little weird, but all in all, I’m kind of happy about it. I got to get out of Robin’s house and I met you in the process. Although it’s weird, I’m enjoying it. So can we stop being weird with each other?”**

I watched several emotions play across Louis’ face, but I wasn’t able to identify the emotions quite yet. I hoped that would change soon.

*“When you put it that way, you’re right. We should just have fun. Just because it’s arranged, doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy it. If you really wanted to annoy Robin, we could turn it up a notch.”*

**“What do you mean?”** If he meant what I think he meant, then this was a much better reaction than I could have hoped for. Much, much better.

*“We could constantly flirt, increase our public displays of affection, you know act like an overly open gay couple.”*

I laughed because I wanted all of that and more, more than anybody knew.

# Chapter Five

## Monday

~Harry POV~

We decided on wearing matching white V-necks with dark jeans. Niall shoved food into our hands as we walked out the door to the car. On the ride over, Liam was probably telling us about our schedule while Zayn drove. I say probably because I have no clue since I hadn't paid attention to a word of what he said. I was too busy thinking of what kind of hijinks I wanted to pull. Robin wanted us to be a gay couple and, now that I have Louis' permission, I will make sure we act like one. In all reality, I probably should have paid attention to the schedule so I would know what's coming, but it's too late now.

Surprise, surprise, there were a bunch of cameras flashing as soon as the door to our car opened. Apparently, everyone knew Robin was running for president, even though it wasn't official and they wanted pictures of the gay son and his fiancé for obvious public interest. But the paparazzi also had high hopes of finding some dirt or scandal so they could leave their big mark in the media. Campaign time also meant time for all the daggers to magically appear in time to stab you in the back. Thank goodness for Louis, Liam, Zayn and maybe even Niall. Without them, I might not be able to survive this campaign.

We walked into a building that, judging by all of the flowers, cake, and venue pictures, belonged to a well-known wedding planner. An assistant greeted us at the door and led us to a room with a long table and a TV and told us Ms. Yates would be in in a couple of minutes.

We sat down and I looked over and saw Louis nervously fiddling with hands. I reached over and grabbed Louis' hand in an attempt to try and soothe him or at least prevent anyone else from seeing Louis' nervous antics. Any weakness would be noticed and used later. I might as well start preventing that now and having an excuse to hold Louis' hand was a definite bonus.

As soon as our hands made contact Louis seemed to visibly relax. And when he didn't object, I did a little internal happy dance. I was trying to take baby steps with the level of physical contact and it was good that he didn't pull back because I didn't know a smaller step than hand holding.

~Louis' POV~

When we got into the car, Liam started on a very long briefing of today's schedule. The short version was that we were going to the wedding planner first, then home for lunch, followed by some fancy fundraising benefit with Harry's family.

Liam kept glancing from me to Harry during his speech as if to say Harry's not paying attention, do something about it. I just shook my head. I knew Harry wasn't pay attention, but I also knew this wouldn't be something worth fighting over. So instead of calling Harry out, I

just paid extra attention in order to make sure I had every detail memorized, since Harry wouldn't be any help.

Once we fought our way through the photographers, some beautiful assistant led us to the meeting room and I couldn't help but wonder who Harry thought was cuter: the girl or I. Not that it mattered or anything. It wasn't like I was wondering if Harry regretted getting stuck with a guy rather than some pretty young girl. These thoughts kept running through my head while we were waiting. In a failed attempt to calm down, my mind shifted to work mode and I started to get nervous for other reasons. I wasn't really worried about the wedding planner and I was only a little worried about the family dinner at the fundraising benefit, though maybe I should have been. What scared me the most at the moment was our down time at the house. That would be the real test. We would be surrounded by friends who actually knew us, and I was afraid they would see through the charade. I still didn't know what they expected of us and that made it very hard for me to control the situation. Now my hands were twitching and making random patterns and gestures. I knew it was a bad habit and it was one of the reasons why I preferred to stay behind the scenes.

I instantly relaxed when I felt a large, warm hand grab mine. I internally chastised myself for having an immediate reaction to him. I'm supposed to stay professional and not get emotionally involved, I told myself. Emotions complicate everything. I was having a different internal crisis because I couldn't pull away because we have to appear in love and handholding was a pretty basic gesture. I settled for trying not to think about how nice the hand surrounding my own felt. Besides, I had told Harry we could act like a more openly gay couple to subtly get back at the senator.

During my internal monologue Ms. Yates came in.

"Hello" she said with a fake smile plastered on her face. "I am Ms. Yates, and your father hired me to be your wedding planner. Let me assure you that your privacy will be honored here. Now you two must be Harry and Louis."

We both nodded and shook hands with her.

"Now I've been told you are going to have a rather large wedding. Do you know what season you wanted?"

**"We would like to have an autumn wedding."** Harry turned to look at me when he said that. I had to mentally remind myself not to let my jaw drop at that statement. Apparently Harry *had* been paying attention when we had talked in the park. I shook myself from my thoughts that were straying away from work mode.

"And do you want inside or outside?"

**"Outside."**

She was casually writing down our answers in a little notebook.

"What about the reception?" Okay, yeah...maybe I should have been more worried about this! We weren't going to convince anyone we were in love if we didn't have any idea what

we wanted for our wedding!

**“You’ll have to ask my Father about that one.”** I tried really hard not to let the shock show on my face. Harry had adorned this calm façade and while there was absolutely nothing wrong with his expression I just knew it wasn’t quite...Harry.

“Okay. Well do you have any other specific requests?” As her questioning glance fell on me, I realized that I was probably expected to have some input as well.

*“Uh, well...”* I didn’t have any idea at all. I had been so caught up with chatting with Harry, the proposal, and the sleeping arrangement that I hadn’t even started thinking about our wedding. To be perfectly honest, I didn’t think the wedding plans would have begun to be put together yet. That’s politicians for you, always trying to play chess ten steps ahead.

**“Well it will be formal, and be able to seat enough people as my father requests. It should be during later midday and must be once the leaves start changing colors. It has to be in Vermont. Oh and we will have a small wedding party and will pick out the rings ourselves.”** I was once again, shocked. Harry had completely commandeered this interview. If she actually cared, this woman might have even believed we really were in love and had gushed about our wedding for weeks before coming to this meeting. But as the planning continued I got more and more worried about Harry. He was being perfectly polite, or you could even say he was formal, and that felt very off. Not that this woman noticed anything wrong.

“The colors of fall will be perfect. The dark red will represent your deep and strong love. And the Orange will make all the guests feel warm and happy inside. There will still be some green to bring harmony. Then combined with some white which represents hope and perfection...” She keeps ranting about colors this and colors that and I start tuning out because I have other things and Harry to worry about. It feels like she goes on for at least a half an hour about wedding colors before I jump to a start when Harry taps my leg under the table.

“Who will be walking down the aisle?”

**“Louis”** Why me? He didn’t even have to think before he answered, as if it was the most obvious answer in the world. **“I want to watch my dreams of forever come true with every step he takes.”** Well...okay. Harry is looking at me now and I don’t think my heart was supposed to react like that.

“Okay, I think I have enough to get started. Make another appointment with my assistant and talk with your father and next time I will have various samples for you.” She apparently isn’t dying of heart palpitations because of the words Harry just uttered. Something is clearly wrong with me.

**“Sounds good. Thank you for your time.”**

*“Thank you.”* I added quickly in a lame attempt to act as if I had contributed to our discussion at all. All I can really process is that the first real Harry-smile, with all its dimply goodness, vanished the second Harry’s eyes left me and turned back to the wedding planner. I

don't know how she can stand it. I think receiving that smile would break my heart. I don't let myself think about that for too long though. Goddamn emotions if they would only go where you tell them and stay there to be ignored for a significant amount of time...

When we get to the car, Liam rides up front with Zayn and rolls up the divider. I was wondering why, until I saw Harry visibly deflate. Apparently, Liam knew how much energy these things cost Harry, and is now handing over the responsibility of his emotional state to me. I had somehow passed the first of what I like to call, fiancé tests. From what I could tell, Liam and Zayn had been with Harry quite a while and passing over this responsibility must mean they trust me. I just hope I never do anything to lose their trust, not that I had done anything to earn it either...

*"Haz, what's wrong?"* I knew Harry had seemed off in the meeting but I chastise myself for evidently being the last to realize how much it had bothered him. I was already failing in my fiancé duties by not noticing sooner.

**"It's nothing. I'll be fine by the time we get back."**

*"Haz, I know something's wrong. Will you please tell me why you look like you've been through a blender?"*

**"It's just, it takes a lot of energy to deal with fake people."** Harry said as he scrubbed his face with his hand. Honestly, I was expecting him to say something about how it was hard to pretend to be in love with me.

**"They've all got these masks on like they're perfect and pleasant. Yet, as soon as they get the tiniest speck of dirt on you, they either use blackmail or turn it in a dagger to stab you in the back. I hate keeping up these walls that I have to constantly ensure are impenetrable. It's so exhausting."**

*"Then why do you do it? I mean you didn't care before, when you had your partier reputation. Why are you trying so hard now?"*

There was a pause so long I thought Harry would never answer. I started to wonder if I had pushed too hard as I watched the mixture of emotions cross Harry's face. He is so good at making me feel better and all I can do is make it worse. Harry seemed to come to a decision. He turned so he could look me in the eyes and put a hand on my knee and said:

**"I do it, because I don't want to lose you. If I keep misbehaving, Robin could cancel the deal and make me move back and you would go back to the office and I would go back to having no one."**

I didn't know how to respond. Part of me, the unhelpful part, was flipping around, overjoyed that Harry would say something so sweet. The other part was rationalizing that Harry clearly meant that he would go back to having no true friends. The war between my work mode and my emotions left me staring at Harry blankly until I was saved by Liam opening the car door, and telling us we were home.

We walked inside to a full lunch set out on the buffet. At this rate, the dining room would never be used. The conversation wandered idly through various mundane topics for a large part of the lunch. The other guys were obviously waiting for Harry and me to get a reasonable amount of food down before bringing up the meeting with the wedding planner.

Niall started the conversation. "So how was it?"

Harry responded before I could. **"It was fine, besides the fact she probably had shoved a stick up her butt to keep her back so straight. She acted like we had some dirty little secret and emphasized our privacy. Other than that, it was all good."**

"So, the usual" Zayn responded.

"Wait, you must be kidding Zayn" Niall stated.

"Sadly, no" Liam responded.

"Ick. Sucks to be you guys" Niall commented.

*"Niall!"* I chastised. I couldn't believe Niall had said something so insensitive. It was so hard for Harry, and Niall just said that so nonchalantly. Sometimes I wonder why I can be a friend with someone who says things like this so nonchalantly. I reached over and put my hand on Harry's leg under the counter in order to try and soothe him and to prevent him from doing something rash.

~Harry's POV~

I was about to give this Niall kid an earful, but was quickly stopped by Louis' hand on my thigh. All my anger and frustration turned to excitement with the thought that I was finally getting Louis out of work mode. I took a couple of deep breaths to calm down all my emotions.

Liam decided to take this moment in time to remind us of our evening plans. "Louis and Harry, you need to go start getting ready for the banquet. It is a black tie occasion. Louis, make sure Harry is dressed appropriately. We leave at 4 o'clock sharp."

And with that, we were dismissed. We went to our room and I promptly dropped myself down on the bed, while Louis went to the closet.

*"What are you going to wear?"*

**"Um, well whatever. It doesn't really matter because whatever I pick out is usually wrong and Liam picks something else out anyway."** It was the truth but I was also secretly hoping that maybe my admission would get Louis to pick my outfit out for me. My heart leaped more at the thought of such a normal, domestic action than I would like to admit.

Louis looked completely horrified at this statement and proceeded to ferociously tear through the closet looking for clothes. Louis kept muttering under his breath about how we've only lived here a day and how could I have made such a mess of the closet already. I just stayed



there smiling on the bed while watching Louis riffle through our closet. I decided to take a shower now while Louis was preoccupied with our clothing situation.

**“Hey Lou, I’m going to go hit the shower. And you know you can reorganize it if it bothers you that much.”**

*“Ok, yeah go ahead.”*

I had a feeling Louis was only half paying attention. I just wondered if I’d have an outfit to wear by the time I got out of the shower or if I would find my clothes rearranged by color or possibly the occasion at which they would be worn...maybe it would be both.

I came out of the bathroom with a towel slung low across my hips and my hair still in the damp, not yet completely curly stage and Louis looked like he was going to have an apoplexy.

**“What’s wrong, Lou?”**

*“You took a long shower and you come out and you’re not even close to looking presentable! At least I picked out our clothes because if you had, we’d probably be going in old faded jeans and some random T-shirt out of the back of your closet!”*

I knew Louis wasn’t really mad at me. I knew Louis was a perfectionist, and left to his own devices, he could set himself into a full panic attack over the most minor details. Today, those details seemed to be me.

**“Lou, are you really worried about our clothes?”**

*“Well, of course-“*

**“Or are you just worried about having to be a couple in front of all those people?”**

Then Louis did that cute little mouth open and shut thing like he didn’t have a witty remark for the first time.

*“How did you know?”*

**“I know you Louis. We’ve talked for months. I’ve heard you stress out about things enough to know you only obsess with extremely minor details when you’re worried about the overall picture.”**

*“That’s not true! I mean they aren’t insignificant details. They’re just as important as everything else and easier to control and perfect when you can’t control other things and... oh. Uh, okay maybe I am panicking over nothing but this is our first gathering together as a couple and I just don’t want to mess it up.”*

Poor Louis looked so nervous, which was weird because he normally maintained a calm and austere front when facing anything politics related. Even though we had talked about the situation a bit, I was honestly expecting Louis to still pretend to be professional and unemotional all the time around me. Now wasn’t really the time to question it though so I

tried to comfort Louis by wrapping him up in a hug, rubbing his back and making soothing noises. Louis froze up for a moment, but then relaxed and wrapped his arms around me too.

~Louis' POV~

As soon as Harry wrapped his rather long arms around me, my mind began an internal debate. The one side saying I should pull back. This is just supposed to be a job; I shouldn't get personally attached and nobody could see us at the moment so we didn't need to keep up the act... On the other hand, Harry was warm and comfortable and it felt really good to have him care. My practical mind lost the battle and I returned the hug. I compromised with my logical side by claiming this was a warm up for the act tonight

I absorbed the comfort for as long as I could rationalize before we needed to start getting ready.

*"We've got to get ready, Haz. I laid out our outfits on the bed and yours is the one with the bow tie. I will tackle your hair after I get out of the shower."*

**"Good luck with that. My hair can't be tamed!"** Harry was smirking as usual but I tried really hard not to see the concern that lingered in his eyes.

And of course I failed horribly but I found myself laughing anyway when I registered what Harry had said. Then I couldn't believe I laughed. Since when did silly puns make me laugh? Oh yeah, since I started crushing on my fiancé... No, no, not crushing. Since I've been friends with Harry, yeah friends. And since when do I completely ignore the fact Harry has nothing but a towel on. The reaction I am having to that fact probably doesn't fit with my statement about being friends. This is going to be an interesting night.

# Chapter Six

## Monday Evening

~Harry's POV~

By the time Louis deemed us ready for the benefit, we were practically running out the door and hoping to be somewhat on time. Louis dressed us in matching tuxes with him in a tie and me in a bowtie. We had matching dark red handkerchiefs with white boutonnieres.

The banquet was at one of those fancy places with the tall round tables where nobody really sat down. Ever. I still don't understand how my sister can survive these things in her ridiculously high heels. Shit, I had forgotten about Gemma. She already knew about Robin's plan and facing her could be potentially dangerous, especially since she's had nothing but time to think about it since we last talked quite a while ago. Well at least it seems like ages ago. I have avoided talking to her since she was so disapproving and there was no way I was going to tell her I actually liked Louis in a romantic way. She would stomp her judgmental heels all over my heart. In other words, tonight would be just another night full of judgmental people trying to schmooze or gossip their way into power. I just hope I can keep them away from Louis and from dragging him down to their level.

As soon as the door to the car opened, I was blinded by the flash of cameras. There must not be anything else exciting going on for them to be here so early. We were only here because we had to help out and do whatever menial task Robin sentences us to. I felt Louis grab onto me as soon as he got out of the car like I was a lifeline or something. That worried me because we hadn't even made it inside and Louis was already scared enough to forget about his self-imposed boundaries. If Louis was this nervous now, wait until all the people arrived. I plastered on a smile and tried to politely wave at as many pap's as possible while maintaining a firm grip on Louis so we wouldn't get separated.

Inside, everything was the same fancy modern chic style that these kinds of things always have. It was another fundraiser for some children's group, not that I dislike children's groups it's just after the first five times they get monotonous. No matter what the name of the group was or what cause they were working towards the banquet went by the same exact way. There would be time for people to get here and mingle, then some great couple of speeches about the cause and some tireless worker or another and encouraging people to donate followed by food and a lot of booze. They figured the more alcohol people drank the more likely they were to donate more money.

The booze was always a bonus to coming to these things but I won't be drinking tonight. I have to stay on full alert for Louis' sake. Besides, I have to live my partier reputation down, which I always thought was ironic. I got that rap from drinking at too many benefits, not from any actual partying or clubbing. But nonetheless, I am soon to be a married man so I'll probably have a new image created for me based on that alone.

The first thing we have to do is find Robin. We found him by the stage getting ready to do a microphone check, and once we got up there we instantly rejoined our hands like they had never been apart.

“Good, you guys are here. For tonight, I just want you to co-mingle and be nice to everyone. Don’t forget you’re engaged and try not to drink too much alcohol.”

**“Anything else, master?”**

“Yes. You could cut that out and pretend to pay attention during my speech and act like you like your sister. She seems peeved about something but you still have to act like family. Got it?”

**“Yeah.”**

“Good.”

~Louis’ POV~

Watching Harry and Robin interact was probably one of the most painful things I’ve ever had to watch. Robin is so dismissive of Harry and Harry just stands there and takes it. Well he rebels with his sarcasm but his sarcastic side seems to only come out when he’s really annoyed. Harry probably won’t ever admit it, but the way Robin treats him is awful and I think the only way to make him feel better is to get back at Robin. We need to pull some hijinks that just barely fall within Robin’s instructions. I won’t let people forget we are engaged.

We got off the stage and I was going to pull Harry aside inform him of my scheming but then we ran into his sister. He never talks about her, but I know about her from when I worked for Robin. Robin? When had I started calling him by his first name? Probably around the time I started crushing, I mean caring, I mean became friends with Harry. Any who, let’s not go down that road. Back to Gemma.

She’s your typical politician’s stand-up daughter: squeaky-clean reputation, never caught in a lie, always smiling, wears the “right” clothes with the “right” hair, and never doing anything damaging. She was a publicists dream. Everyone always loved when she or her mom would bring baked goods to the campaign office, or maybe it had more to do with her feminine figure. Now that I think about it, maybe that’s why I was never affected by her charms; I’m just not into women. Apparently, I was right not to be charmed because up close her saccharine-sweet smile became all the more transparent when she turned her gaze to me.

“Hello, you must be Louis. I’ve heard so much about you.” She pulled me into a hug. “I know about the arranged marriage and I’ve done my research on you and you aren’t good enough for this family. If you do anything to hurt him or screw up Robin’s campaign I will kill you” she hissed in my ear. Then she went back to talking to Harry like nothing had ever happened.

“It’s so nice to see you, Harry. We haven’t had a chance to catch up since you started college and got engaged. Call me some time so we can have a nice chat.”

**“Nice to see you too, Gemma”** he said as she walked away to greet the guests arriving through the newly opened doors. If Harry’s own family treated him this way, how would everyone else treat us? This was a very different side of politics than what I was used to.

I quickly started to realize more people cared about us and our new relationship than the cause. Most people came for the same reason Robin hosted, publicity. No one truly cared about the cause, they wanted to get gossip and be talked about. We were a recent scandal and therefore targets.

~Harry’s POV~

I wanted to ask Louis what Gemma had told him, but before I knew it we were being swarmed by people. I’ve been away just long enough to forget people are like sharks swarming to find the freshest blood, or in this case scandal. Unluckily for us, and lucky for Robin’s campaign, our engagement was the most recent thing to sweep up amongst the politicians and elites who come to these things.

We somehow ended up standing next to a group of older gentleman. They were gossiping about this person did this, that person did that until they started talking about Louis and me.

“I don’t understand why they would want to get married. Girls are meant to stay home and cook and clean while men work. Who’s gonna do that when they’re both guys. Men shouldn’t take a feminine role in a marriage.” The guy looked so confused about how two men would handle marriage. Did I mention how much I dislike the people at these things?

“Did you hear? That Louis guy isn’t even wealthy. I think he’s only in it for the Senator’s money. Who knows why that Harry kid is doing it.” Funny they would think that when half of their wives are only with them for money and social status.

“Probably just some stunt to try and piss off his dad. I mean Louis’ short, pudgy, and has no sense of proper dress from what I’ve heard.” I was really glad I had decided not to drink tonight. I probably couldn’t have kept myself from punching one of these guys if I was drunk.

“I hear he wears skinny jeans and suspenders together.”

“That’s outrageous!” Actually, it’s quite attractive.

I had been trying to move Louis away from those bigoted old men as soon as they had started talking about us but Louis wouldn’t move. He can’t handle this yet, or at least I don’t want him to have to handle it. Honestly, I wasn’t handling it well. I finally got him to move but when I turned my gaze to his face to see how upset he was he only appeared very determined.

**“Louis, are you okay?”**

*“Yeah, I’m fine.”* He sounds somewhat distracted but not upset.

**“Are you sure?”**

*“Harry, I’ve been out for a long time now and if I let every asshole get to me, I wouldn’t have made it out of high school.”*

**“Oh, okay... Should I be worried about the mischievous look in your eye?”**

*“Possibly, because, I know the perfect way to get to them.”*

~Louis’ POV~

Homophobes were all the same. They hated to be confronted with gay PDA.

**“How?”**

*“When they turn around to grab some champagne, we kiss and they won’t have a clue how to react.”*

**“Really?”** Harry seemed almost confused that I would suggest such a thing.

*“Yeah. They’re turning around.”*

Harry backed me up to the wall and put his hands on either side of my head and I grabbed his waist. He whispered in my ear.

**“Are you sure about this, Lou?”**

*“Of course, just kiss me already.”* Hopefully he didn’t feel me shudder at how hot his breath was on my ear.

I mean it was no big deal and we were engaged. Plus we were running out of time and if we really wanted to screw with them we needed to do it soon.

I figured it was going to be like one of those stage kisses where your lips touch and that’s about it. But his mouth felt so warm and his lips were just inviting my tongue to taste them and I just forgot about why I shouldn’t be doing this; I forgot all the reasons not to be getting emotionally involved. Instead, I pulled Harry closer and teased his lips until he opened his mouth so I could explore deeper. His hands moved, one to grab my waist and the other to wrap around my upper back and he pulled me close like he was never going to let me go. It felt so good in a way nothing has ever felt before now. Our tongues intertwined so naturally that it was difficult to remember this was our first kiss. When we separated enough to catch our breaths, all I could do was stare into those fantastically green eyes. Everything about this felt so warm and safe and...perfect.

I was snapped from our happy bubble when I noticed everything had gone completely silent. Apparently, someone had put the spotlight on us while we were \*ahem\* “preoccupied.” People were staring and I wanted to go crawl in a hole and die of embarrassment.

~Harry’s POV~

Louis looked so cute when he was embarrassed; he got all blushy and coy. I should probably be more concerned about the bright spotlight on us that most likely caught us making out, but

I was too happy about the fact we were kissing in the first place. I couldn't stop smiling or let go of him. I hadn't even managed to stop *looking* at him for that matter.

Robin cut in with "This is my son and his fiancé, obviously, which is one of the reasons why I'm so proud to raise money for this charity. This charity provides support and a safe place for teens of any sexuality."

All I could think was "really, are you that cliché?" No wonder he wanted us here so bad, we were a perfect way to encourage charity without having to invite any of the kids actually in the program. Well played Robin, well played.

The spotlight returned to Robin, but I could still see people glancing at us out of the corner of my eye. They don't matter, but Lou would be freaked out when we got home. Home. Since when had I started thinking of it as that? Whatever, I could figure it out later. I just had to make sure Louis didn't panic before the end of the night, or run away, or go hide with the caterers, or... Never mind the list, it would take me forever.

The rest of the evening was rather boring by comparison. Not that there was anything that could really top kissing Louis. Somewhere at the back of my mind there was still a happy chant of *wekissedwekissedwekissed* happening and that got me through the rest of the evening. Louis seemed to be doing alright as well but I was wary of that changing later when we were alone.

Finally, the last guests were leaving and I was happy that we would be leaving soon. That is, I was, until I saw the fake smile drop from Robin's face as soon as he was no longer in the public eye. He looked over toward Louis and I with an unreadable expression. I just assumed he was angry because ninety-five percent of my conversations with him were angry.

When Robin came over I instinctively pulled Louis behind me for, I suppose, obvious reasons.

"Boys I can't believe-" here comes the yelling, "how perfect that was!"

**"What?!"** The is so far from what I expected, my eyebrows are probably lost up in my curls

"Your timing was perfect and I got so many donations. You two getting together was the best thing ever."

**"You're kidding."** It's almost like he forgets that he planned this.

"So I want you guys to come over for a family Thanksgiving on Thursday."

"*Sir, what about my family?*" Louis had stepped out from behind me and I hadn't even noticed I was so in shock after Robin's statement. But Louis' brought me crashing back to reality. Louis didn't deserve to miss Thanksgiving with his family.

"Oh don't worry. I had my secretary send them a formal invitation."

I looked over at Louis and his eyes had gone supremely wide and he had gone completely silent, which Robin thought was acceptance of the situation. I was fairly sure it was the

opposite but it evidently wasn't up for discussion.

"Liam and Zayn are out front to take you home. I will see you two Thursday."

It was a very silent car ride back from a combination of tiredness and things we couldn't say in front of our bodyguards. It was a relief when we finally collapsed onto the bed in our room. Even Louis was too tired to think about sharing a bed. I don't think either of us was ready just yet to talk about everything that happened tonight so I settled for attempting to lighten the mood.

**"Are you going to wear twenty layers tonight?"** Louis let out a tired chuckle.

*"No. I'm going to go get ready for bed."*

He must really be exhausted because I was expecting at least a little freak out. It would probably all burst out in the morning if I didn't prompt some of it out tonight...

~Louis' POV~

I can't believe my family and his family are getting together for Thanksgiving. My family knows nothing about this arrangement and most of his family does. What am I going to do? I hate lying to my mom, but she wouldn't understand and would make me back out and I couldn't do that to Harry. I would be such an awful friend if I back out and sent him back to Robin after seeing how bad it was for him.

When I got out of the bathroom, Harry was already curled up in bed. I just laid down facing him without putting much thought into it.

**"What's wrong, Boo?"** I am too stressed to care that he's using that nickname. And that he was pulling me in to cuddle on the bed. I am just too worried about all the things that could go wrong. Someone, most likely Gemma, could "accidentally" spill about our arrangement. Or Harry's family could look down at my family for not being in the "one percent." Or, my little sisters could say something really rude. Not that I had any reason to believe they would, but I like to cover all my bases when I stress out. Or

**"Hey! You still there? You didn't answer my question."**

*"What? Sorry, I'm just so worried about our families getting together. My family's so nice and friendly and normal and your family is so rich and..."* I can't bring myself to finish the sentence.

**"Stuck-up, overly polite, and cold."**

*"Maybe..."*

**"It's okay. I know how bad my family is, and that's why I wanted to move out. The truth isn't offensive."**

*"But still-"* **"You don't like to be offensive. I know. Which is why I balance you out so nicely. Look, I'm sorry that your family has to get brought into this but honestly, I'm**



**happy they're coming. It will be nice to be around an actual, loving family on Thanksgiving for once."**

*"But my mom can't know about this arrangement. It would break her heart that I lied and she'd probably make me leave you."* Okay that all spilled out faster than I meant it to so I rushed on to amend the statement as Harry's eyes widened. *"I mean what an awful friend I would be to make you move back in with Robin after I've seen how awful it is for you"* I repeated my earlier thoughts out loud hoping that they would do a better job of deceiving Harry than they did of deceiving my heart.

Harry just looked at me for a moment before tucking me into his chest and saying softly, **"Hey, it's going to be okay, Lou. Just try to get some sleep. We will figure something out."**

Harry made it really easy to feel as if everything in life could actually work out and that was probably really dangerous for me but I was really tired and Harry was really comfortable so I just muttered something that I hope sounded somewhat like an "okay" as I began to drift off.

That night I had the sweetest dream where Harry kissed me, innocent and sweet, like he actually cared about me. Not that he ever would care about me that way, but it was a nice dream nonetheless.

~Harry's POV~

In order to make sure Louis was asleep, I waited until his breathing pattern remained even for a good five minutes. I kissed him on the top of his head and told him how proud I was for how he handled the whole evening, and how excited I was to be meeting the lovely family who raised such a wonderful boy. I told him how jealous I was of his family and the fact they cared about each other. I told him all the things I was afraid of telling him when he was awake and hoped that I could be brave enough to tell him one day. When I had finally exhausted my words, I snuggled him closer and fell asleep.

## Chapter Seven

Thanksgiving (Thursday)

~Harry's POV~

The first thing I thought of as I woke up was thank goodness it was finally Thanksgiving. It wasn't because I was expecting some lovely, calm family dinner. No, it's just that the past two days had been Hell. Louis had been stressing out over the impending familial doom and I had homework to get done before I went back on Saturday. What made things even worse was Liam's passive aggressive ways of saying "be safe."

He had left a trail of "safe sex" pamphlets all around the house and I had to run and try to grab them every morning before Louis could see them. Luckily, I'm usually the first awake anyway because I'm pretty sure Louis wouldn't react well if he found "Tips for Safe Oral Sex" when he went to brush his teeth. What really took the cake was when we went to bed last night and I had to do a sliding tackle onto the bed, to try and grab the six that had been laid out on the comforter. But apparently Louis didn't find it too suspicious that I suddenly had the impulsive need to act like a five year old in his first hotel room.

I don't know why Liam even bothered. Louis and I were in a committed, monogamous, public relationship. The only people we would allegedly be having sex with would be each other. Not that I let myself think about our relationship getting to that point...okay maybe I didn't let myself think about it *often*. Honestly, they did more to send me into a frenzy over finding them, than actually telling me about safe sex but I also wasn't reading them. I know Liam's just doing this because he cares, but I wish he would stop before he accidentally kills my fiancé with an aneurism or heart attack or some other panic induced death.

Ugh. At least the stress of Thanksgiving will be over after today and the tension level between the five of us will significantly decrease. Speaking of which, I wonder what time it is. Thanksgiving dinner/lunch/whatever-it's-called-because-it's-at-such-a weird-time would be at three. We needed to leave around 1:45 to get there by 2:30 and that means we need to be up by nine so I can make a few last minute dishes. Robin was trying to be completely all-American this year, so everything was homemade and the chefs had the day off. Mom was cooking the majority of the meal at their house, and Louis and I and Louis' family were bringing a couple other dishes to complete the meal. I was planning to make cake balls, bread, and pie. I tried to turn enough to see the clock without disturbing Lou because apparently his cuddle level increases with his stress level. It was 8:46, close enough to get out of bed. The question was how to get up without disturbing him.

When I rolled back over to assess our entanglement situation, Louis snuggled up even closer. I wouldn't really mind staying here until he wakes up but that just won't work with all the baking I need to start and Louis' tendency to sleep away the morning. How am I supposed to get out of this mess? Our legs were intertwined like a pretzel gone wrong, I was on my back with one of his arms pulling me close and trying to permanently bond our ribcages together,

his head was snuggled into my chest with one of my arms around his shoulder, and his other arm tucked between us and holding onto my shirt as if his life depends on it.

I managed to wiggle my legs out successfully. I figured I could swap out my torso for a pillow, but that still wouldn't get him to let go of my shirt. As I shifted him a little and started sneaking out, he wouldn't let go, so I somehow managed to slip it off and sneak away. When I got to the kitchen I turned the ovens on and kneaded the bread dough so it could sit and rise for another couple of hours and decided to make us breakfast.

~Louis' POV~

I woke up clutching something to my chest. I don't know what it is or why I'm holding it but I know I don't want to let it go. When I am finally awake enough to be functional, I move so I can see what I have grabbed a hold of.

Why do I have Harry's shirt? Was I too tired last night to be able to remember what happened? Did I do something in my sleep?

What did I do?!

**"Lou, breakfast is ready."**

I better go find out sooner rather than later. Apparently I didn't wake up much later than Harry for once, because he hadn't even gotten dressed yet.

**"Here, try this."** He said as he held out a bite of his pancakes. I opened my mouth for the fork and ate them without thinking.

*"That's really good. Can you put some sprinkles in them?"*

**"Of course."**

I realized I was still holding on to his shirt, which led me to stare at his well defined chest, and my eyes focused on two particular marks that looked like freckles but not quite. When he fake coughed I snapped out of it and held out his shirt.

*"Oh um, here, do you want your shirt back?"* He just motioned for me to leave it on the bar. After a few minutes of watching him flip pancakes, he came back over to continue the conversation. I guess he knew what had caught my attention earlier, because he came over and said, **"I have four nipples"** as he fed me another bite of the heavenly pancakes. And of course that was when Zayn and Liam decided to make an appearance. Aw shit! This must look bad. Well not bad as in bad bad, but bad as in insinuating that we had been more intimate than we actually had, bad.

I turned bright red, but Harry just continued on like this was all normal. He fed me another bite to either show he couldn't care less, or to see if I could turn a darker shade of red. I could've turned down the pancakes, but they were just too good to resist. Besides...I was sleepy and feeding myself takes a lot of energy.

**“Morning boys, take whatever you like.”** Harry grins as he gestures towards the breakfast he’s made.

*“I thought you guys have the day off because of the holiday.”* I’m still attempting to return to my natural color but I somehow manage to make my voice sound completely natural.

“We do” Zayn replied “after we make sure you get to the Senator’s house.”

*“Oh, Ok.”* And at that point I pick up my own fork and the other guys join us to eat their own pancakes.

It took forever to finally get everything ready to go. I say forever because within five minutes of cooking, Harry understood Niall’s instructions to never allow me into the kitchen and threw me out. Oh and it probably doesn’t help that I set a towel on fire. I killed a bit of time picking out what Harry and I would wear for the afternoon but I was soon left to wander the house full of nervous energy.

When we eventually pulled up to Robin and Anne’s I saw my mom’s car and got really excited. I hadn’t realized how long it has been and how much I’ve missed my family until now.

As soon as I got in the door and the twins, Phoebe and Daisy, latched onto my legs. Then Harry walked into the door and they looked at him like they had just gotten a brand new toy. I probably should have warned him how much they like to play with hair now that I think about it... Anyway, while they launched themselves at Harry, I hug Lottie and Fizzy and they tell me that mom is waiting to see me in the living room

As I walk down the hall toward the living room I see the twins have gotten up into Harry’s arms, which has coincidentally put his hair within their grasps. My attention is drawn back to the room I just entered when my mother flies off the couch to hug me.

“Aw baby I’ve missed you so much.” Her words are muffled into my chest because she’s pressed into my so tightly.

*“I’ve missed you too, Mom.”* I laugh but it really has been awhile since I last went home.

“How have you been? What have you been up to? How’s your new place?” *“Mom!”* I interrupted. *“You’ve got to pause long enough for me to answer.”*

“Ugh, fine. But there’s just so much I want to know. It feels like it’s been forever!”

*“I know, Mom. Let me start with this. Harry!”*

**“What?”** Harry responds from down the hall.

*“Stop playing with the twins and come here!”* I’m smiling at mom as I call for Harry because no matter how much I don’t like lying to my mom, I do really want to know what she thinks of Harry.

**“Did you need something, Babe?”** The twins have scrambled into the living room after him frowning at the interruption of their fun.

I grabbed his hand and pulled him closer attempting not to notice the flutter in my stomach due to the pet name.

*“Harry, this is my Mom, Jay. Mom this is Harry, my fiancé.”*

“It’s nice to finally meet you, Harry.” My mom’s smile is warm and genuine as she looks at Harry then glances between the two of us.

**“It’s nice to meet you too, Jay. I’m going to go put these dishes in the kitchen, Lou. I’ll be right back.”** As I watch Harry smile at my mother, exposing his dimples in the process, I realize how happy I am that his fake smile hasn’t made an appearance instead.

I chat with my family for a bit before Harry came back into the room followed by Robin who tells us it’s time to eat. We follow him to an overly formal dining room. You know the ones in movies that seem to have entirely too many seats and the walls are covered with paintings and china cabinets? Yeah that’s pretty much how this room was.

The table is overflowing with every imaginable Thanksgiving dish and it all circulated around an enormous turkey that had been placed in the middle. I couldn’t imagine the ten of us even making a dent in the amount of food that had been prepared. But now I definitely knew where Harry learned to cook because his mom must have been working for a few days.

After I drag my eyes away from the food I notice Harry’s sister, Gemma walking over to talk to my mom followed by a pretty woman that obviously must be Harry’s mother. Robin makes his way to the head of the table at the opposite side of the room. I watch as he smiles his perfect-for-politics fake smile and tells us that we can take a seat wherever we would like. Our moms are already deep in conversation at this point so they go over toward Robin and take seats next to each other. Gemma follows them but sits across the table on the other side of her step-father. Harry sits next to his sister and I naturally sit next to him. Mom turns away from Harry’s mom to tell Daisy and Phoebe that they need to sit next to her so Lottie and Fizzy take the last two seats next to me.

As soon as the food has been distributed and the conversation starts, Harry pats my knee underneath the table as reassurance and I grab onto it immediately. He reintroduces me to his mom, Anne, because we had only met briefly at the benefit. She smiles at me and I can tell it’s genuine because she has a dimple that perfectly matches Harry’s. But as everyone is now acquainted with each other, my grip on Harry’s hand tightens as my anxiety returns.

It’s a lot different than the Thanksgivings I had grown up with. Other than the obvious fact that our meals were considerably less extravagant, I also never released how fake the whole idea of being thankful could be. It was just so obvious to me during the meal how fake everyone can be even if they don’t intend to be. It felt like we were one step away from going around and having to all say something we were thankful for.

I could tell from watching my four sisters converse with Harry that they clearly didn’t notice much wrong with the meal. The twins were young enough that they didn’t really understand

politics so they kept asking Harry if he was a prince and that's why he lived in such a nice house and would they be princesses after Harry and I's wedding. Lottie and Fizzy also seemed quite charmed by Harry's quirky personality. I was happy that they weren't having an unpleasant time and that their interest in Harry made it easier for him not to have to talk with Robin and Gemma.

While our moms seemed to have hit it off quite well, Robin was definitely controlling the conversation and he made it all about how he was thankful for family and this time to be together and get to unite our families as one. On top of that Gemma was being extremely nice to my entire family and after what she had said to me at the benefit I was very concerned at what ulterior motives she may have. She may have been the perfect senator's daughter but I still had the feeling that she was going to attempt to end Harry and I's engagement somehow.

~Harry's POV~

I cannot believe how awkward that was. Louis' family deserves an award for being able to still enjoy Thanksgiving despite my family's presence. The only thing keeping me from telling my family off was Louis' grip on me under the table. Besides, it's not that they were doing anything explicitly wrong it's just that I was used to all the fake smiles and conversation so I could see right through it. At least my mom had befriended Jay. She was probably the only reason I hadn't just walked out of this so-called family years ago.

The end of the meal couldn't come soon enough. Even though I had spent most of the time talking to Louis' sisters, just being around my family had come to exhaust me and I was ready to go home. Gemma, Louis and I cleared off the table while everyone else moved to the living room to spread the awkward to another part of the house. But when we went to go join them, Gemma grabbed me and pulled me into a room and locked the door.

**"What are you doing?"** I half whispered.

"I needed to talk to you." Her voice and face were completely expressionless but I knew her well enough to know that probably didn't mean anything good was coming.

**"Now?"** I really didn't want to leave Louis alone...

"Yes now."

There was an uncomfortable pause during which I almost just left to rejoin Louis.

**"Well?"**

"Well what?"

**"What was so important that you had to talk to me right this very minute now?"**

"You need to break up with Louis. Soon. The sooner the better." For a second I didn't know how to react to that because it was definitely not what I was expecting her to say.

**“What?! What do you mean I *need* to break up with Louis? Why would I ever do that?”**

“He’s not good enough for you Harry. He’s not right for this family.”

**“Are you serious, Gemma? This family is so screwed up. If anything I’m not right for him simply because I come with all of you! I mean look at how fake you and Robin were during that meal!!”**

“Shh, not so loud.”

**“Not so loud?! You’re telling me to dump my fiancé because you say so and you thought I would just be quiet about it?!”**

“We wouldn’t be arguing if you hadn’t agreed to this ‘deal’ in the first place. This is totally messed up. You shouldn’t be engaged!”

**“Why? Because my big sister can’t get a man so I shouldn’t be able to have one either?”**  
I knew that wasn’t what she meant but I wasn’t just going to take all of the shit she was saying to me.

“Can’t you see? This isn’t going to work!! He’s just not good for you.”

**“He’s not good for me. Really? Is that the best you can come up with? He’s not good for me. How is he not good for me, hm? I don’t drink anymore. I get home at a decent time. I’m studious and getting good grades. There haven’t been any scandalous paparazzi shots of me getting drunk with a half naked girl. I have pretty much stayed out of the public eye except for my engagement. And you say he’s not good for me.”**

“You aren’t listening to me. This is a joke. It’s making a mockery of marriage and politics. How can you be okay with that? How could you risk Dad losing everything if Louis ever sells his story to the press?”

**“First off Robin is not our Father so stop calling him that. Second off Louis would never ever sell to the press. Ever. And the fact that you believe that little of him shows just how shallow you are.”**

“How do you know that for sure? How are you okay with being forced to live with someone for years with no foreseeable end, and with *that* boy of all people? I mean I could understand if it was some hot girl, but-“

**“Let me stop you now before you do irreparable harm. Nothing you say is going to make me run away or back out or let him go. You don’t even deserve an explanation of all the ways your wrong about him. I want him more than I’ve ever wanted to be with anybody else and if you aren’t okay with that, then I don’t really care. You have less than nothing to do with this relationship. And you can take whatever mean comeback you are going to use and shove it up your ass because I don’t care what you say. You’re just a selfish, spoiled, shallow, hard-assed bitch.”**

“I can’t believe you would say that to your sister! I’m your flesh and blood and you’re just gonna pick some guy over me because you want to sleep with him.”

**“No, Gemma”** Then she got this smug little look on her face like she knew she was going to win.

**“I’m going to pick Louis over you because I love him and he is the best thing to ever happen to me. I don’t care how this started, but I am going to spend every day caring for him and loving him no matter what. You know why? Because, even if he never loves me like I love him, he will treat me more than a million times better than you ever have.”**

And with that I turned around and walked away. Sister or not, it didn’t matter. If she wasn’t going to be happy for me, then I don’t need her. I have never needed her.

~Louis’ POV~

While Harry and Gemma were gone, Robin led the conversation using all of his political charisma. Throughout the evening, he had managed to successfully charm my mother and all of my sisters and that bothered me because I didn’t want them to like him. I didn’t want them too involved in this. After Harry and Gemma didn’t come back for quite some time, Anne sent me on a search to go find the missing pair. After searching for a bit, I managed to successfully lock myself in one of their many closets.

*“Hello! Is any one out there?! HELLO!?”*

Shit! The staff had off because of the holiday and I was in a random wing of the house.

Now what am I supposed to do? I have been literally left alone with my thoughts. Do you now how hard it is to keep those things in a little corner when they’re sitting there like Pandora’s box just tempting you to open it and let chaos reign?

A little voice pointed out ‘But it’s so pretty and full of thoughts of Harry so why shouldn’t I open it?’ Maybe because then I’ll have to admit I actually like said boy.

“What’s so wrong about that?” the voice questioned. Well, um, we live together so it might be awkward if...

‘But you could enjoy your time together more if you owned up to your feelings’ the little voice tempted me. ‘You can’t have a relationship without feelings. Life is so much easier if you don’t deny everything. Denial is for people who are too chicken to be willing to get what you want. You are in politics where people seek out their dreams. You can’t shoot for your dream if you’re in denial it exists’ the voice reasoned. It sounded so logical.

If I want to potentially have a relationship I just have to say it. I-I-um. I like Harry. No, that’s not right. I love Harry. ‘Now see’ the voice said, ‘isn’t it better knowing how you feel even though he doesn’t feel the same?’ Of course, the voice is right and that feels like shit but it still feels good acknowledging my feelings. Now I think I’ll just curl into a ball of emotions and hope that Harry finds me soon.



~Harry's POV~

When I got back, Louis was missing. At first I thought nothing of it but then Jay asked me where he was. I just looked at her confused before she explained that they sent him to go find me and he never come back. So naturally, I went on a Louis hunt.

I figured he must be in that closet with a sticky handle that always seems to lock people inside, if people can actually find it that is. I used to lock Gemma in there whenever she was being particularly annoying because the staff doesn't come by very often and it's far enough away that she wouldn't be found too soon.

When I opened the door, Louis latched onto me like a monkey with his legs wrapped around my waist and his hands gripping my shoulders. He was a lot smaller than me but he was still lucky I didn't fall over out of shock. Or maybe he was just luck that my arms always wanted to wrap him up so it had become their natural instinct to catch him in a way.

*"Thank you thank you thank you! I didn't know how long I was going to be stuck in there."*

His face was a mere couple of inches away from mine and he just looked so perfectly happy and it felt so nice to have him in my arms. So I did what any sane person would have done; I kissed him.

He tensed up at first, not realizing what was going on, but then he relaxed into me like it was the simplest thing in the world. It was slow and lazy as we explored each other's mouths in an attempt to memorize every single detail.

*"What was that for?"* he asked when we ended the kiss.

**"No reason. You just looked too tempting to ignore."**

*"Oh. Um, well, uh. You see, um... What does this mean?"* If I had been planning this I probably would have expected this question. We had never actually discussed the accidental make-out session at the benefit after all.

**"What does what mean?"**

*"The kiss Harry! What does the kiss mean?"*

**"It typically means a touch with the lips as a sign of love, sexual desire, reverence or greeting. Like so."**

And I kissed him again, because why not? He's my fiancé and I love him, not that he knows that but it's still true.

"Found them!" someone called from down the hall. "They just got distracted by each other's tongues!"

"Lottie!" Louis yelled back. I guess it was the oldest of his younger sisters that found us. That was embarrassing but at least it wasn't one of our mother's.

The rest of the night was uneventful. Gemma pled sick so the conversations were considerably less awkward without her glowering in the corner. When we got home, I fell into bed while Louis went to the bathroom and was fast asleep before he came out.

~Louis' POV~

It was nice to see my family today but I was still happy when we finally got home. It would give me a chance to confront Harry about what happened in the hallway. That was, until I came out of the bathroom and he was fast asleep. I guess there's still tomorrow but we would actually need to talk tomorrow instead of ignoring it like we did the kiss at the charity fundraiser. Harry goes back to school the day after tomorrow and I don't think I could go three weeks without knowing why he kissed me. For now though, all I can do is curl up next to him and fall asleep.

## Chapter Eight

Friday

~Louis' POV~

I love my family, but I was so tired after Thanksgiving the only thing that could wake me up would be a hurricane--in my case, hurricane Niall. The stupid twit decided it would be funny as hell to pounce on us in order to wake us up. Living with Niall is kind of like living with a dog, he always wants to play and he always thinks he's being cute. All it really resulted in was flailing limbs and not so manly yelps.

*"Niall! What the fuck, man?"* The wind had been knocked out of me so I sounded more out of breath than angry but I definitely wasn't happy at Niall's choice of wake up call

"Liam and Zayn told me to go wake you guys up so I did" Niall responded. If the grin on his face was any indication, he seemed to think he was going to get some comedian of the year award.

**"Be that as it may... What made you think it was a good idea to jump on us?"** Harry had been hit in a more sensitive area and that was evident from the groan laced into his words.

"I wanted to see your reaction." His eyes were still full of swirling blue eagerness as he waited for us to find the humor in his actions.

*"Really, Niall? Really?"* He meant well but it was entirely too early in the morning for this.

*"So what do you think we should do with him?"* I turned to Harry pretending Niall wasn't there.

**"Well we could try behavioral modification."**

*"Interesting. He's motivated by food so we could use that for positive reinforcement and maybe start carrying around a spray bottle for negative."*

**"Hmm. I think I like that idea."** Harry was smirking at me and I found it very hard to ignore the effect it was having on my heart rate.

"Hey guys! You realize I'm still here and can hear everything you say."

At that, I reached over and flicked his nose with my eyes still locked on Harry. *"Bad Niall! You shouldn't eavesdrop."*

Then I stared at him with a straight face, causing Harry to burst out laughing, which made me laugh in return. Soon enough we were just rolling on the bed around a confused and pouty Niall until Liam came in.

"What is going on in here?" Liam asked.

Harry and I immediately looked up and stopped laughing like kids caught causing trouble.

That was until Niall whined, “Liam, they flicked me in the nose for eavesdropping.” Then we couldn’t contain it anymore and just started cracking up all over again until we were both clutching our sides due to lack of oxygen. Liam just looked equally confused and amused by the pout on Niall’s face. About five minutes after Liam had come in, Zayn showed up.

“Hey, what’s taking so long?” Zayn asked.

“Apparently, they find flicking me in the nose hilarious” Niall responded grumpily. Zayn coughed in an attempt to cover up a chuckle.

“I’m sure there is an interesting story that you two will tell me later,” Zayn smiled as he looked toward Harry and I who were still stifling giggles before continuing, “In any case, you two need to get ready to take go to the suit maker. Now. We don’t have a lot of time. I’ll explain in the car.”

Once everyone had left, I turned to Harry.

*“Guess we better get ready. I’ll pick out our clothes. Who knows what would happen if I let you pick them out.”* In all actuality, it probably didn’t matter what we wore to the fitting. But, I couldn’t pass up a chance to be so wonderfully domestic with Harry.

“**Hey!**” I instantly broke out into a grin at Harry’s mock offense.

*“Don’t deny it. You know it’s true.”* This felt fantastically like flirting and I never wanted it to end but it sounded as if we were in a rush.

So, with that, I walked into the closet to get us ready for the day. I picked out dark skinny jeans for both of us, a pale green shirt for Harry and a maroon shirt for me. I quickly change in the closet before bringing Harry his clothes. He thanks me as he pulls on his t-shirt and I definitely try not to check him out. Instead I turned to give him some privacy and headed for the bathroom to fix my hair.

As we go to leave, Niall shoves some bagels in our hands as Liam and Zayn hurry us out the door. Zayn drove while Liam explained our rushed schedule.

“So here’s what’s going on. The Senator decided to move his campaign up by almost a month. So you have to get your suits fitted today so that they can be ready for a final fitting when Harry gets back. Then we have to go to the Senator’s campaign headquarters to brief you guys and get everything in motion sooner. So no messing around and everything is get in and then get out. Got it?”

*“Absolutely.”* It was going to be a long, long day...

**“I still don’t get what the big deal is-“** I interrupted him with an elbow to the ribs. **“Ow! Okay fine.”**

Liam shot Harry one last look before turning his attention back to where they were going.

**“So what’s the big deal?”** He whispered to me.

*“Do you really not understand how much work goes into Robin’s campaign?”* I realized he probably didn’t. I knew how messed up his family dynamic was and I understood why he put so much distance between himself and all the politics that had come to dominate his life after his mother married the Senator.

**“Well I guess I haven’t really thought about it before. I was too busy contemplating my way out or getting absolutely wasted.”**

*“Understandable I suppose. To put it simply, the announcement requires a venue, advertisement, security, a speech, outfits, and rehearsals to assure everything goes off like clockwork and Robin just shortened the time they have to get it all organized.”*

At that Harry let out an impressed whistle. **“Why anyone would want to get involved in something so overly complicated beats me.”**

*“You forget we are now part of that complication. And I guess I have been for a while.”*

**“Oh.”** He legitimately looked like he had forgotten. That reminded me that we seriously needed to talk but there was no time now as Liam ushered us out of the vehicle into a suit shop.

When we walk in, Liam gave a man our names and he asked what suits we wanted. Harry and I turned to Liam expecting him to tell the man some predetermined specifications but he simply gave us a nod to signal we could pick out our own suits. Harry and I looked at each other. Then, Harry smirked and his pupils dilated slightly as he looked at me and told the man, **“He’ll have a black suit with satin trim and a steel grey undershirt. Make it slightly metallic if you can.”**

I match his look and, lowering my pitch enough to make Harry’s cocky grin falter, say *“He’ll have all black.”*

I’ll have to give the guy this, his composure never broke; like it was everyday men came in and picked out suits, while giving each other looks that said they wouldn’t be wearing them long. We were measured, fitted and pinned for what seemed like forever but was actually only two hours. Then we drove over to the campaign office where I knew the real test of patience was waiting.

When we walked inside everyone was in crisis mode.

People were running everywhere, there were papers taking up every available inch of space and there was a loud hum coming from all the computers working at full capacity. Rodger, an intern that had started the same time I had, came up to us and said, “Thank goodness you’re here, Louis. I need your help.” He then whisked me off to my old station and threw me back into the midst of work as if I had never left.

~Harry’s POV~

I was stunned when I walked into the door. I had seen this place get pretty crazy, but it had never been this bad. Before I knew it, Louis was gone and I was left standing there in a daze. It was almost like a car wreck, where you want to help but you know you can't and you can't help but stare. It felt like hours before someone found me, but I had only been standing there for about thirty minutes. I guess everything seems longer when everyone appears to be going in fast forward. Oh well, no more staring; time to face the heartless bastards.

I was rushed to the same old room with the long table and the television screens covering most of one wall. Louis was already sitting at the table fiddling with his thumbs. I walked up to him, kissed him on the forehead and said **"Hey, Lou"** while grabbing his hands, to try and calm him down.

Soon after Isadora Fontaine, the head of the P.R. team, came in. She just gave us her cold smile that was an insult to all other smiles.

"Welcome back boys" though her tone told us she was anything but welcoming.

"Against my advice, your father has decided to include you in his campaign. You two must be on point at all times. No more parties. No more drinking underage, Harry that means you. You will study everything I give you. You will do whatever you are told to do. Harry, you will enroll in an online college at the end of the semester. No pulling any shit. Absolutely no philandering. We do not need a sex scandal and you are never allowed to split up. Your wedding will be seen to by us. You have to keep security with you at all times. No screw ups, no cavorting around, and keep the public displays of indecency down to a minimum. We don't want to lose any more voters than we already lost because of you two."

She was so melodramatic and covertly hostile. It reminded me of all the backstabbing people I've met. I began stroking my thumb across the back of Louis palm where our entwined hands rested on his thigh. My anger was slowly building with every word this woman said. I think I was trying to comfort Louis as much as I was attempting to calm myself. The lecture just went on and on. Talking about stupid this and stupid that and full of veiled threats. She must like the sound of her voice because we sat there for three hours without saying a word and, at least on my part, pretending to listen.

Finally, some guy came in looking for Louis bringing an end to the never-ending lecture of awfulness. After a few final warnings he left to go help work on something or another. This left me awkwardly sitting there, and Isadora didn't seem to know what to do. Apparently, she's not used to people walking out on her, despite how much she has deserves it.

"You can go now" she said unpleasantly. And with that, I was dismissed. I went off in search of Liam or Zayn to see if I could maybe go get some food. Liam managed to find me first. "Hey, Harry! Let's go, you need to start packing. Zayn's going to stay here with Louis until he leaves," Liam said. And with that, I was out the door on my way back to our house, hoping tomorrow wouldn't come too soon.

~Louis' POV~

It was such a relief when Rodger got me. I don't know how much longer I would have been able to listen to Ms. Fontaine's accusatory speech before I blew up or stormed off. Back to

behind the scenes work for me. I wasn't really expecting to be wrapped back in at the office but the work felt so natural to me that it was practically involuntary.

The rest of the day passed in a blur and I didn't realize how much time had gone by until Zayn finally interrupted me.

"Hey, Louis?"

"*Yeah, Zayn?*" I was barely paying attention, focused instead on the article I was reading about other politicians that would most likely be declaring their campaign intentions soon.

"It's almost ten."

"*So?*"

"Harry leaves tomorrow, so you have to be up early to go to the airport."

"*Oh, Shit! You mean it is ten at night?!*"

"You thought I meant ten A.M.?" His tone was definitely amused

"*Maybe...*" Zayn chose that moment to laugh at me.

"You understand how ridiculous you are? You are absolutely work obsessed. Did you even notice Harry leave earlier?"

"*Well...*" I had figured somebody would come get me when it was time for Harry and I to leave.

"Ha ha. C'mon let's go home to your fiancé, Mr. Workaholic. Poor fella's probably going to be asleep by now." I really hope not. I already felt like a jerk wasting the day.

Unfortunately, Zayn had spoken no truer words. When I got home, I found all the lights out and a sticky note telling me everyone was asleep and there were two plates of food left in the fridge for Zayn and me. We ate a quick dinner in silence and split up for bed.

When I went to our room, I stumbled around in the dark, afraid of waking Harry up by turning on the lights. I grabbed the first set of comfortable clothes I found and slinked into bed. A little sleepy smile formed on my face when I curled into Harry and he instantly wrapped around me.

~Harry's POV~

I woke up holding something warm and soft, which is weird because I could have sworn I had gone to bed alone last night. It's also the reason I had stolen one of Louis' shirts. I know it sounds ridiculous because we've only been sleeping together for four days but it was really hard to go to bed without him. I didn't last five minutes tossing and turning in the bed before I got up and grabbed Louis favorite t-shirt. I traded shirts before lying back down in the bed and instantly falling asleep to the only smells I had associated to the word home

My alarm went off then, interrupting my thoughts. It's still dark outside so I turn on a lamp in order to see and slap at my alarm clock. When I rolled back to see the man fisting my t-shirt, I realized I wasn't the only clothing thief last night.

I reached over to try and wake him up, but I knew he was exhausted so it wasn't surprising that he didn't stir. Normally, I would let him sleep and it was really hard not to just leave him now with his adorable stubble and mussed hair but I couldn't leave without saying goodbye. I tried nudging him and talking to him in a not so quiet voice and even went so far as to rolling him back and forth and he wouldn't wake up. So I did the only other thing I could think of, I kissed him. It was just supposed to startle him but little did I know...

As soon as our lips met, he made this incoherent noise of what I think was approval. Our kiss became heated as he rolled me onto my back. The moment ended when I jumped at my alarm clock going off again. I groaned at the loss of contact as Louis' eyes shot open and he ran into the bathroom. I set off to finish doing last minute packing but my mind was a swirl of thought centered around Louis. I wasn't sure why he had run this time; I thought things would be different after the kiss at Robin's house. I suppose we still needed to discuss everything though. Damn Louis' rational side...

I got everything packed and even managed to sneak some of Louis' clothes into my bag without him noticing. Soon enough it was time to go. I didn't want to leave. I like it here. Three weeks back to College of Hell seemed even worse now that I have somewhere to come home to. And someone to come home to, my heart added. To be honest, I don't want to leave Louis. How am I going to be able to sleep? I really hoped he wouldn't find the nightly skype calls I had planned pathetic. Thank goodness only three weeks of classes were left I guess. I don't know if I could last any longer than that.

The drive to the airport was too short and too quiet, and all too soon it was time to say goodbye. It was awkward because the press was following us. I just hoped Louis would be able to handle them while I'm gone.

~Louis' POV~

I didn't want Harry to leave. I know that's selfish because he needs to go get his education, but I really don't want him to go. Not to mention, we didn't have our talk yet and the paps were following us. So much for a quiet moment alone. But Harry's worth it. There was no way I would let him leave without a goodbye. Even if it had to be entirely too public.

Lucky for me, I managed to steal some of his clothes when he wasn't looking. It's not weird or anything, I just find his scent soothing. When we got to the gate, the last thing I wanted to do was say goodbye. So I just kind of look at him.

**"Well, I guess this is goodbye for now."** Harry said as he grabbed my hands and looked me in the eye. He looks like he wants to say more but knows now isn't the time

*"Yeah, I'm going to miss you. You better call me when you land and every day."* I don't care that I sound really needy because it's true. I had finally admitted to myself how much I needed him and he had to leave.



**“Okay, Lou. You better answer every time I call”** He’s smiling but his eyes look so sad.

*“And you better behave and do well in all of your classes.”* Oh great, now I’m starting to sound like a mother but I don’t know what to do with the small crowd watching us. I’m honestly just saying anything I think of so he doesn’t have to leave just yet.

**“Yes, Lou.”** His expression is so unbelievably fond I find myself holding back the pooling wetness in my eyes.

*“And no drinking or partying.”* I really wish he would shut me up soon.

**“Yes, Lou. Any other advice, oh wise one.”** I was attempting to playfully slap the back of his head but my hand seemed to have other plans as it tucked some curls behind his ear and stroked down his neck finally coming to rest on his shoulder.

*“Don’t sass me boy!”* I joke but it doesn’t sound as happy as I intend it to

Then things seemed to get serious. We were running out of time. Even though it would only a few weeks, it seems like forever. Slowly yet in an instant, our lips joined, seeking each other out and trying to memorize the feel of each other before we would be separated. At first, I could hear the shutters on the camera’s but the feel of Harry’s lips on my own were enough to make me forget all the people and get lost in his smell and his taste. I was absorbed into the swirls of colors dancing on the backs of my eyelids—dark purple, pale green, shimmering gold, and bright, lively red.

All too soon, it was over and he had to go through security. After waiting until Harry was too far away to see me waving when he looked back for the hundredth time, I turned and followed Liam and Zayn back to the car. These coming weeks were going to be exhausting as I filled my days with a weeks’ worth of work for the campaign and my nights belonged to thoughts and conversations with Harry. I had no hope that they would pass quickly.

## Chapter Nine

First Friday of Christmas Break

December 12<sup>th</sup>

~Harry POV~

The flights took forever. My flight was delayed from leaving Vermont, which sucked because it could have been time spent with Louis. When I eventually landed in New York, I missed my next flight because my first one had been delayed so long. It had been such a long day that I was actually looking forward to getting back to school because that meant I could finally get out of the airports.

As I exited the terminal, there was a bodyguard looking guy holding a sign with my name on it. My first thought was, ‘what trouble have I gotten myself into this time?’

The man introduced himself as a security officer from the school. He told me he was one of the two security guards assigned to me for the rest of the semester. The other guard was waiting in the car to drive us back to the school. It wasn’t normally a long drive, but today hated me so we spent a good amount of time stuck in traffic. I was so relieved to finally get back to my dorm room that I immediately dropped my bags and collapsed on the bed. I didn’t worry about unpacking anything except my laptop in hopes Louis would be online and we could Skype.

Luck seemed to be on my side for the first time that day. Louis was logged on and I think I almost broke my mouse pad with how exuberantly I clicked on the call button. It rang a few times without an answer and I deflated—the exhaustion was catching up with me quickly. I figured he had probably just left his computer on and was about to give up and shut my computer so I could giving in to my drooping eyelids when his face popped up on my screen.

**“Hey, Boobear! I thought you might already be asleep.”** Unconsciously I had broken out into a wide grin and no longer felt fatigued. The wave of relief that hit me when he answered, told me how much I had missed him, despite it having not even been a day since we last saw each other.

*“Of course I’m not. I wasn’t going to go to sleep without seeing my Haz.”* Actually, he looked like he had just woken up but I was too happy to call him out on that.

**“I missed you today. The trip was so long and boring. It was delay after delay, and then missed flights. It was a mess.”** I watched him stifle a yawn as I recounted the day’s events and couldn’t help but notice how adorable he looked.

*“I’m sorry and I missed you too.”* We just kind of smiled at each other for a few seconds after that, scanning over the others’ face as if it had been months since we’d seen each other, instead of hours.

**“Would you believe they assigned me a security team?”** It was probably really selfish of me but I just wanted to keep talking so we wouldn’t have to hang up yet.

*“Well your safety is important; I wouldn’t want anything to happen to you.”* I was determined not to start blushing like a 13 year old girl at that statement and I may or may not have succeeded.

**“Yeah, but two around the clock security guards. Is that really necessary?”** And it was a good thing I wasn’t really trying to make friends because they were a bit intimidating.

*“We have two security guards here.”* He’s smiling like picking apart my argument is the best game ever.

**“Yeah, but that’s different.”** I add a pout to my face as I respond to play along.

*“Oh, is it...how so?”* He’s clearly amused by the whiny tone of my voice.

**“I mean, it’s Zayn and Liam! I’ve known them forever. They’re more like friends with bodyguard tendencies.”**

*“Whatever you say, babe”* He rolls his eyes at me before continuing, *“have you unpacked yet?”* He looks concerned—probably because he knows unpacking for me doesn’t involve any organization.

**“No. The first thing I did was call you. Besides, I don’t have classes tomorrow, so I still have time before I have to ‘concentrate on my studies’.”** I add a wink to the end of my statement for good measure.

~Louis’ POV~

I was surprised I was the first thing he thought of. I mean, I had been lying on the bed with my laptop hoping he would call tonight. I had even turned the volume up so it had a better chance of waking me if I fell asleep—which I had—but I hadn’t wanted to get my hopes up too high. I had finally admitted to myself that I was falling in love with Harry, it felt entirely too vulnerable to let myself believe he returned those feelings.

When my alarm went off, I jumped, almost sending my laptop across the room as a result. Apparently, we fell asleep skyping because the video was still on and I could see the outline of Harry asleep in his bed.

*“Haz, Hazza. Wake up.”* He just grumbled in his sleep and rolled over a bit.

*“Hey! Wake UP!!!”* There was still no response, so I went in search of something to leave him a note. I found a note pad and quickly scribbled something down.

*Hazza,*

*We fell asleep on Skype last night it seems. My alarm went off and I tried to wake you, but you're too heavy of a sleeper. I have to go to work, but I promise to talk to you later. Have a good day!*

*With love,*

*Lou xx*

I taped it to the wall and pointed the computer at it so it showed up on the video. Hopefully Harry would find it when he woke up. I didn't notice until later that I had subconsciously written 'with love' at the bottom of the note.

~Harry's POV~

I woke up with an awful kink in my neck. Last night was kinda groggy and I couldn't remember where I was. Then it came back. I'm back at school, which really sucks, but at least I'm one day closer to never having to leave Louis. After mustering up enough will power to roll over, I finally realized my computer was still on and the video was still running. There was some wall with a note on my screen.

It was really stupidly cute. I can't believe Louis cared enough to leave a note. When I realize he signed it 'with love' and let out a very unmanly noise that makes me very glad I don't have a roommate. Soon enough, it became a mantra I was repeating whenever I got stressed *WithLoveWithLoveWithLove*. It was enough to keep me motivated through classes with demanding teachers and pricks for classmates. I just might survive these three weeks.

We both got busy. I had classes and final projects. Louis had work with Robin, which monopolized his time. But we still managed to chat every night. It consisted of mostly small talk about our days and typically resulted in us falling asleep on the computer. One night we tried hanging up and going to bed, but we ended up calling each other back because we couldn't sleep. We quickly figured out we should get ready and into bed before we called each other to insure we didn't end up face down on our desks again.

We fell into a rhythm of work, Skype, and sleep.

~Louis' POV~

Work was crazy. Everyone was going insane because Robin seemed to have gone insane by starting the tour sooner. This meant more work for everyone and pulled me back into the office. I was soon dragged into the center of it all. Between knowing how to work behind the scenes and becoming part of the family, I was involved in everything.

I had my hands filled with everything from campaign posters to helping figure out Harry and I's position and involvement at various events. Work could be its own kind of Hell in all its craziness. No matter how much I loved this job, it still sucked sometimes. At least I had Harry to look forward to at the end of every day.

We went through about two weeks of work, chats, and exhaustion. It had become a sort of paradox where time was going by really quickly but also incredibly slow because each day was the same busy schedule and I had finally adjusted to the agony. At least I thought I was until the Friday before finals week. Harry had just fallen asleep and I was fading rapidly when he murmured something in his sleep. **“I love you.”** I instantly woke up from my sleepy haze. I looked carefully at Harry but he was definitely fast asleep with his mouth hung open. I assumed I had dreamed it and I groaned softly at the cruel games my mind apparently liked to play.. Then he muttered again, so softly that I almost missed it, **“I love you so much, Lou. Please love me too.”** He sounded so broken, like a child seeking a sign of approval. Looking for some tiny sign that his parents cared too. All I could do was whisper back, *“I already do love you.”* I definitely couldn’t put off talking to him any longer. Even if it somehow hadn’t really meant what he said, I couldn’t bare how lost he sounded when he asked me to love him. He needed to know how much I already did.

The next day was awful. I couldn’t concentrate on anything at all; I was too busy trying to figure out how to approach Harry. I mean, I couldn’t just say, ‘you said I love you in your sleep last night and oh by the way, I think I love you too.’ My face was heating up just thinking about it. I was so unfocused that I left at lunch and took a half-day. People just assumed it was because I was missing Harry, little did they know it was because my fiancé had just slipped out our first ‘I love you’ in his sleep.

I was super antsy in the car to the point where even Zayn noticed. Liam had left for lunch, which was okay because security was so tight at the office anyways. Plus Niall’s food was better than the crap they serve there. Zayn must’ve finally gotten tired of my twitching because he asked me “what’s wrong?”

*“Nothing’s wrong. I just want to go home.”*

“To talk to Harry?”

*“How’d you know?”*

“Because you’re obviously smitten with that boy.”

*“What?”*

“Your smitten, in love, head over heels with Harry. Some of the officers at work thought it was a ruse when you two came out because it was so fast but I know. I saw you work over the summer. You were an absolute workaholic. It was all politics twenty four seven with you. The only time I ever saw you stop working was when Harry would come by to ‘visit.’ And by visit I mean shamelessly flirt with you. And Harry, you should’ve seen him. He hates Robin’s work, but he actually liked going to the office this summer. Plus, he cleaned up his act. The only thing I can think of to cause that kind of change would be if he found someone important. That someone appears to be you.” I was swallowing tears at his words. Zayn’s one of his best friends, if he thought we were good together that meant something.

*“Why are you telling me this?”*

“Because I know Robin has his hand in this somehow. I know everything isn’t how it appears. I just want you to know that you’re good for him and you shouldn’t ever let anyone get in your way. Especially Robin.” He glanced back at me then through the rearview mirror and his eyes were incredibly serious

*“What do you mean?”*

“I mean Robin has a way of getting involved in Harry’s relationships. I don’t want him to screw up yours.” The way he said it clear that Robin had ruined other relationships for Harry and I honestly didn’t doubt it.

*“Oh, well thanks for the advice, I guess.”* Seeing as Robin had created this relationship I really hoped that he wouldn’t attempt to destroy it as well. But Zayn knew what he was talking about so I figured I should at least be cautious.

“No problem.”

We returned to silence then. That was the longest conversation I had had with him. Zayn was a man of few words, but when he spoke you listened. It was nice to know I had his approval, but I wondered how long until he would figure out the truth and if that would change anything he had just said.

When we finally got home, I practically ran to Harry’s and my room. I went straight for my laptop only to notice that it had come unplugged and the battery had died. This led to me impatiently pacing around the room while waiting for it to boot back up. Finally it turned on and I leapt onto our bed and swung my laptop into my lap.

I all but cheered aloud when I saw Harry was logged on. He answered instantly.

**“Hey, Louis!”** I still had no idea how I was going to start this conversation but I figured I could try for spontaneity for once,

*“Harry!”* His hair was frizzy from running his fingers through his curls but he looked really good regardless,

“Hi?” said some kid in the background that I hadn’t even noticed until he spoke up. He looked maybe a year older than Harry, and slightly surprised that Harry was skyping right now.

**“Oh hey, yeah, this is Matt and he’s in one of my classes. Matt this is my fiancé, Louis.”** At that I smiled with pride and gave Matt a small wave hello.

“Your fiancé?” Matt parroted. I recognized the look he was giving Harry, which, by the way, Harry didn’t even notice because he had already turned back to me. Matt was probably studying with Harry because he was into him. I’m happy that Harry seemed completely oblivious to his study buddy’s state of mind but I can’t help the little bout of jealousy I feel swirling in my stomach. But it helped that he was paying more attention to me than Matt.

*“Yeah. We got engaged over Thanksgiving,”* I said with a smile as I held up my hand with my engagement ring.

“Oh, well I’m just going to go so you can talk. So I guess I’ll see you at the final, Harry.” I swear he couldn’t run out of the room any faster. It was good to know I could still scare away boys from what’s mine.

**“Okay, good luck on your finals!”** Poor Harry was completely oblivious to the poor guy’s intentions, but it made me feel better about the conversation I was about to start after teasing Harry a bit.

*“Hey, Haz. You do realize he’s totally into you, right?”*

**“Who Matt?”** I don’t make any attempt to contain my laughter at his confused expression.

*“Yes Matt,”* I say rolling my eyes. *“Poor thing has a crush on you and you’re clearly smitten with someone else.”*

**“Is that so?”** He’s trying to act all smirky and cool which just makes me laugh again.

*“Of course it is.”*

**“So why did you call? Not that you can’t call me anytime, it’s just you normally work all day and you don’t have time and-“**

*“Hazza,”* I interrupted. *“You’re right. I do have something to talk to you about.”*

**“Oh.”** I don’t know what he thinks I’m going to say but his face falls immediately.

*“Um, well, you see...” \*exhale\* “Last night, when you fell asleep. You said ‘I love you’...”*

**“Lou, I can explain! I meant it like-You see I –I was sleeping and-“**He was rambling so I decided I would just save him and spit it out already.

*“I love you”*

That seemed to work because he immediately shut up. For about five seconds. Which is five seconds of silence more than I can stand.

**“What did you just say?”** He says it quietly like speaking too loud will shatter some illusion.

*“I said I love you.”* My voice was barely louder than his and my gaze had shifted to the floor, all my previous confidence gone.

**“Well, good. That means my hearings not faulty and I can say I love you too.”**

~Harry’s POV~

*"I wish you were home. With me, where you belong."* Oh how I wish I was too. I just had to survive finals.

*"On another note, I still can't believe you didn't notice Matt."* I'm surprised I didn't too actually. I used to be so aware of that. I guess I just wasn't looking anymore because it didn't matter; I didn't want anyone except the one I apparently already had.

**"C'mon Lou. Can't you give me a break on this?"**

*"No. The poor boy bugged out when he found out we were engaged. When he left he had his tail between his legs. Poor boy never stood a chance."*

**"Hey! That's not fair."**

*"Yes it is you're obviously previously occupied, if that ring is anything to go by. The boy was selectively observant."*

**"You're not going to let this go are you?"**

*"No."* I'll just have to change the subject myself then.

**"When I get home, we're going on a date."**

*"What?"* He scrunches his eyebrows together confused and it makes me laugh before I rearticulate.

**"When I get home, we are going on a date. D-A-T-E."**

*"I heard you, I just didn't believe you."*

**"Mhm. I'm glad you called."** I don't bother trying to convince him; this will just make it easier to surprise him later.

*"Me too and Matt aside, I'm sorry for disturbing your studying."*

**"Don't be. I needed a break anyway. And you are always the best distraction, babe."** I love the way he tries to hide his blush and I bite my lip in a failed attempt to conceal my smile.

*"Well, study hard and we'll talk tonight, okay?"*

**"Ok. I love you."** It felt great to finally be able to tell him whenever I want.

*"I love you too, Haz."* But the rave of my heart beat at his words confirmed how much better it was to hear it from him.

Finals went fine, or at least I hope they did. We wouldn't find out about our grades for another week. But I had other things to concentrate on now. Between the studying and testing



I had made plans for our first date, not that Louis knew about it. He still didn't believe me and I couldn't wait to prove him wrong.

I managed to get an earlier flight home, so I would land the afternoon of the day before I was originally going to be home. Zayn came and picked me up while Louis was at work. I wanted to have a surprise dinner ready for him when he got home. I had already gotten Niall to get all the ingredients and he was going to have the rest of the night off. Zayn and Liam had promised to stay away and let us have our reunion. Everything was going to be perfect. Time to start making tacos.

~Louis' POV~

I was working hard trying to make up for the fact I wasn't going to be here tomorrow; I had to pick up Harry. So when Liam tried to get me to go home, I argued with him, trying to get more things done. He was finally insistent enough that I grumbled an agreement and finally went with him. Liam beat me into the house, and by the time I got in he had disappeared.

*"Liam! Zayn! Niall! Where are you guys?"* When no one answered I followed my nose into the kitchen and found my favorite person. *"Haz!"* I shouted as a sort of warning right before I leaped on him. He turned around just in time to catch me and I hooked my legs around his waist while nuzzling into his neck.

*"Welcome home!"* I said as I leaned in for a kiss. It was messy and passionate as we tried to make up for the lost time. It was better than the last time we had kissed. No more pent up emotions, no denied feelings, it was all love and Harry had to end it albeit reluctantly.

**"Love, if you don't let me go dinner will burn."** He spoke softly with his forehead pressed against mine.

*"What if I don't care?"* My stomach decided to speak for itself however and very loudly at that.

**"You may not care but your stomach says it does."**

*"Fine."* I agreed as I slid down his torso to get back to the ground.

**"Lou"** he groaned.

*"What?"* I tried to make an innocent face. Harry just laughed and went back to cooking.

Harry had set the dining room and laid out some not so fancy Tacos that were ridiculously delicious. Our talk at dinner was mostly small talk and excitement over being together again. But the conversation wasn't really important; it was just wonderful to be with each other trading looks and touches over meaningless words. When we finished, Harry cleared the dishes and I complained because I didn't want to move.

*"Harry, come sit back down."* I whined.

**"Shh, Lou. Be quiet."**

*“Why?”* I just wanted to cuddle or something. It didn’t need to be some covert operation.

**“Because we’re going to sneak out.”** I instantly quieted. I was too curious about what he planned to rationalize why we shouldn’t go.

We snuck out the front doors with our coats and I kept thinking we’d get caught at any second. It was oddly exhilarating. But then I started getting curious. Where in the world could we be going?

When we were almost there Harry covered my eyes and led me the last couple of yards. When I opened my eyes we were at a playground.

**“Don’t worry, no one comes here anymore now that it has been rezoned out of a residential district.”**

*“I’m not worried, it’s just so…”* My words trail off as I try to explain.

**“So?”** He looks perfect and nervous as he tries to assess my opinion.

*“So sweet, and adorable, and cute. It’s perfect.”*

It was dark but I think Harry was blushing.

**“Come over here. I’ll push you on the swing.”**

So I got on and he started pushing me.

*“Higher! Higher!”* I yelled. Harry complied with my wishes and then we were both giggling like we were five. Harry grabbed the next swing and we ended up matching pace and I yelled excitedly, *“Harry, look! We’re married!” just like kids used too at recess in elementary school.* I was smiling so hard I thought my face would split. We started slowing down and Harry said, **“Come here.”**

*“So demanding”* I responded, but I complied anyway.

**“Sit in my lap.”** The smirk on his face was very intriguing.

*“How?”*

**“Face me and slip your legs around my waist.”** I did and we ended up face to face and Harry started swinging us. Soon enough we were kissing. It was slow and gentle, our tongues dancing with a slow unheard melody. We finally parted breathless. I just stared into his intense green eyes, luminous despite the dark. Harry was the first one to break the silence.

**“We should probably start heading back.”** He sounded like it was the last thing he wanted though.

*“Mk.”* Just because Harry had regained coherent speech, doesn’t mean I had.

The walk back was nice. We walked hand in hand, swinging them ever so often, and occasionally a quick peck on the cheek or the mouth.

When we finally walked through the doors to our house, bright lights flipped on in our face like an old detective movie.

“What were you thinking?” said a voice from the darkness. I think it might have been Liam.

“Never mind that, you were obviously not thinking! Where were you?”

**“We just went to the park, Li”** Harry responded while I was too afraid to speak

“Just to the park! What do you think you were doing leaving without a chaperone? You guys are no longer semi-anonymous faces. You’re in politics now, and not just any politics, a presidential campaign! Any screw-ups could get you in deep shit with Robin, and you know what happens when you do that, Harry. He takes something away, something that matters. Even worse, you could have been attacked! Let’s not forget that not everyone will be that accepting of your relationship and it’s publicity. So here me now, you are never allowed to sneak out of this house again.” And with that he walked away.

Zayn took pity on us and turned off the lamps and turned on the normal lights. “Next time, at least tell me about your adventure first so I can smooth it over later. I understand you guys will need time away, just tell me about it.” And with that, Zayn left too.

As soon as he walked far enough down the hall, Harry burst out laughing. And because his laugh is so contagious I broke out laughing too. Then I kissed his dimple because it was just so cute. He let out a yawn.

*“Come on, Haz. Let’s get you tucked in.”* He was so tired he just walked with me without complaint. Then we curled up in bed together, face-to-face because I think we both still couldn’t believe we were finally home and together. We both fell asleep curled up in each other’s warmth with smiles on our faces.

# Chapter Ten

## The Day After Their First Date

~Harry's POV~

I woke up that morning with an odd feeling. For as long as I could remember, I would wake up with anxiety about the press, or my grades, or a hangover, worrying about what punishment I would get for whatever stupid shit I had pulled the night before. This morning I actually felt peaceful and it had everything to do with the perfect boy using me as a pillow yet again, not that I minded. He looked so cute with his un-styled fringe and amazingly blue eyes that were almost too perfect to be real. I'm so in love with this boy.

*"Morning, Hazza"* he mumbled sleepily.

I press a kiss to his hair. **"Morning, Boo-Bear."**

*"Mmm."*

**"What? No complaints? No outrage over your childhood nickname?"** I said in an overly dramatic voice.

*"Nope. Too happy to complain."*

I was surprised at that but I guess it was a good thing I was getting to use a name no one else got to use. Then there was a rustling as he scooted a little closer to give me a peck on the lips.

**"What was that for?"** Not that I'm complaining; far from it actually.

*"Just because I can."*

**"Oh"** I say as I attempt to hide the grin that's threatening to split my face in half.

*"And because I love you."*

**"I love you too."** I thought he was going to fall back asleep then because he just nuzzled into my chest and paused for a while before continuing.

*"Thanks a lot for yesterday. It was the best date ever."* I could feel my face heat as my cheeks began to color. Then Louis' phone interrupted the moment with its ringing. Louis answered it with a *"Hello mom."* I tuned out most of the conversation until I heard *"Yes Mom. We'll come home on my birthday."* Pause *"Yes, of course I'll be bringing Harry. I mean I just love to bring Phoebe and Daisy new playthings"* he chuckled. *"Alright I'll see you soon. Love you. Bye."*

~Louis' POV~

I love my mom, but she has horrible timing.

**“Lou, why didn’t you tell me your birthday was coming up?”** Uh-oh, I’m in trouble.

*“I don’t know. I guess I just kind of forgot.”* Honestly, I’m used to my birthday just being swept into Christmas madness.

**“When’s your birthday?”** He’s eerily calm.

*“Christmas Eve.”*

**“Good. Then I still have time.”** The mischievous smirk that so frequently inhabits his face is back now.

*“For what?”*

**“To get you a birthday present of course.”**

*“You know you don’t have to get me anything.”*

**“I know. Now, come back to bed.”** And I walked over and did just that. I’m glad he’s not mad at me for neglecting to mention my birthday. I know I’d be upset if I missed his. My birthday has never felt like a big deal to me even though mom always tried to separate it from Christmas. She never really succeeded but it’s not her fault; it’s the unavoidable curse of mid-December birthdays.

~Harry’s POV~

The rest of that day was spent lazing and watching movies. Well, actually the rest of the weekend was spent like that. Eventually though, we needed to get out of the house, so we decided to go Christmas shopping for everyone.

**“Zayn, Liam! We’re leaving in ten minutes!”** That should be enough time fore them to get dressed right?

“Where are we going?” I think it was Zayn’s voice that called back.

*“Shopping!”* Louis yelled. Which was met with an audible groan from the living room.

Louis picked our clothes, which was quickly becoming habit to the point where I don’t think I’ll ever have to pick out my own clothes again. Soon enough we were ready to go and we were out the door with Zayn and Liam close behind.

We ended up going to one of those strip malls with plenty of stores for hours of shopping, which will probably bore the hell out of Zayn and Liam, well mostly Liam. I can always bribe Zayn with hair care products.

~Louis’ POV~

I actually have money this year, now that I have a job and don’t have to pay tuition anymore. I could get the cutest princess dresses for the twins and clothes for Lottie and Fizzy. And then there was Harry. What to get, what to get? I’ll figure it out later.

*“Harry! Let’s go to the toy store first so we can pick out some stuff for Daisy and Phoebe.”* I said as I dragged him towards the store, not that he was putting up any resistance. I got sidetracked by the stuffed animals so I pulled him over there and started pawing through the pile. They had every animal from Lions to Tigers and Bears, Oh my!

*“Look at the giant lion. ROAR!”* he just laughed at me, while shaking his head and I resumed my perusal through the store. I got into all the bouncy balls and they went everywhere while we ran away, leaving Zayn and Liam to pick them up. After disorganizing most of the displays, I finally found the princess dresses. I got the Tinkerbelle one for Phoebe because she can be a quiet ball of sass and I picked out the Rapunzel one for Daisy because she’s the fun loving counterpart to Phoebe’s madness. I even picked out pixie wings and a tiara so they could have the full-effect.

As soon as Liam and Zayn finished picking up the balls, I was running out the door, this time actually dragging Harry, before I could get scolded for the mess. Next we snagged a couple of books from the bookstore, some for Fizzy and some for me.

I dragged him off to a cosmetic store, partially to gain forgiveness from Zayn and the rest to get makeup for Lottie. There was one problem: I know nothing about makeup. I guess I must’ve looked completely lost because Harry wrapped his arms around me from behind and bent over to whisper in my ear.

**“Having difficulties, Lou?”** I loved and hated how I was now able to recognize that god forsaken smirk in his voice.

*“Well, uh.... Yeah?”*

**“What are you looking for?”** He was still talking impossibly close to my ear and it would have been much more distracting if I wasn’t so focused on Christmas shopping.

*“Makeup for Lottie. I don’t know what to get her. She’s growing up so fast.”*

**“I can help you.”**

*“Really?!”* I said as I spun around. I was scrabbling for help from a familiar face; I really didn’t want to have to go ask the lady for advice. They always have a million questions about skin tones and color pallets and I wouldn’t be able to answer any of them.

**“Of course, Boo.”**

*“Yes! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”* I said as I pecked kisses across his face. He showed me around to a bunch of essentials and helped me pick out eye shadow that worked with her eyes. We checked out pretty fast, but we had to wait a while for Zayn to finish getting gunk to maintain his quiff. Boy does he love his hair products.

*“So how do you know so much about makeup?”* I asked while we waited, not that I thought it was weird, I was just genuinely curious.

**“I picked it up after Robin got into politics. I had to wear makeup for the press so after a while I started paying attention. Plus my stylist is really nice.”**

*“Good to know. I’ll file it away into my blackmail folder for later.”*

**“Hey!”** I just winked at him and walked away because Zayn was checking out.

Our next mission was lunch. We went to a small Mexican place, where you order and you can sit and eat or take it to go. We grabbed a booth with Harry and me on one side and our bodyguards on the other, not that I paid them much attention. I was too focused on Harry and I sitting with our sides pressed together. I got really unfocused when Harry leaned over to snag a bite of my burrito while it was still in my hands. I couldn’t let him get away with it so I snagged a bite off his taco.

**“Hey!”** he pouted.

*“You started it,”* I argued back.

**“Well, I guess I’ll have to finish it”** he responded as he leaned over to press a quick kiss on my lips.

*“I’m not sure it’s quite finished, but you’re getting closer,”* I said in an attempt to get another kiss. He leaned in and I closed my eyes, and he pressed a kiss to my eye and then my other eye. He followed with the corners of my mouth until I finally groaned *“Harry.”* He finally leaned in to press a kiss to my lips and I leaned in and teased his lips with my tongue. Our food was quickly forgotten as we took in the taste of each other mixed with cilantro.

We were dragged out of our reverie when Zayn spoke up. “Enough of the cuteness, I think you’re going to scar poor innocent Liam for life.” We all broke out in a fit of laughter, well everyone except for Liam. He just turned bright red.

“Are you ready to go?” Liam said in what I think was an attempt to change the subject.

**“Yeah,”** Harry and I said simultaneously. I let Harry take the lead and pick the next shop. I had gotten presents for everyone except Niall, but we don’t exchange presents, just a pint or I buy him food.

Harry led me to this hidden men’s clothing store. My eyes were bugging out of my face. There was everything from skinny jeans to suspenders and sweaters and beanie’s. I was in clothes heaven. I was running around picking out clothes for Harry to try on (and for me to steal later). I made him get this really cute pair of tight black skinny jeans with a white shirt with the black mini collar. Then I started going crazy and wandering around and lost complete track of everyone else.

~Harry’s POV~

I decided I was going to get Louis a cute pair of bedazzled suspenders while he was distracted with other clothes. I wanted to get him an awesome birthday present, but I couldn’t

deny I just think he looks hot in them. I don't know if we're going to exchange Christmas presents, but I at least wanted to get him a birthday present.

Once we were all groaning and complaining over his clothes obsession, well mostly Zayn and Liam because I found it too cute, we headed off again.

*"You ready to go home?"* Louis asked.

**"Yeah, wait no. I have to grab a gift card for Gemma."**

*"Oh, okay. Where too?"*

**"Just a shoe store, it won't take very long if you and Zayn want to go get the car."** I'm pretty sure he was about to argue when a huge yawn almost cracked his jaw. He agreed and we split up.

I was in and out of the store in five minutes and soon enough we were heading home and Louis had fallen asleep on my shoulder. When we got home, I carried him off bridal style into the house. At first I thought he would wake up but he just shifted closer and let me carry him off.

I laid him down and stripped him down to his boxers, knowing how uncomfortable he'd get if I didn't. I tried not to linger too long as I rid him of his clothes. I ignored the way my hands felt on his skin. Soon enough his clothes were off and there was nothing left but to go to bed.

A week and a half passed without much of any incidents. Louis had to go back and work for a while before they finally let him go so he could get ready for the holidays.

One thing was for certain; the sexual tension was rising to an extreme level. I was so horny it was ridiculous. Which is what led to Louis' birthday morning wakeup.

We had to wakeup so we could go to Louis' house. As usual, Louis didn't want to wake up. I decided to employ a new tactic. I rolled over and straddled Louis' hips. I leaned over and started pressing kisses along his face and neck and finally to his collarbone where I sucked on the skin to claim him as mine. This must've pierced his subconscious because he just moaned *"Harry"* in his husky morning voice.

**"Yes?"** I replied as I kept peppering kisses on his torso.

*"What do you think you're doing"* he whined.

**"Waking you up, of course."**

*"Oh, okay."* I don't think he was able to form a more coherent response.

**"Louis?"** I asked, suddenly serious. I guess he noticed the tone in my voice because he suddenly opened his eyes to look at me.

*"Yeah, Harry?"*



Okay, here it goes. **“I want to have sex tonight.”**

At first he didn't say anything and I got worried that maybe he didn't want me. Or maybe it *was* still just an arrangement for him. Maybe he didn't like me like that after all.

**“Lou, it's okay if you don't want it. It was just an idea you know? I was just-“**

*“Harry, it's not that I don't want it. I was just startled”* he said as he pushed his obvious problem against my thigh.

**“Oh.”** I said, swallowing hard at the feeling of him.

*“Now, we have to get ready soon so we can come home sooner”* he said in a slightly strained voice. *“I'm just going to go shower first.”* He said as he dashed off to the bathroom, while I shouted **“Happy Birthday”** at his back.

Soon enough we were heading out and in the car, Louis was sitting far away. It was kind of funny how he thought I wouldn't tease him if he sat a seat over. But I let it go this time. I wouldn't want to have any unfortunate incidents at his mom's house. I just realized I'd never been to his house before. Hopefully there would be embarrassing baby pictures.

When we finally got there it was a relief. I don't know how much more we could have lasted in the car before Louis exploded.

The house we arrived at looked homey. It wasn't large and overbearing like Robin's. It had that quaint lived in look. When we let ourselves inside, it was barely controlled chaos. There were some toys scattered across the floor and the twins running around. Lottie was talking on her cell phone in another room and I had no idea where Fizzy might be. It's what I always wanted my home to look like.

~Louis' POV~

It felt great to be back at my mom's house. It was weird for it not to feel like home anymore. I have to blame Harry for that one. He weaseled his way into my heart and I'm never letting him out. As nice as it to be back, there's still a faint buzzing in the back of my head, reminding me of what's waiting for me at home later.

When my littlest sisters' saw me they jumped up and wrapped around me like two little octopi. Both yelling “Happy birthday, Louis!” The others must've heard because Lottie came running while Fizzy slowly sauntered her way into the living room and I heard my Mom yell a welcome from the kitchen. I was soon forgotten as the twins went after Harry in order to go play with his hair.

Liam and Zayn finally made it in, carrying the Christmas presents I had gotten for my family.

“Welcome home sweetie. Who have you brought with you?” my mom asked as I realized they hadn't met yet.

*“Mom these are our friends/bodyguards, Zayn and Liam.”*

“It’s nice to meet you two, please call me Jay. Feel free to make yourself at home.”

There were mumbles of yes ma’am and thank you’s from their direction.

“Lunch is ready. Grab a plate and sit down wherever. Meal time isn’t formal here so do whatever you like.” Lunch was nice. It was full of friendly chatter and I think Liam and Zayn were actually relaxed for once. The twins were having a grand old time with Harry and I think Lottie had a little thing for Zayn. Every time he would say something to her she’d turn bright red.

We had the typical cake. My mom baked a marble cake with buttercream icing and I blew out all 21 candles while Zayn muttered something about being able to provide alcohol for the house. Next came the presents.

I got handmade cards and pictures from the twins. It was so cute; they drew one with me and a cake with Harry popping out of it. And I just laughed and he turned bright red. I got some books on politics from Fizzy and some super tight jeans from Lottie. My mom got me and Harry matching charm bracelets and I almost cried with how perfect they were. What I didn’t expect was for Harry to pull a present out and give it to me.

**“I hope you like it”** he said as he handed it to me.

My hands were nearly shaking when I opened it up. Inside was the perfect pair of bedazzled suspenders.

*“I absolutely love it!”* I exclaimed as I leapt at Harry and pressed a kiss to his lips in an attempt to show him how much I really loved it. We were finally interrupted by a polite cough from my mother’s direction and some muttering from Lottie about there being children here and something not suitable for young eyes.

Then my mom was demanding her Christmas gift. So I set up my iPod and hit play and the background music started.

*This is the start of something beautiful*

*This is the start of something new*

*You are the one who’d make me lose it all*

*You are the start of something new*

I sang as my gaze was drifting to Harry who surprised me by joining in on my mom’s favorite Ed Sheeran song. Our voices formed a perfect melody.

*And I’ll throw it all away*

*Watched you fall into my arms again*

*And I’ll throw it all away*

*Watch you fall, now*

*You are the earth I will stand upon*

*You are the words that I will sing*

We got an overenthusiastic round of applause when we finished and mom told us that it was officially the new tradition that we would duet for her every Christmas. Harry happily agreed and then we began the long process of goodbyes.

As soon as we entered the car it was like someone flipped a switch and we were all over each other, remembering our promise from this morning.

~Harry's POV~

I loved Louis' family. I really did but by the end of the night there was so much sexual tension and emotion built up between the two of us that I honestly didn't know how we were going to make it back home.

Apparently I didn't need to worry too much though because Louis was no longer keeping his distance in the car. He climbed into the back of the SUV after me and immediately put up the divider thing that separates the front seat with Liam and Zayn from us. We never used it so I expected to see shock as their faces disappeared from view but instead, I think I saw a smug look on Zayn's face—like he had just won a bet. I didn't have long to think about it though because Louis was straddling my lap as soon as the divider was up.

I wasn't about to question it so I just put my hands firmly on his hips as he brought our mouths together. It was hungry with a touch of desperation and the kiss showed no signs of stopping until we had to break apart or suffocate, which was a much harder decision than it should have been. The rest of the car ride went like that; it was as if neither of us could get enough of each other. When we finally pulled into the garage and Louis climbed off of me I groaned even though I knew the loss of contact was only temporary. But he kept his hand around my wrist as he basically pulled me out of the car after him and we were inside before Liam or Zayn even opened their doors.

~Louis' POV~

I knew if we stopped at any point to start kissing again, we would never make it to the bedroom and I really didn't want Zayn or Liam ruining the moment. Instead, I just dragged Harry to our room as fast as I could. As soon as I heard Harry close the door behind him, I spun around and reattached our bodies.

I threw my head back as Harry shifted his attention to my throat making full use of his teeth and tongue, clearly trying to leave a mark. I worked my hands underneath the hem of his T-shirt and as soon as my fingertips brushed his lower abs heat rushed straight to my groin and I spun him around to push him onto the bed.

I climbed on top of him and began to leave my own mark on his neck while rotating my hips in small circles to create more friction. It didn't take long for us both to decide we were

wearing too many clothes. Harry sat up using his hand splayed across my lower back to ensure no additional space got between us. As soon as he was upright though I leaned back enough to push his shirt up over his head and quickly removed mine as well.

I pushed him back against the mattress again and moved my kisses down his torso, biting and licking as I pleased. I moved slowly south enjoying the moans coming out of Harry but when I focused my tongue on his first nipple the throaty moans quickly turned to kittenish whimpers. I made a mental note of that as Harry as Harry managed to find his voice enough to tell me to get on with it. Normally, I'd probably torture him a bit more but the pleading tone of his voice sent more blood rushing to my cock causing my jeans to become painfully restrictive.

~Harry's POV~

I didn't think I could put up with Louis' teasing much longer. I just really wanted to be fucked so when Louis rolled off with a simple command of "Pants. Off. Now" I was all too happy to obey. I had just gotten my jeans and boxers around my ankles when Louis was back and kissing my inner thigh. I kicked my pants the rest of the way off and attempted not to buck my hips too much as Louis' mouth got closer and closer to my dick.

He kissed all the way up my length before taking the head into his mouth. He moved his hands to my hips at the same time to keep me from thrusting into his mouth and the warmth that was enveloping more of me every second.

**"Lou, please"** I was barely even ashamed at how pathetic and desperate I sounded.

He pulled his mouth off of me then but quickly replaced it with his as he came up to whisper in my ear.

*"You're so hot when you beg, Hazza."* I'm pretty sure that caused me to let out some not so manly whimpers.

He reached over to the night stand then and pulled out a bottle of lube I hadn't known was there. I had no time to think about it though before I felt his fingers at my entrance. His first finger moved into me slowly, testing to see how tight I was. He was quickly able to add a second and by the third I was a pleading mess writhing around on the bed. He thrust repeatedly into my prostate and all I could think was *moremoremoremore*. I realized he was waiting for me to ask for it.

**"Fuckfuckfuck, Louis, please. I need....more. Need you"** And that's all it took. He pulled his fingers out and I gasped but I didn't have much time to mourn the loss before I felt him pushing into me.

~Louis' POV~

Fuck Harry was tight. It hadn't taken me long to prep him but I wanted to hear him ask for me. And eventually he had and that was all I needed.

I pushed into him slowly, making sure he was comfortable with me completely inside him. When his moans turned back into whimpers, I took that as the cue to move so I immediately pulled out and slammed back into him. The sound he made when I hit his prostate was, literally, the best noise I had ever heard. I just wanted to hit that spot over and over again, completely consumed by the sound and feel of Harry.

At the fast pace I had set it didn't take long before Harry was letting out a litany of curse words and saying he was close. That's all it took to have me moving in and out of him at a tempo I hadn't known I was capable of and when his hands started to move my body to his untouched cock which was leaking pre-cum I grabbed them and pinned them against the bed. I wanted him to come untouched.

A few thrusts later and I felt him clenching around me as white spurts covered his chest. The sight of him coming undone simply from the feeling of me inside him was all I needed to go over the edge as well. I rocked us both through to the end before pulling out and collapsing onto his sticky chest.

It should have been gross and I should have gone to the bathroom to get a warm cloth to clean us both up but I was so fucked out that I couldn't bring myself to care.

We lay like that for a while and I thought Harry might have fallen asleep and I was definitely close as well. Then I heard him sigh and roll me off of him so he could climb out of bed. I didn't move, paralyzed by my sudden wave of exhaustion, but he came back a moment later rubbing a wash cloth against his chest. He cleaned me up as well before climbing back into bed and pulling me into his chest. I vaguely remember feeling him kiss the top of my head and whisper I love you before I fell asleep to the soothing sound of my love's heartbeat.

# Chapter Eleven

Christmas

~Harry's POV~

I woke up to the sound of knocking on our door.

"Time to wake up or I'm going to sick Niall on you!" Zayn yelled from the other side of the door. That was enough of a warning for me; I remember what happened the last time Niall got assigned wakeup duty.

**"Louis, time to wake up. Come on Boo"** I said as I rubbed my hands along his back. He just grumbled something unintelligible and snuggled closer. It was a nice feeling but I still had to get him up before Niall came barging in.

There was only one thing I could think of doing. I kissed my way to his neck and then sucked on a spot until he pulled away causing an audible pop.

*"Hey! What was that for?"*

**"I had to wake you up before they sent Niall after us."**

*"But did you have to latch onto me like a vampire?"* he said sounding slightly miffed.

Instead of responding, I just kissed him until our bodies molded back together.

There was a banging on the door and Zayn yelled, "I said wake up as in get ready, not go for another round!" I just laughed as Louis groaned. I rolled out from under him and pulled on a pair of boxers and sweatpants and he threw on sweats and a t-shirt.

We joined the other three at the table and Zayn promptly turned to Niall and said "Pay up. I won the bet."

As Niall slipped Zayn a twenty he whined "Why couldn't you guys have waited one more night? I was one day from winning the bet. Why couldn't you have waited until tonight to fuck each other's brains out?"

Louis turned bright red and looked like he was trying to slide under the table. Then I noticed the giant ass hickey I had left on his neck and hoped no one would say anything about it.

Then Liam had to put in his two cents, "I hope you two used a condom last night."

I couldn't help but respond **"Of course not Liam. First off we're engaged and not sleeping with anyone else, second it feels oh so much better without one. Right, Louis?"**

And at that point I thought Louis was going to die. He was spewing milk out his nose and spluttering, while turning a vivid shade of red. They turned their attention to him and Zayn

had to open his mouth right as Louis could finally breath again.

“I understand your need to mark your territory, Harry, but did you really have to give him that big of a hickey?”

Louis spat milk again and I just couldn’t help myself.

**“Wow Lou, you need to learn how to swallow. I could teach you, if you’d like”** with an added eye waggle for emphasis.

That was the last straw. He got up and ran to the closest mirror and yelled, *“I can’t believe you Harry! How could you give me a giant hickey the day of a function?! What are people going to think? What are they going to say about us? I can’t believe you chose today of all days to give me a giant, noticeable hickey.”* He was starting to panic. I realize I had to calm him down fast or he’d go into full out panic mode.

I bolted up and went over and wrapped my hands around him from behind while nuzzling into his neck. I just started murmuring soothing words in his ear just trying to calm him down.

**“It’s gonna be okay Lou. We can cover it with makeup, Boo. Or you could wear a high collar. I love you and that’s all that matters. Okay? It won’t matter what they say.”** This seemed to calm him down. He finally turned around and snuggled into my bare chest. We just stood there for a while until he finally spoke up.

*“I love you,”* he whispered in a whisper so quiet that I wouldn’t have realized he was talking if it wasn’t for the feeling of his breath whispering across my chest.

**“C’mon. Let’s go get dressed.”** I said as I pulled him towards our room. I took a hot shower to try and rid myself of some of the soreness from last night, while Louis pulled out some clothes.

~Louis’ POV~

**“There’s something we have to do before we go over for the party,”** Harry said as he walked out of the bathroom looking perfectly tempting with water dripping down his chest and a towel slung low on his hips.

*“What’s that?”* I responded when I snapped out of my daze.

**“My mom has this one tree we’ve had since I was little. Every year we’d make another family picture ornament. I wanted to give her an ornament with a picture of us.”** I was so touched that he wanted to include me in his family. I know he doesn’t have a big family, and over the years he has kind of pulled away. It was amazing that he wanted to include me in his childhood tradition.

*“I have one condition.”*

**“What?”** He had asked with a curious look on his face.

*"We have to use glitter."* At this he just burst out laughing and almost dropped his towel. *"You better get dressed"* I said as I pointed out his clothes laid out on the bed. He was going to wear the shirt I picked out for him when he went shopping that was white with a short black collar. I was wearing matching skinny jeans with a black button down and my absolutely fantastic bedazzled suspenders. I had also laid out our matching charm bracelets from my mom.

I went to the bathroom to touch up my hair and when I came out, Harry was waiting for me with a Polaroid camera. We went out and stood in front of the fireplace and got Liam to snap a pic.

To make the frame we inflated a balloon and dipped string in glue and wrapped it around the balloon, leaving a hole to put the picture inside later. Then we took glitter and covered everything, though we ended up splashing more glitter on each other than the ornament.

We used a blow dryer to try and dry it faster. But we forgot balloons pop when they get hot. Luckily it was dry enough to hold its shape. Harry quickly slipped the photo in with 'Harry and Louis 2014' on the bottom in his neat handwriting.

I tied a string on the top and it was ready. Then I looked at Harry and we must've looked like we had been in a glitter tornado. We tried to clean it up the best we could but there was only so much we could do with the limited time.

Next thing I knew, we were being ushered out the door to go to Robin's for a huge holiday party. According to Harry, we were going to a different part of the house than where we went for Thanksgiving. They have a full out ballroom in the West Wing. West Wing, ha, it sounded so posh. It was nothing I was used to with the fancy clothes and overly formal parties, but as long as I have Harry it will be fine.

Apparently this was the place to be tonight. There was a red carpet rolled out with paparazzi everywhere. The camera flashes were doubly blinding due to the reflections off our glitter speckled selves. It was worse for Harry because he had to deal with the light reflecting off my suspenders.

It was insane, how many people had turned out for the party. The floor was packed full of people. There were caterers carrying champagne and food. Everyone was dressed in his or her own style. Most guys were wearing a variation of dress pants and a nice shirt. Girls were in everything from dress pants to cocktail dresses to the long flowing dresses typical of these kind of events.

Our first mission was to find Anne and give her Christmas present to her. We finally spotted her talking to a group of people who were probably politicians with some connection to Robin. I followed Harry as he went to maneuver his mother away from the guys.

~Harry's POV~

I got to my mom and somehow managed to snatch her away when the guys turned around to stare at some girl or another that wasn't one of their wives. I pulled her into one of the hallways that was hidden in an attempt to keep people in the ballroom.



“Hello, honey. It’s so good to see you. I’m so happy you came and you even brought Louis.” She said as soon as we were far enough away from the ballroom to be able to hear normally.

**“We brought you a present,”** I said as I handed her the ornament.

“I absolutely love it! You probably should have made it before you got dressed for the party though.” She pointed out the glitter stuck in hair and giggled. Then she got this teary look in her eye. “You’re growing up so fast. I can’t believe your already moved out and getting engaged. My baby is all grown up. I thought Gemma would be out first, but it’s my Harry. I’m so proud of you sweetie.”

She pulled me into a tight hug. It was like I was five all over again, when everything was still normal. We were a small family but Gem and I got along and Mom was always there to pick us up and dust us off. It was less glamorous, but it was home. I finally had that feeling again, of belonging and being a part of something, with Louis, but it felt good to remember. Then mom pulled Louis into the hug and he let out what could only be described as a squawk of surprise.

All too soon, we let go and had to go back to the party. Mom dragged Louis with her so she could “go show off her future son in law” and told me to go find Robin.

When I finally found him, he pulled me into a guest room secluded from the party.

“At least when you go out clubbing, you could try to be a little more discreet. I mean coming covered in glitter, Harry, really? You need to grow up. This isn’t just Harry’s world. There are other people here. You have to at least appear to be faithful to Louis. I will not tolerate anything less than your full cooperation in this. We had an agreement and you better keep it. Understood? I will not lose this election because you couldn’t keep it in your pants.”

I can’t believe he was yelling at me. I have done what he’s asked. I’ve stayed out of the press and went to the college he picked. I can’t believe he’d just automatically assumed I went clubbing. That’s just like him to believe the media without any evidence. I still can’t believe he thinks I’m a party boy. I may have gone out occasionally but I am in no way, shape, or form a man whore who goes out to strip clubs and gets glitter all over them and then goes home to his fiancé like it’s nothing.

**“I can’t believe this! You just assumed I went to a strip club, didn’t you! I can’t believe this bullshit! Not that it’s any of your business but I am covered in glitter because Louis and I were making a Christmas present for Mom. But you would never ask about anything because you just always assume the worst of me”** I yelled, releasing all my frustration caused by him the past couple of months.

“No I can’t believe you would try to destroy everything I built! I gave you this house and this lifestyle. Without me you would still be living in that small joke of a house that I found you guys in. You’re threatening my career and our happiness. You’re being a selfish brat.”

**“You’re the selfish bastard! You think you’re oh so great but you’re just an arrogant jerk! You can have your lifestyle and you’re so called family. I don’t care anymore. All you do is try and tear me down. I do have to give you props for one thing though.**

**Without you I would never have found Louis. I know how much you love your plans, but I don't think you factored in us falling in love. Yeah, we're in love. So no more partying or messing around, because he gives me a reason to be better. So do what you want, I just don't care. Caring isn't worth it. I don't need your approval anymore. Go enjoy your party, because I surely will. I mean it's Christmas and I have Lou."** I turned on my heels and walked out.

It felt good to finally get it off my chest. I was free, in a sense of the word. I can enjoy the party though, because no matter what happens I'll still have Louis at the end of the night.

~Louis' POV~

I went off with Anne while Harry went off to talk with Robin. I felt bad for leaving him to face Robin alone, but I knew Anne really wanted to show me off.

We met a bunch of people that seemed pretty nice. Anne introduced me to a group of politicians and we ended up talking for about an hour before I figured I needed to search for Harry.

I finally found him with some girl trying to hang all over him. I had to jump in. Harry was mine and that was that.

*"Hello, I'm Louis"* I announced as I intruded on their conversation.

"Hi Louis!" she responded while still hanging on him as I glared at her. She had obviously been helping herself to some of the champagne.

**"Hey, Babe"** He said with a pleading look in his eye.

"Well aren't you gonna introduce me, Harry?"

**"Uh, well I guess--"**

"I'm Paige." Then she whispered, "Me and Harry are going to get married one day. I mean it's sooo obvious he likes me. Plus our dad's our like total bff's."

*"Is that so?"* I said as I turned to Harry. He had that Oh shit! face. He knew he was in trouble.

**"Well, you see Lou, she's drunk. And persistent. I tried to find you but I couldn't get away,"** he pleaded with me.

"Honey, you don't have to explain yourself to him. Why should he care about our relationship?"

*"I'm just going to borrow him from a minute,"* I said more as a statement of fact than a courtesy. Harry had to know by then, he was in deep shit.

As soon as we got to the secluded hallway, he started apologizing. **"Louis I'm so sorry. I tried to get away from her, but she just wouldn't leave me alone. She's relentless. I've**

**been trying to get rid of her for years.”** But I didn’t respond. I just pulled him into the closest room with a lock on the door.

I slammed him into the door and kissed him senseless. I started kissing my way across his jaw and neck, leaving marks every so often as I unbuttoned his shirt. *“Mine”* I growled. This was all about reminding him whom he belonged to.

So what if I’m a little jealous. If the obvious bulge in his pants is anything to go by, he liked it too. I quickly found my way to his nipples as he moaned my name. I quickly found the button to his jeans and yanked them down around his ankles. Then his boxers followed and I got onto my knees.

*“Who do you belong to?”* I asked as I took hold of his cock. I was satisfied at his quick response. **“Louis. I only belong to you.”**

*“Good.”* I said as I proceeded to run my tongue up the underside of his dick. Then I pulled it into to my mouth going as far down as I could and using my hands on what I couldn’t reach.

**“Oh God, Lou!”** He exclaimed as I pulled him into the back of my throat. He ran his fingers through my hair as I worked up and down his length.

He started tugging on my hair as I swirled my tongue around his head. Soon enough, I felt a trembling underneath the hand I had moved over to his thigh. Next thing I knew he was coming and I swallowed every last drop until he was completely spent and sliding down the door with a soft **“Lou”** that was barely an exhalation of breath.

*“So much for having to teach me how to swallow,”* I said and we both just cracked up.

**“C’mon Lou, let me help you with that,”** he said as he gestured toward my own bulge.

He was much slower and a lot gentler. Where I had been full of possessive energy and unrelenting need, he seemed to be full of tenderness and care. It still didn’t take long for me to reach my own end though with Harry filling all of my senses.

Soon enough, we were getting dressed, figuring we had to get back to the party before someone came looking for us. I buttoned his shirt while he straightened my suspenders. We shared one more, quick kiss that tasted deliciously of what we had just done.

Right as we got back to the ballroom, Paige found us again.

*“There you are, Babe. I thought you had gotten lost.”* Then she gave us a funny look.

*“Weren’t you two wearing each other’s shirts earlier? Why did you trade?”*

I looked down and thought. ‘Aw shit! We must’ve accidently traded shirts when we got dressed and there’s no way we can go back now.’

*“And your guys’ hair is so messy...”* Then it must’ve finally dawned on her.

*“OMG! What were you two doing?!”* Then she whispered, *“Are you two, like, gay?”*

Harry and I just looked at each other like we've been caught with our hands in the cookie jar.

"You are! You are gay! I can't believe you didn't tell me this, Harold. You just led me on like one day we'd have the big white house and the picket fence, and then you just go and cheat on me with this lower class Bastard! I can't believe you are such an ass!"

*"First off, Harry is absolutely wonderful and doesn't deserve any of your crap. Second of all, we've been engaged publicly for over a month now, so you have no right to be pissed. You're just a clingy bitch who expects her daddy to just get her whatever she wants. It's not his fault you completely ignored our engagement announcement and paparazzi shots. You haven't been wronged, he has. You need to apologize to him for being rude and saying things that were uncalled for."*

She and I just stared each other down and then she finally opened her mouth.

"I can't believe you let him get to you. You've been corrupted. I feel sorry for you. You know you're going to burn in Hell right? And it's going to be all your fault, Louis," she said as she stormed off like a little kid throwing a temper-tantrum.

Harry moved to go after her, but I grabbed him around the waist to stop him. *"She's not worth it."*

That seemed to do the trick because he stopped fighting and leaned into my touch.

**"I'm just so sorry you'll have to deal with these people now. They're just so shallow and callous. They're all from old money and just assume everything will be given to them. But at least I have you now. None of it matters anymore, because regardless of anything else, I'll be happy as long as I have you to come home to."**

At that moment I knew. No matter what else came, I could never leave him. He needed me, and I may need him just as much.

~Harry's POV~

It finally hit the time where it was no longer impolite to leave and I grabbed Louis and bolted to where the security guards and chauffeur's were, in hopes I could get there before someone else could interrupt us.

Luckily I grabbed Liam and Zayn and I shoved Gemma's present in the butler's hands as we rushed out the door. We walked out with Louis' and my arms wrapped around each other's waists.

Each mile away from the house decreased eased the tension that came along with being in front of the crowds. As soon as we walked through the doors Niall greeted us with a shitload of alcohol laid out on the counter.

"I got the alcohol you request. Let's get drunk!" Niall greeted us.

I looked over at the co-conspirators who knew me so well. They knew how much this took out of me and planned a little fun for what was left of Christmas. Maybe after we got drunk,

it would actually feel like a day to celebrate.

# Chapter Twelve

## Chapter 12

~Harry's POV~

I woke up with a mean pounding in my head. I guess I got drunk. The last thing I really remember is coming home and deciding to get smashed. I finally got enough energy to crack open my eyes and look around.

Liam and Zayn were passed out on the floor and Niall was curled up in a chair fast asleep. Then there was Louis. We were laying together, butt naked under a blanket on the couch. I hope the others had been asleep, when whatever happened, happened.

\*ring ring\* What was that?

\*ring ring\* "Somebody answer the damn phone!" came a voice from Zayn's general direction. I guess I was going to have to do it because no one else was functional enough to move. I quickly slid out from underneath Louis and ran to the kitchen to answer the phone.

**"Hello?"**

"Good morning, Mister Styles" but from her tone of voice this was obviously anything but a good morning. "This is Isadora Fontaine. Have you gotten a chance to see the paper yet?"

**"No."**

"Well I suggest you do, because you and Louis' faces are plastered all over it. Next time you go to a party, I expect you to keep it in your pants. Or at least make sure you remember whose shirt is whose. On another note, I expect to see you two at the office at 1 o'clock sharp." Then she hung up. **"Rude..."**

*"Hazz"* a voice that was obviously Louis' moaned from the couch.

**"One second,"** I responded. I grabbed the aspirin from the cabinet and winced when it closed a little too loudly. I grabbed a few water bottles and returned to the living room.

I passed out the water bottles and aspirin and got grumbles of pain and murmurs as thanks. Obviously they were too zonked to notice my current state of undress. I went back to the couch and pulled Louis into my lap, with the blanket wrapped around us, to message his temples while we waited for our headaches to dissipate.

It was 10 am. Which leaves us with about two hours or so until we have to leave. Ugh, no day is a good day when I have to deal with her *and* a hangover.

"Who called?" Liam asked, always the responsible one.

**"It was Isadora Fontaine,"** I said dropping into a southern accent.

*“What did she want?”* Louis asked, probably worried that we were in trouble.

**“She wants us to come in today at 1 o’clock.”**

*“Did she say why?”*

**“She said something about this mornings newspaper, but otherwise I don’t know.”**

Louis moved to get up but must’ve realized he was in his birthday suit because he promptly sat down and glared at me like it was my fault. Though it could have been my fault for all I knew....

Niall spoke up “why aren’t you two moving?” When neither of us answered, he responded, “No way! You guys are totally naked under there, aren’t you? Ha! I didn’t know you were an exhibitionist, Lou.” He chuckled and went back to gathering up his stuff.

Louis just turned to me and said, *“This is all your fault!”*

**“What did I do?”**

*“Do you really not remember?”*

**“Um... Not really.”**

*“Sleep naked, Lou. It’s liberating, Lou. I absolutely love being naked, join me!”*

**“Oh. Sorry, I guess.”**

*“You guess?”* He was trying to sound angry but he was too busy nuzzling into my scalp message to be convincing.

**“Well I do like being naked and I don’t really mind that you... Ow!”** Louis swung a pillow at my head. So I just picked him up bridal style and started carrying him off to our room. We got appreciative catcalls and whistles followed by chuckles from our seemingly less hung-over friends.

I deposited him on the bed and before he could retaliate, I ran into the bathroom to wash away the smell of last night’s booze. I got out to find my clothes laid out on the bed. I guess even hung-over Louis didn’t trust my style.

I went out to the kitchen to find Niall making what he called, his hangover special. It was fried eggs and bacon, toast and jam. When Louis saw me, he made a run for the bathroom, after a quick pause to ruffle my shower-dampened hair. He got ready just in time for us to finish gathering our stuff and head out the door.

When we got there, we were immediately escorted to the infamous P.R. room. Isadora wasn’t here yet, but plastered on the big screen was a pair of pictures from last night titled ‘Spot the Difference.’ On the next slide, they had our shirts and some not so hidden hickeys circled. I guess that’s why we’re having the meeting.

I had sat down in a chair and Louis stood looking uncomfortable and unsure, so I just pulled him into my lap.

*“Harry, what are you doing?”*

**“Getting comfortable,”** I said as I nuzzled into his neck. Miss Fontaine walked in, took one look at us, and seemed to scowl harder than normal.

“I don’t know what stunt you were trying to pull last night, but you are never to do that again. The whole world knows you’re together; you don’t have to prove it by having sex at parties. I will, personally, kick your asses if this happens again. It’s bad enough you’re in this campaign at all. I do not get paid enough to deal with your immature, horny behavior!”

I couldn’t help it I had to say it. **“Now tell me how you really feel.”** Bad decision.

“You really want to know? Well here it is. I think you’re a punk-ass, spoiled brat who has no business, whatsoever, being here. I may be good at my job, but you two’s shenanigans could ruin anyone’s career. I will not let you two take me down with you. I think your father is insane to include you two on his tour, and it would be better for everyone if you disappeared for a while. Is that enough feeling for you?”

**“Yeah, I think it should suffice.”** That really did it. I was actually afraid she would become violent when I saw how she was glaring at us. Luckily, Robin walked in at the precise moment to defuse the bomb.

“Harry, Louis I’m so glad you’re here. You two are just the people I was looking for,” he said as he escorted us out the door and away from the she-beast.

“Louis, I think Rodger had something to ask you about the campaign.” This was one of the best ways to get rid of Louis. As soon as someone talked about politics, he was totally gone and naturally I was instantly suspicious

“Come with me Harry. I think we have some things to talk about.” I followed him to his office and he closed and locked the door. “Sit, sit. I’ve been thinking about last night and you had a few valid points.” I felt my eyes bulge out of my head. This was the equivalent of a normal person admitting they were wrong.

“Last night, I realized that having you on the campaign is one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. You fight for what you believe in which is an admirable quality in a man. You know, you could have a strong future in politics.”

**“Th-thanks,”** I responded, not really knowing what to say.

“Also, congratulations on your relationship with Louis. Of course your wedding will still be used for the campaign. But if you guys stay on the straight and narrow, I may be amenable to a small private ceremony with a rather large, public reception. This off is only valid if you can avoid a repeat of today’s paper.”



**“Okay... I mean thanks. Thanks so much... Um, does this mean you aren’t mad at me for yelling at you?”** That may seem like an idiotic question but I honestly had no idea what was going on. I was barely even processing what he was saying

“At first I was, but then I realized you have a good head on your shoulders. Your newfound outstated integrity could be very useful. Plus I had an epiphany. I am your stepfather and I should help with your happiness where I can.”

**“Okay.”** This was perhaps the weirdest conversation I had ever had with him. Normally, everything is about him and his career. This was still mostly about his career, but at least it was somewhat paternal. We might never have a real relationship, but he was trying to care. I think.

I just kind of wandered out of his office and found a corner to sit in on the main floor where could watched Louis work. He was just so animated. He would read things silently, while his lips still moved and he was constantly moving, whether it be drumming on the table, or twitching in his chair, or humming an almost inaudible melody.

It was then that I started actually thinking of our future, past the tours and the media. I was thinking of what it would be like to grow old together, watch the planes of his face shift with age. I wanted to learn how his habits changed, what mannerisms he kept, and what we picked up from each other. Louis made me think about our future, not just how I’m going to survive the present. He made life enjoyable for me again.

~Louis’ POV~

I can’t believe Rodger pulled me into working on one of his projects again. That boy has all the ideas in the world, but no determination to finish what he started. I’m kind of having that weird sense of deja vu with Harry watching me as I work. I haven’t seen him, per se, but I can feel his gaze.

It kind of reminds me of the first time we met. I was working not so diligently when Harry caught me staring and decided to ask me if I enjoyed the view, while he hovered over me. He had just come out of Robin’s office that day too.

It seems Harry remembered as well because I felt someone behind me and two arms began to wrap around my chest.

**“See anything you like?”** an all too familiar voice whispered huskily in my ear, using the same words that brought us together all those months ago.

*“Not at the moment, you see Rodger ran off to print some papers,”* I said while, somehow, maintaining a straight face. I was actually able to form a response this time around.

**“Is that so?”** I nodded. **“Well then may I ask where those hickeys came from?”**

*“Oh, some random guy I met last night while I was drunk.”*

**“You realize I’m gonna get you for this later?”** His voice was lower than normal due to his hushed tone and it sent shivers down my spine.

*“I wouldn’t have it any other way.”*

“Hey, you two! Either go back to work or get a room!” Rodger chastised us. We just laughed. The people on the floor just scoffed murmuring something about young lovebirds and horny as hell teenagers having no business in the workplace.

**“How long are you going to stay?”** He was still entirely too close to my ear and pretty soon it would be a problem.

*“I’ll be home in time for dinner,”* I said as I turned around in his arms.

**“Okay. See you later, Babe,”** Harry said as he quickly pressed a kiss to my cheek.

*“You missed”* I gave him a proper kiss before he could respond. *“See you later, Love.”*

~Harry’s POV~

I went in search of Liam and Zayn, and finally found them hanging out in the security team break room. Liam was having a heated discussion on one side of the room while Zayn was playing cards with a couple of other guards. Zayn noticed me first and gave an acknowledgement with a slight incline of his head. Some of them finally noticed me and called out greetings of “Good day, Mr. Styles.”

They looked unsure of how to behave around me. I hadn’t ever been around them before. Most of the time I strayed off and did my own loner thing. Plus, only Liam and Zayn were assigned as my “personal bodyguards,” so that didn’t leave many reasons for hanging out with the others.

**“It’s just Harry. But, please, don’t let me ruin your break.”** I said in hopes of them returning to what they were doing before. They did after a few more quick glances at me. Zayn finished the hand and went over to Liam.

“Rock, paper, scissors best two out of three. Loser has to babysit Louis,” Zayn said.

“Deal,” Liam responded. Liam lost, so I’ve got Zayn for the day. “That’s not fair! You always get to go home for dinner. You’ll get to laze around with the boys, while I’ll be here ‘til who knows when,” Liam whined. Then he turned to me. “Harry, why do you have to be engaged to such a workaholic?” I just chuckled.

It was a day of relaxation as Liam predicted. When we got home, we had nothing better to do, so Zayn, Niall, and I played Fifa. It was a rather boring afternoon and it was really weird being separated from Louis. We had been practically attached at the hip since I had gotten back. I guess it was good to be apart for a little while though. Even though I couldn’t think of any reasons at the moment.

We finally heard the garage door at about six.

“He’s home early,” Niall commented.

**“This is early?”**

“Yeah it is. Louis is a total workaholic. Some days I swore he would have slept there if he could. He must have something to come home to now,” Niall said with an added eye waggle. Louis and Liam walked in the door and Louis plopped down into my lap on the couch. Liam and Zayn gave us a moment to reacquaint before letting out a polite cough.

“We need to talk,” Liam said, entering parental mode.

**“About what?”** I asked, genuinely confused.

“About you two’s relationship. We don’t doubt that you two care for each other. We just want to know how Robin’s involved.” I opened my mouth to deny Liam’s words but Zayn cut me off. “I don’t care about whatever bullshit you were about to try and pass as the truth. I know he is involved somehow. We need to know, so we can protect you better.”

*“But, you work for him. How can you see him as a threat?”* Louis stated, sounding confused.

“But we’re your bodyguards and our real loyalty is to you” Liam protested. “Just spill now. We’ll find out the truth eventually. It might as well come from you.”

Niall piped in, “What are they talking about?”

Zayn chose to respond to that one. “Robin is, how do I want to put this, a perfectionist. To complete his campaign, he somehow got them two together. I don’t want to say their relationship isn’t real, it’s just Robin is involved somehow. Besides don’t you think it’s weird we all work here?”

“Well, I haven’t really thought about it, but I guess so. I mean we’re all around the same age and get along pretty well,” Niall answered.

“Exactly. It’s one of Robin’s preferred modes of control. If he gives Harry friends that are bodyguards, then he won’t try to ditch us. If you work here, then Louis will probably feel more at home and be more likely to stay,” Zayn explained.

Meanwhile, Louis and I were having our own little conversation.

**“Do you want to tell them or should I?”**

*“I don’t know. Um, maybe from you. You’ve known Zayn and Liam longer and Zayn seems to be explaining the ins and outs of Robin’s character to Niall. Plus Niall’s not as curious. Your friends want to know, so it should probably come from you.”*

I turned my attention back to the boys. **“Okay, here it goes. Robin wanted something edgy for his campaign, so he decided to arrange for me to get a husband. Oddly enough, his plan worked out in a weird way. We fell in love.”** I turned to Louis and we both smiled at each other at that last statement. **“So in a sense his plan worked, because I’m in a committed relationship that keeps me out of trouble. Though it seems to have had some**

**unforeseen consequences since I finally stood up to him.”** Then we seemed to shift into a private conversation between Louis and I when I remembered to tell him about the conversation earlier.

*“How did he respond?”* His brow was furrowed slightly and his voice was full of so much concern. I brought my thumb up to smooth out the creases he was creating on his forehead before I continued.

**“Well, he pulled me into his office for a chat today. Then he told me I could have a bright future in politics which alone was weird enough. But then this was followed by him providing ‘incentive.’ If we stay out of trouble, we could get that small wedding we wanted.”**

*“It’s all about the safety of his public image. But I will never understand how he can treat you so impersonally. The campaign tour is going to be interesting to say the least.”*

I suddenly remembered the others in the room. They looked like they were trying to smother laughter behind their hands.

**“What’s so funny?”**

Niall was the first one to speak up. “It’s just so messed up. I mean Robin tried to arrange a fake marriage and accidentally created a real one. You two walk out of a public party with obvious signs of sexual activity and he rewards you for it. Man, I thought my family life was messed up. This is just insane.” That was the tipping point, because we all broke out in fits of laughter at the absurdity of the situation. If things were this interesting now, Louis was right; tour was going to be a whole other set of crazy.

## Chapter Thirteen

~Louis' POV~

It was finally time to go. We're dressed to the nine in the suits we had just gotten back from the tailor yesterday. I never realized how long it took to custom make a suit before and this probably wasn't my last one. Zayn was waiting to walk us down to where Liam had the car out front. Today was when Robin was announcing his campaign and, therefore, was the first of many stops on the campaign tour. Man, how time has flown since Christmas. I grabbed the leashes off the counter and called our dogs. I can't believe how easily they've meshed into our lives.

A couple of weeks ago, we decided to get a dog to take with us, well more specifically a therapy dog. Neither one of us was particularly looking forward to months of listening to Robin speak to random people across the country so we decided to adopt a cause of our own. We get to go to hospitals all over the country and help brighten peoples' day. So we ended up with Apollo.

Apollo is a red golden retriever. Apollo came from a lady, who absolutely adored him, but she no longer had the time for him. She had already gotten him licensed and helped teach us his commands. We, also, took a class on how to behave in hospitals and info on being on and off duty.

We ended up adopting a puppy too. We figured it would be easier to train a puppy, if we had an already trained dog as a guideline. We decided on a sheltie because they are incredibly intelligent and lovable. When we went out to the farm to pick a puppy, we fell in love with an absolutely adorable blue merle with bright blue eyes.

Harry came up with the name while we were walking the dogs one night. Well, more like I was walking Apollo and Harry was carrying the puppy because he got tired.

*"What should we name him, Haz?"* We had been trying to come up with names for at least a week and I was starting to feel bad for the little guy. We just couldn't agree. I mean there was Gandalf, Oreo, Merlin, Woofus, Rodney, and so on and so forth...

**"Hm... I've been thinking about it and I think we should name him Cerberus."**

*"Cerberus? As in the vicious guard dog of Hades?"*

**"That's the one, minus the vicious part. Cerberus isn't actually all that mean. He's like a cute little puppy that lets all the dead pet him and is totally adorable and sweet and cuddly. The only time he's ever vicious is if someone tries to get back out of Hades, but otherwise he's a complete softy."**

I just stared at him with an open mouth.

**“What? You didn’t think I was going to study something like poly-sci at school, did you?”**

*“Well no, but I didn’t expect a Greek mythology lesson either.”*

And that’s how we ended up naming him Cerberus.

The rest of break was pretty normal. We got to spend New Years at home relaxing, because everyone was getting ready for tour. Harry and I kissed at midnight while our friends cheered and sprayed us with champagne. I had been about to complain to the boys about it but before I had even begun to frown Harry had pulled me into the bedroom. It wasn’t so bad cleaning up when it meant showering together and well...other things too. Then we had to start packing and stocking up on dog supplies, and now all that’s left is to hope we can make it through the tour without everything going to Hell.

*“Apollo! Cerberus! Haz! Time to go!”*

**“I’m not a dog, Lou!”** Harry really wasn’t looking forward to being around his family for so many months so he had been grumpy all morning.

*“That’s why I only grabbed two leashes, Babe.”* I said as Apollo came around the corner, with Cerberus following close behind. The two had become fast friends, and besides the occasional reprimand, they got along well. Harry continued to grumble as he pulled on his shoes and his coat.

I leaned over and pressed a quick kiss to his cheek in an attempt to get him to smile. Worked like a charm. He helped me hook the pups up to their leashes and we were out the door with Zayn. The drive took a little while with all the traffic. People were already heading out for the speech even though it wouldn’t start for several hours. It was ridiculous. Hopefully we would make it and still have time to walk the dogs.

~Harry’s POV~

The drive was too long. There were too many people. I hope Louis would be able to deal with all the cameras and people. I hope I don’t look too bored during the speech. Hopefully the dogs will sit still. My anxiety level was incredibly high and it wasn’t helping that Louis looked so handsome. The tailor has managed to find the perfect undershirt—grey with a slight metallic sheen that could only be seen up close. It was exactly what I had pictured two months ago when we had picked out each other’s suits. I felt a strong connection with Cerberus right now because we were both fidgeting a lot being confined in the car but it was finally time to get out of the car and into the fray. I reached out for Louis hand.

**“Ready?”** No matter how much I didn’t want to do this, I needed to suck it up because journalists get crazy at things like this and I was planning on shielding Louis from them as much as I could.

*"Whenever you are."* He squeezed my hand to reassure me. If we weren't about to face the masses I may have found it adorable how we were both trying to protect the other.

We each grabbed a leash and slid out of my side of the car. Zayn and Liam quickly attached themselves to our sides. We were escorted to the campaign tent thingy. Isadora was there. Of course. She zeroed in on us as soon as we walked into the tent.

"You're late," she sneered. "What's with the dogs?"

**"They're therapy dogs."** We had gotten them cleared with Robin who was just oh so happy that I was stepping up to my role as the perfect campaign son. Because, you know, it's not like I might actually care about the cause of the dogs or anything.

"Hmph. You guys are sitting offset from the Senator. You will behave and so will the dogs. At the end you will get up and join him and smile like you've never been happier." Then she walked off to go finish the last minute preparations.

There was a whirlwind of activity and soon enough we were sitting on the stage in the order of Mom, Gemma, me, and then Louis with Apollo and Cerberus curled up at our feet. Robin was at the podium waiting to start his speech.

The speech was boring, as usual, though everyone around me seemed interested. I just concentrated on petting the dogs occasionally and trying not to fidget. I apparently wasn't doing a good enough job because Louis would occasionally shoot me a look. He soon figured out I was calmer when he held onto me. He would draw invisible designs on my hand or my leg, occasionally switching spots to keep me from getting too bored. I was pretty content after that point.

I was so absorbed in the patterns being scrawled into my skin; I didn't notice the end of Robin's speech. Louis tugged me up and we followed them to the center of the stage for the family photos. People were cheering and we were just smiling and waving.

We stood there forever before we finally got to leave the stage. I was off first with both dogs in hand trying to find a patch of grass for them. When I returned, I found Gemma and Louis debating politics, of course. I found a chair and sat and watch. Gemma had to be up to something because she was being oddly amicable towards him. So I confronted her when he went off in search of a bathroom.

**"What do you want with him, Gemma?"** I didn't even try to mask my suspicion. I had absolutely no patience for her anymore.

"What makes you think I want something?"

**"Well, do I need a reason after our fun little conversation at Thanksgiving?"**

"Ever the cynical one, aren't you Harry? Besides I wouldn't be worried about me, I'd be worried about you right now?"

**"What are you talking about?"**

“Well it’s obvious he’s going to get bored with you. I mean how long do you think you’ll last when he loves politics and you can barely stand it? You better watch out, because one day he might realize you have nothing in common and leave.”

**“You don’t know Lou. He’d never do something like that.”**

“We’ll see.” I glared at her as Louis walked into the tent and she plastered on a smile.

I knew what she was really up to. She’s done this before. The first time was with Mark. He was my first boyfriend. One day, I came home to find them making out on her bed. When she saw me in the doorway she turned to me and winked. Then pulled this Oh My God, Harry! You weren’t supposed to find us act. We couldn’t help it. So on and so forth.

Gemma told him maybe he should go, putting a fake regretful face on. When he was gone, she just said, “I guess he likes girls more.” She just walked away. It happened again, with John. I wasn’t really into him, he was just fun to hang out with. She must’ve thought we were dating, because the same thing happened with him. So I just didn’t have friends after that, except for Zayn and Liam. They were off limits anyway because they were our best security detail and she couldn’t truly get rid of them.

Here she goes again with my fiancé. I’m actually happy this time; I cared more about Louis than I ever had about anyone. Not to mention this could affect the campaign, but if we broke up she’d be the good child again and that’s what mattered most to her. I wanted to say something, but if I did that meant I was worried about our relationship and gave her an opening. There was nothing to do except wait and I was not looking forward to that.

They continued their talk all day. I was forced to use the dogs as an excuse to wander around and look for something to do. It was incredibly frustrating. She deliberately picked politics so I couldn’t join in. By the time we got to dinner at the hotel restaurant, I couldn’t take it anymore. I started operation retrieve Louis’ attention.

I started by scooting our chairs closer and pressing our legs together. Then I wrapped my hand around his and attempted to eat as a leftie. I would occasionally offer Louis a bite and he would mutter something about it being good and go back to politics. I finally had to resort to desperate measures, which I knew would never fail.

~Louis’ POV~

I was having a fine conversation when I notice Harry’s hand on my knee. He was drawing circles on my leg, which wasn’t that unusual considering I was doing it to him earlier. Then it started moving which was fine, except it was getting closer and closer to my crotch.

Soon enough I could only give half responses to Gemma; I was too focused on Harry’s hand to do anything else. Then the waiter came over and asked if we wanted desert. I was so glad when Harry spoke up, I could barely form coherent words at the time.

**“No, I think Louis and I are going to head back to the room and catch up on some sleep so we aren’t too tired tomorrow.”** Though, I think we both knew we weren’t going to sleep soon. I leaned over to speak in his ear as we walked.



*“Harry! What did you think you were doing?”*

**“Oh, nothing. I was just bored and had nothing to do.”**

*“Is that jealousy I hear?”*

**“Maybe...”**

*“Well you started this situation so it’s only fair that you finish it.”* I said, letting the lust invade my voice. We got in the elevator.

**“Well I don’t know. You seemed to be more interested in Gemma-”** he let that hang in the air until I couldn’t take it. I grabbed his collar and mashed our lips together, pushing my tongue into his mouth when he gasped in surprise. When the elevator doors dinged opened, he pulled me down the hall to our room.

He pulled me into the large bathroom and turned on the shower. We started stripping each other while it heated up. Stripping wasn’t the most productive on my part; I kept getting distracted by various patches of skin and would spend time leaving marks rather than putting the effort into pulling all his clothes off.

Luckily, Harry was a little more focused than I was and worked on getting our clothes off. He would occasionally move me to a new patch of skin when I was in the way. Steam started pouring over the top of the shower and Harry opened the door and pulled me in. Harry started pressing kisses all over, stopping in a few places to leave a dark mark. **“Mine,”** he breathed into my skin. Apparently it was his turn to get jealous.

He worked his way down and I closed my eyes, enjoying the feel of Harry on one side and the shower beating down on me on the other. My eyes burst open when he pulled my hand to his ass pleading with his beautiful green eyes darkened with lust.

I loved that I did this to him. I made his pupils blow with lust, and his lips puff out from the bruising force of our kiss. I adored the way he became completely needy for me and only me.

**“Lou”** he whined.

*“I’m here, now turn around and grab the wall.”* He let out an impatient sigh and I knew I couldn’t keep him waiting for too long.

~Harry’s POV~

I was starting to get twitchy when his first finger found my hole. I let out a sigh of relief. It was about fucking time. He quickly added a second finger and when he wasn’t moving fast enough I started pushing back against him.

*“Well, somebody’s impatient tonight”* he said pressing kisses against my neck as he finally added a third finger.

**“Well somebody—ah!”** I said as he cut me off by hitting that spot.

I was thoroughly fucking myself on his fingers when he pulled out. **“Hey!”** I complained, but then he grabbed my hips and pounded into me. It seemed he understood my need for pure fucking tonight. I’m pretty sure there were going to be bruises tomorrow, but at that point I couldn’t think past the feeling of his cock plowing into me, trying to throw me over the edge.

**“Fuck Lou!”** I said as he found my prostate and managed to hit it with every thrust. I lost all form of coherent thought and could only feel. Soon enough I was coming with a shout of **“Louis!”** He soon followed yelling *“Shit, Harry!”*

We collapsed, sliding to the floor. We sat there for about five minutes before Louis spoke up. *“May I ask what brought about your jealousy?”*

I figured he deserved an answer so I told him about how she stole Mark. And John.

*“Oh, I’m so sorry, Babe. I love you and I’ve never swung that way. Girls are too squishy.”*

I chuckled and Louis pulled me up and started washing my hair. I nuzzled into his touch like a kitten; it just felt so good. Then he was tilting my head back into the spray and used one hand to prevent suds from getting in my eyes while the other one washed them out. I returned the favor and then we both washed each other’s bodies.

We got out of the shower and I wrapped a towel around my waist and tied one around Louis’ waist. We walked into the living room where Zayn and Liam were waiting with the dogs.

“So I see how it is. You gave us the dogs so you could get the D!” Zayn commented.

“I’m glad you two did it in the privacy of your own room this time.” Liam added.

“We should be glad they are at least somewhat covered. Though I don’t really mind the view,” Zayn stated while wiggling his eyebrows. Zayn and Liam had been gone for security briefings several days in the weeks before the tour and Louis and I had taken advantage of the empty house to spice up our sex life a bit. Zayn took every chance he could to remind us of the time they had come home earlier than expected.

Louis must be getting used to it, though, because he didn’t hide behind me anymore.

*“Thanks for taking care of them”*

**“Yeah, thanks.”** I agreed. They continued to sit there. **“Is there something else you need?”**

“Oh, sorry. I was just trying to count the number of hickies you had.” Louis gave in and started blushing a ferocious red. I guess there was still only so much he could take.

Liam chimed in. “On a more serious note, we wanted to talk about our plans tomorrow. We leave at 8:30 to make our way to the hospital. Your family hasn’t been told so we can try to keep the press to the minimum for your therapy dog trial run. Cerberus won’t be able to go in, so we’re going to have to have someone watching him at all time outside. Okay?”

*“Sounds like a plan.”*

“Now you two get some rest. It’s not a luxury you’ll have for very long.”

We followed his advice and put the dogs in their kennels and curled up in the over luxurious hotel bed for the night. Soon enough our breathing patterns matched up as we drifted into dream land

*I was standing in the crowd, watching as people cheered for my sister Gemma. I was listening to her speech when I noticed something weird. All the signs said Gemma Tomlinson, but her last name is Styles. I was so confused. Then I noticed the wedding ring, but couldn’t quite put two and two together.*

*After her speech, a figure moved forward. What was Louis doing up there? I tried to move to the front of the crowd shouting “**Lou! Louis!**”*

*Then he turned and pressed a quick peck to her cheek and I noticed the matching wedding rings when he placed his hand on the small of her back. I finally made my way to the front and he must have seen me.*

*“I’m sorry Harry. You just weren’t good enough. Gemma, here, understands politics and isn’t some boy who has never grown up and isn’t doing anything with his life. You just don’t have anything to offer me anymore.” This statement was driven home when he turned to make-out with Gemma and the tears streamed down my face.*

~Louis’ POV~

I woke up when Harry started twitching in his sleep. It wasn’t anything too abnormal; he just shifts in his sleep and sometimes it wakes me up because his arms are around me. I was going to go back to sleep but then I heard a whimpered “**But Boo, I love you.**” And then I noticed he was crying.

*“I love you too, Haz. Whatever’s happening? It’s just a bad dream. Wake up, Hazza. Please wake up.”* But he just kept crying. So I kissed him. He gasped and popped up, knocking our heads together. “Ow!”

**“Oh, Lou. I’m so, so sorry! Wait you’re here. That means that didn’t happen…”**

*“What didn’t happen, Babe? Was it your dream? Is that why you were crying?”*

He exhaled in relief, but continued crying, explaining how he thought I had left him for Gemma. I spent another half hour trying to calm him down and reassure him I would never leave him. He finally fell asleep with me spooning him. I was holding him close with one hand, stroking his curls with the other and whispering in his ear.

Poor Baby, I hoped he wouldn’t have any more nightmares tonight. I’m going to have to be careful around Gemma from now on. I don’t ever want this to happen again.

## Chapter Fourteen

~Louis' POV~

We got up at about 8:00 and were out the door by 8:30. Poor Harry was sore this morning. Liam and Zayn wouldn't let him forget.

"Hey, Harry! Are you walking or waddling?" Liam asked. It was enjoyable to see the more playful side of Liam.

Zayn pitched in with a "good thing we're going to the hospital today. We can pick you up a wheelchair while we're there."

Harry gave me a dirty look like it was all my fault, and it kinda was. But there was no way I was going to admit it. *"Sorry, Babe. You asked for it and I only aim to please."*

The other boys laughed. I was finally getting a hang of their humor without turning completely red in the process.

The puppy had to stay here while we were gone. He wasn't certified, so he wasn't allowed in the hospitals yet. The poor thing wasn't happy about being left at home. He just kept nuzzling against Harry's leg and whining while Harry tried to get out of the door cooing about a good cuddle session when we got back. In the car we got Apollo's harness on him and put on his leash.

We walked in and were greeted by a very sweet nurse. She pointed us in the general direction of the children's ward and we were off.

There were a bunch of kids waiting, like they knew we'd be there. I had Apollo lay down in the middle of an open space so more kids could have access to him. We told them they could pet him and it was like a feeding frenzy. I was so glad Apollo was mellow. I almost jumped when they swarmed and I had spent a fair amount of time around rowdy kids at home.

The kids were so cute and sometimes it was easy to forget that there were various sad reasons they were there.. There were ones there for surgery and others there for some chronic disease that was manageable and they'd be out soon. What was really heartbreaking, were the cancer patients.

Some were going to be okay and just had to go through treatment, but then there were the ones who were terminal. They were still happy in the face of death in a way that only little kids seem to manage. They joined in and had fun, but at the same time there was that heart-wrenching feeling because you didn't know how much longer they'd be around.

I was so happy when Apollo made the kids happy. I just stood there watching some little girls press kisses to his head and giggle when he licked their cheeks in return. The next thing I knew, Harry was sitting on the floor with kids gathered around so he could read to them. He

looked so massive sitting next to them with their little hands and I just couldn't help but smile.

I thought back to the times I had seen Harry around my own little sisters, especially Daisy and Phoebe. He always seemed so at ease with them, so happy, as if worry lines I hadn't even noticed before had suddenly vanished. It made him seem years younger in comparison and I was able to imagine a Harry who wasn't surrounded by a life style he never wanted and pressures he didn't need.

Then Gemma had to ruin it all. I saw a flash out of the corner of my eye and I turned around just in time to see the reporter on the other side of the glass. Another guy had a camera and they were recording. Gemma stood off to the side with a look of compassion painted on her face as she watched the kids. I tuned them out, though, because they didn't matter, the kids did and I'll be damned if I was going to let the press ruin this for Harry.

A shy kid walked over then and tugged on my hand to get me to bend down. When I was at his eye level, he whispered in my ear. "I'm afraid of dogs."

*"Aww sweetie, it's okay! Apollo is really soft and he really loves to give little kids kisses!"* He still looked a bit apprehensive but there was also a glint of curiosity in his eyes. *"How about we go pet him together okay? He's just like a stuffed animal, except a little warmer."* I led him over to Apollo and helped guide his hand to Apollo's back. He jumped a little at first but soon enough was petting and cuddling him on his own.

It was the sweetest thing I had ever seen.

~Harry's POV~

Everything had been going smoothly; the kids had rejoiced over Apollo, adored Louis, and had even taken a shine to me. Naturally though, my stupid sister had to stick her big nose in it all. We hadn't told anyone about the outing for just this reason. She had shown up with paparazzi and, even worse, Isadora Fontaine. Our time was up and it was time to face the media.

**"Alright guys, Louis, Apollo and I have to go. Say goodbye!"**

"Bye, bye, Apollo," they chorused and a few came over and hugged my legs.

Once we had disentangled Apollo and ourselves from the little kids, Louis grabbed the leash and I grabbed his waist so I could whisper in his ear as we walked out.

**"No matter what, just try and keep a straight face. We just have to make it to the car. I'll hold on to you the whole okay."** Louis gave a slight imperceptible nod and I continued to hold on to him as we strode past Gemma and Isadora. The reports pushed microphones towards us but I just tugged Louis closer and kept my eyes on his face.

Zayn walked behind us and we got into the car where Liam was waiting.

We grabbed lunch on the way back to the hotel and ate in our room. We made bets on how long until the P.R. manager from hell makes an appearance. Zayn won the bet when she showed up about an hour later.

Liam let her in and she stormed right to where we were sitting. “Here’s how it goes. Tomorrow you have an interview scheduled at 9 a.m. You are going to go talk about your charity. You are going to keep your PDA down to a minimum. Couples don’t act like this in politics; you need to tone it down and act more professional. I will send you a list of questions and answers and you are to practice them until they sound natural and believable.”

*“Why do we have to memorize them?”*

“You didn’t think politicians actually answered questions that hadn’t been prepared and pre-answered, did you?” When Louis didn’t respond she just let out a chuckle. “How quaint. For a person involved in politics you are so naïve.” And as per usual, she left after a condescending comment.

Gemma caught the door as Isadora walked out and decided to invite herself into our room. “Hello, Louis, Harry, how has your day been?” While she had named both of us she had directed it at Louis.

*“It’s been just fine, thanks,”* Louis responded warily shifting the tiniest bit closer to me on the couch.

She then started off about the importance of charity in politics, and although he was probably questioning her motives, he liked politics too much to turn down her conversation. After a while I couldn’t stand it anymore and took the dogs out for a walk and Zayn came with me.

We walked in amicable silence before Zayn had to go philosophical on me.

“You know whatever Gemma does, it’s not going to work, right?”

**“Intellectually I know that, but she’s done it before.”**

“I figured. But Louis loves you too much. Don’t you ever forget that.”

**“I won’t. I’m just worried about what she’ll pull when her usual tactics don’t work.”**

We went back to the room and Gemma left to get ready for the fancy dinner we had to go to. It was one of those same old black tie events full of schmoozing and trickery.

I held tight to Louis the entire night, and tried to avoid people as much as possible. It was as boring as watching paint dry, but at least Gemma was off schmoozing other people. She couldn’t make an open pass at Louis, so that was a bonus. We were finally allowed to leave when our cheeks hurt from hours of fake smiling and we had listened to hundreds of people congratulate us on our engagement with false sincerity.

We passed out right after we took care of the puppies. Luckily there were no nightmares and I didn’t wake up until Louis nudged me awake just in time for Liam and Zayn to waltz in.

“Rise and shine boys! You’ve got an interview.”

I tried to snuggle back under the covers and into Louis, but, sadly for me, my pillow was obsessed with being punctual. He rubbed his hand down my chest and then twisted my nipple and I jumped up in pain. There was no chance of me going back to sleep any time soon.

I glared at him as I stalked to the bathroom. Liam shouted after me, “You really need to learn the meaning of public decency and wear some clothes! Some of us don’t want to see you in your birthday suit!”

Louis picked out our clothes, as usual. It was nice to still have some sort of a routine, despite us being away from home. We headed out to the television studio with both dogs.

We ran into the interviewer in the hallway at the studio. He instantly went nuts over our doggies. “Aww! They are so cute! Aren’t you boys?”

He finally remembered there were people attached to the leashes and greeted us. “Welcome! I’m Jack, you’re interviewer for today. I believe Gemma’s already here and you’re dressing room is the third room down on the right.”

**“I’m Harry.”** And while I shook his hand Louis added his own introduction, *“And I’m Louis and these two are Apollo and Cerberus.”*

“It’s lovely to meet you all. I have a few last minute preparations to do, but I look forward to the show and we’re on in 15 minutes.” With that he was off.

Soon enough, we were on the set and the camera crew was counting down. 5-4-3-2-1

The first couple of questions were about the charity and Gemma cut in before we could answer any of them. Jack turned to us and caught me whispering reassuring words in Louis’ ear.

“So why did you two get involved in this charity?”

*“I have four younger sisters and my mom is a nurse so I’ve always adored kids and Harry here is just a bit of a softy. We really wanted to take advantage of our travelling to brighten the days of little kids across the country. We ended up with the therapy dogs because we wanted to be more involved than just watching by the sidelines or raising money.”* He added a playful ruffle of my curls when he noticed me blushing about being called soft.

“So Harry, you two are quite the popular topic lately, what with your Father’s big announcement and your engagement scandal. How has your guys’ relationship been doing now that you’re on the road?” I felt Louis’ grip tighten because this wasn’t one of the prearranged questions. I’m sure P.R. would not be too happy about this but it wasn’t like I really cared about Isadora Fontaine’s sanity anyway.

**“We’re still holding strong. We don’t get as much alone time, but we always make time to take care of each other.”** This guy seemed genuinely interested and happy that our relationship was doing well. It probably says a lot about my life that I found that surprising.

“Louis, you’re new to the public eye, how have you been handling everything?” His pause was barely noticeable. It seemed as if my confidence with the divergence from the scripted interview was enough to keep him relatively calm.

*“I was scared at first. Well, not only at first, but Harry’s always there with a few words or a touch or a quick smile that always reassures me and gets me through the chaos.”* He turned to me and gave me his thousand-watt smile and squeezed my hand.

“Now aren’t you two cute? That seems to be all the time we have for the day. Thanks for coming Harry and Louis and Gemma.” There was a slight pause before he said Gemma and I could see her get ticked out of the corner of my eye. We shook hands and they yelled cut. We got out of the studio and had the misfortune of riding back to the hotel with Gemma.

She complained the whole way. “I can’t believe he paid more attention to you guys. It was like he was directly trying to block me out, that jerk. He should know I could bring him viewers. I’m hot, intelligent and smart and he just dismissed me.” And it went on and on. I practically ran out of the car when we got back.

We had to do a last minute sweep of our room and then we were getting on the road to go to the next city. Luckily we got to ride in a different car from her this time. I don’t know if I would have been able to sit in the car and listen to her prattle on for five hours.

~Louis’ POV~

The drive went smoothly enough and we arrived in a decent amount of time. Harry went to walk the dogs while I went to check us in. Before I could make it to the counter, Robin pulled me aside.

“I already checked you in,” he said as he pulled me aside. He gave one key to Liam, for Harry when he came in. He told me to follow him up to his room.

“Please, have a seat Louis.” I had no choice but to follow his instructions.

*“Is something wrong, sir?”* I asked, concerned I had done something wrong.

“Nothing’s wrong, per se, I just wanted to have a nice chat.”

*“Um, okay,”* I said, sounding unsure.

“Well, I’ve come to realize a few things. Harry could have a bright future in politics and you could be a potential help or harm. On the one hand, you have a background in politics and could be a massive help in his future career. But if you do anything to harm his potential by causing a scandal or breaking contract, I will make sure you are blacklisted. Understood?”

*“Y-yes sir. Perfectly understood.”*

“On the other hand, he seems to care for you. If you do anything to break his heart, I will personally cause your downfall.” I gulped audibly at that.

“Now that everything is clear, go get settled in. We have a long day tomorrow.”



I was dismissed and I almost ran out the door. I walked into our room, well more like suite.

**“Hey, Lou!”** Harry greeted and immediately realized something was wrong. He pulled me into his lap on the couch. **“What’s wrong, Boo?”**

*“It’s nothing...”* Harry just gave me that ‘I don’t believe your bullshit’ look.

I sighed and leaned into his chest. *“I just had a talk with Robin.”*

“What did he want?” Liam asked.

*“Oh, you know the usual. Don’t fuck up Harry’s career or I’ll blacklist you.”*

**“I can’t believe he said that.”**

*“Well, you probably won’t believe the other thing he threatened me for. He told me not to break your heart. It was like some teenage movie where the dad threatens the date if they try and pull something.”*

“Well that’s weird” Zayn said.

**“Not helping, Zayn.”** But I laughed at Zayn’s statement anyway.

**“Don’t worry about him, Boo. He doesn’t matter.”** I wasn’t worried too much. If it all worked out, I wouldn’t need to find a new job because I’d have Harry. Ultimately, it wouldn’t matter if I got blacklisted no matter how much it would suck. I just wondered how long until Robin realized Harry was never going into politics...

*“I’m not worried about him. I’m more worried about what Gemma’s planning...”*

## Chapter Fifteen

~Louis' POV~

Our alarm went off and I rolled over to hit the snooze button and flinched when I felt a pain in my stomach. Instead of waking up Harry like normal I just rolled over and curled back into him. I must've squeezed him a little too tight because he woke up.

**"Morning, Babe,"** he mumbled. **"Is it time to get up?"**

I didn't respond and he must've assumed I had fallen back asleep. Soon enough his breath was evening out and he fell back asleep. Twenty minutes later I ran to the bathroom in attempt to make it to the toilet before I threw up.

I was still sitting on the bathroom floor when I heard the tap water turn on and Harry pressed a cool towel to my forehead. He handed me a glass of water so I could rinse my mouth out. I heard Zayn and Liam in the background looking for us

**"Hey Lou, it's gonna be okay."** He just sat with me whispering reassurances for a little bit before Zayn and Liam finally found us in here.

~Harry's POV~

"What's going on?" Liam asked sounding genuinely concerned.

**"I think Lou's sick."**

"Can you get up, Louis?" Zayn asked. He nodded and I helped him up. When he winced in pain, I saw Zayn and Liam share a look of concern. I laid him down in the bed and Zayn went to go take care of the dogs.

"Louis, this is important. How do you feel?"

*"I'm nauseous, and my side really hurts."* Liam pulled me aside and started talking to me in a low voice.

"I think he might have appendicitis. We need to take him to the hospital. If you get him ready, I'll call everyone to let them know you guys won't be coming. Zayn is finding someone to take care of the dogs for the day"

**"Okay."** Now I was worried, but I was trying not to let Louis see it.

I pulled out some of my sweatpants and t-shirts, thinking the loose clothes would be more comfortable.

**"Come on, Lou. You have to sit up so I can get you dressed."**

*"I just want to go back to sleep."* I managed to get him into my clothes by the time Liam walked in to tell us Zayn was out there with the car. I ended up carrying him bridal style while he curled into my neck. He groaned at the movement and it was everything I could do to keep moving instead of laying him down so he wouldn't be in as much pain.

Liam had called ahead, so there was a doctor waiting for us when we got there. They let me go to his room with him while they did a check up.

"What seems to be the problem?" the doctor asked.

**"He has side pain and he was throwing up and I believe he has a fever."**

"Louis, on a scale of one to ten, with ten being you want to cry, how bad does it hurt?"

*"Eight."*

"Where, specifically, does it hurt?"

*"My right lower side."* The doctor started feeling around his abdomen he winced in pain and squeezed my hand tighter. I just wanted to make his pain go away.

"I'm going to go get a nurse to take a blood sample. I'm also going to need a urine sample, and we're also going to have to do a CT scan."

The nurse was in in about five minutes. He went to the bathroom to throw on the robe and donate a urine sample. Then she took his blood.

I couldn't go to the CT with him so I was left to wait in the room and try not to pace a rut in the floor. I sighed in relief when the nurse finally brought him back.

"The doctor will be in soon."

*"Haz"* he slurred. *"You are soooo pretty. You have the cutest curls ever and you purr like a kitten whenever I pet them."* Apparently, while he was gone, they had given him an IV drip and some morphine and the result was him reaching up to stroke my head. The doctor walked in then and Louis immediately turned to him but he didn't stop petting me.

*"Doesn't he have the cutest curls and the prettiest green eyes? He's just like a cute little kitten, don't ya think? Hee hee. He's my little kitten."* I was turning bright red and the doctor chuckled at his antics.

"You must be his fiancé. He was talking about you in the CT." Oh God, I wonder what he said about me. I hope it wasn't too embarrassing.

"It looks like Louis has Appendicitis. We're going to need to remove his appendix. The nurse is going to come in and prep him shortly. I'm going to go in laparoscopically and remove it through a hole in his abdomen. There are some minor risks, but we need to do surgery soon to try and prevent it from rupturing."

**“Okay.”** I didn’t know all that much about Appendicitis except that surgery was the best option. The nurse walked in then so the doctor made to leave.

“See you soon, Louis.”

*“See you soon, Doc! Ha ha, I sound like Bugs Bunny.”*

**“You’re so goofy Lou,”** I said with an added peck to the lips trying to make my tone light and playful. The nurse gushed from behind me. “You two are the cutest couple, ever!”

She came over and added something to his IV and started attaching a heart monitor electrodes to his chest.

*“No offense, but I like boys. More specifically, Harry.”*

She laughed and played along. “I’m sorry Louis, but you can’t fault me for trying,” she added a wink. I just chuckled at his obvious satisfaction.

It wasn’t long until they took him to surgery and I had to go sit out with Liam and Zayn in the waiting room.

“How’s he holding up?” Liam asked.

**“He has appendicitis and they just took him to surgery. Though he seemed to be enjoying his morphine.”**

“I can’t believe I missed that,” Zayn said.

“He will probably be medicated post-op, so you probably haven’t missed it,” Liam added. This is going to get interesting.

I was still anxious about the surgery. I mean they do appendicitis surgeries all the time. He should be fine. But my brain wanted to point out every single outcome that ended in Louis injured, maimed, or dead just to spite me.

After about an hour the doctor came out to tell me he was in post-op and everything had gone just fine during the surgery. He should be up soon and I would be allowed back when he was back in his room. I could finally breathe again.

I was allowed back about twenty minutes later and this time they let Zayn and Liam come with me. The nurse warned us he’d probably be loopy and fall in and out of sleep without warning.

Louis finally woke up and instantly started talking. *“Hey, look! All my boys are here. Don’t tell anyone, but I’m quite partial to Harry over the other two,”* he attempted to whisper to the nurse.

*“Did you know Harry has four nipples? He makes the cutest little mewling sounds if you lick them.”* The boys cracked up laughing and the nurse just gave me an inquisitive look.

“Obviously, we have given him some pain medication. The doctor will come by later to check on him.”

“**Thanks.**” I was glad she was leaving, at least this way I would only be embarrassed in front of Liam and Zayn.

“Mewling sounds?” Zayn asked.

*“Yeah, you know like a kitty cat. He even purrs when you pet his curls.”*

“This is so much fun, minus the whole appendicitis part” Liam pitched in.

“**I’m glad you’re feeling better, Boo.**”

*“You could make me feel oh so much better,”* he said with a wink. I blushed, which I guess I better get used to at the rate he was going.

“Yeah Harry, you could make him feel better,” Liam pitched in. At least I could make fun of Louis later when he came down from the high.

*“Harry, come sit with me. I’m so sleepy, but it’s so hard to sleep without my favorite pillow.”* I knew better than to deny him. He had made room for me so I squished myself next to him. *“You are so pretty, I love you.”* He planted a sloppy kiss on my lips and fell asleep in the middle of it. I moved his head to a more comfortable spot.

“Aww, you’re so purrty Harry,” Liam teased.

“Yeah Harry, you’re my favorite pussy,” Zayn fired off.

“**Shut up!**” I whispered even though his sleep was medicated and I probably wouldn’t wake him but I still didn’t want to take chances—he needed rest.

“Can I please be the one to tell him about it?” Zayn asked and I glared at him.

The doctor came in after about an hour. I scooted out off the bed so he could examine him. Liam and Zayn didn’t really want to stay for this so they went off in search of food.

“The swelling looks about normal. His stitches seem to be doing pretty well. He will probably be able to go home tomorrow.”

“**Thanks,**” I threw out as he walked away to check on other patients.

Louis slept on and off throughout the rest of the day. Eventually visiting hours ended and we had to leave at about 9. The press was waiting outside the hospital for us to come out. They were shoving microphones at me.

“Harry, what’s going on?”

“Where is Louis?”

“Why were you at the hospital today?”

I knew I had to talk to one of them so I found one of the people too afraid to join in the fray.

**“Hello.”**

“Um, hi. Could you please tell me why you were here?”

**“Well, Louis woke up this morning with severe abdominal pain. It turned out he had appendicitis and will, hopefully, be able to leave the hospital soon.”**

She whispered a thank you and I walked off to the car. I sought out the dogs as soon as we got back. I walked them around then took them up to settle them for the night. Liam and Zayn had grabbed us some food, but I had no appetite.

I went to bed and by 1 AM I noticed there was no way I could sleep. I gave up and went into our kitchenette and cuddled up with the dogs. Liam found me there the next morning, passed out and surrounded by two fluffy puppies.

Liam nudged me and told me to go get dressed so we could go back and visit Louis. That woke me up enough to be semi-functional. We dropped off the dogs and went off to the hospital. I was practically bouncing in the car with anxiety.

~Louis' POV~

I woke up a little after Harry left. At least I was drugged up enough so I could still sleep.

The next morning I realized why hospitals suck. I was woken up at 5 am, by a not so happy intern. She did a quick exam asked about my pain and then she was off. I still had four hours until Harry could come back.

Harry was abnormally punctual and was in my room at nine on the dot.

*“Haz! You're here. I missed you so much. No one here is as fun as you are.”*

**“Morning to you too Boo-Bear.”**

*“It's really sad how co-dependent I am. I woke up this morning and could not sleep. Come here.”* He came and sat down. *“You look like hell, Hazza. Is that a tile pattern imprinted on your face?”*

**“Maybe.”**

*“Hazza! Why were you sleeping on the floor? Aww, could my poor Baby not sleep without me? I love you so much.”* It seems I have absolutely no filter. I wonder how long that will last.

*“What's up Doc?”*

“Seems like you're still working on your Bugs Bunny imitation.”

*“Yeah, except I don't actually like carrots...”*

He seemed to turn his attention to Harry. My beautiful beautiful Harry. I was so lucky to snag him.

“Louis’ should be able to go home by lunch time. I’ll come by around eleven to do a final check and go over his meds and how to care for him for until he’s better.”

**“Okay, Thank you again doctor.”**

*“You have such a pretty voice, Hazz. I could just listen to you talk all day. Now come curl up with me already”* I pouted, knowing I would get my way.

Soon enough he cuddled into my side and we both fell asleep. We slept until the doctor evicted him so he could check me out and I could leave. He started giving Harry care instructions.

“No strenuous activity for the next two to four days.”

*“That means no sex, Harry, which sucks because you’re just so tempting.”*

““He can start taking short walks when he feels up to it. Make sure he sleeps whenever he’s tired. He should be completely normal in about four to six weeks. Make sure he doesn’t over work. Food wise, start him on clear liquids and slowly work your way up to normal food. I’ll send in a nurse with the paperwork and you can go.”

*“Yeah, Harry. Go fill out the paperwork so we can go.”*

~Harry’s POV~

“I’m going to give him a prescription for Vicodin. He can take it every four hours as needed and you can also wean him off onto Tylenol when the pain starts to decrease.”

I filled out all the paper work and grabbed all the pamphlets and I held Louis’ hand as they wheeled him out to the car. I helped him into the car and we drove back to the hotel.

Zayn called Robin while Liam was driving. Zayn told Robin we wouldn’t be able to catch up for a while and that we were going to go back home for a bit. This was news to me. Apparently Liam and Zayn had decided this last night and had called and talked to his doctor to make sure it was okay.

I was secretly glad that we were going to go back. I know we were barely into the tour but I still missed home and Niall and his cooking.

I tucked Louis into the back of the car with his head in my lap as we started the six-hour drive back home. We both fell asleep and slept through the whole trip.

We got back at around 6 and I carried him into our house and tucked him into bed. Then I walked and fed the dogs and sent a greeting out to Niall. When I walked back inside, Liam and Zayn were talking about Louis on drugs.

I went into the fridge to try and find him some water or juice he could have. I brought it to him with his pain meds.

**“Hey, Boo. You need to take your meds.”**

*“But they make me sleepy.”*

**“But they also help with the pain.”**

*“Since when did we get home?”*

**“It was about twenty minutes ago.”**

*“Mm. Why?”*

**“So you can get better.”**

*“You know what would make me feel better?”*

**“Hm?”**

*“You. Cuddle, please?”*

There was no way to deny him. I stripped to my boxers and joined him. He instantly attached to my side; despite the fact he had just had surgery. I was surprised at how much I had missed him last night. I was glad to have my Louis right back where he belonged.

I woke up the next morning and went to go get him something to drink and his medication. I grabbed myself some breakfast thinking he could steal some of my food if he was up to it. He was awake by the time I came back in.

**“I grabbed your meds, Lou.”**

*“You didn’t have to. I don’t need them anymore.”*

**“Are you sure about that? I mean you just had surgery.”**

*“I’ll be fine, Babe.”*

**“Okay,”** I said sounding skeptical. **“At least take some Tylenol.”**

*“Fine, but it’s just because you asked.”*

He was so stubborn and he was going to be paying for it later. By noon, I had helped him to walk to the couch so I could keep an eye on him and the dogs. I could tell he was starting to feel the pain, but he was too stubborn to say anything.



I went in search of Liam so I could go walk the dogs. We walked them for about a half an hour. I walked into the house to find Louis looking like he was trying to melt into the couch cushions and Niall and Zayn clutching their sides in laughter.

*“Did I really start talking about how I’m gay when she attached my heart monitor?”*

**“Um...”** *“No!!!! Never let me take painkillers again! Promise me, Harry!”*

**“Well-“** *“Promise me!”*

**“I, Harry Styles, promise not to let you take painkillers ever again.”** Then I added under my breath **“Unless you’re in pain and it will make you feel better.”**

Zayn heard and chuckled under his breath but Louis seemed to miss it. Instead he just asked for an escort to the bathroom, because he was still too sore to move on his own, especially since he had stopped taking the meds.

~Louis’ POV~

I was tired of recovering. I have already been resting for a week. Harry has been great and always caring but I’m soooo bored. I’m tired of sitting around the house. So I decided to remedy that fact.

I managed to get up around seven without waking Harry up. I got dressed and ready and snuck into Zayn’s room. I knew if I went to Liam, he’d tattle on me right away.

*“Zayn. Zayn. Wake up!”* I said as I shook his shoulder.

**“Mm. Go away.”**

*“Wake up!”* He just ignored me, so I did the only thing I could think of.

*“Wet Willie!”*

**“Gah!”** He shouted as he bolted upright.

*“Shh! Get up and get dressed. We’re going to the office.”*

**“But-“**

*“No buts. If you don’t get up, I’m going alone.”*

**“Fine.”**

He got ready and we were out the door in 15 minutes. It was amazing time considering how long he normally takes to do his hair. Then again, he might be worried I was going to leave without him.

The car ride started out quiet, but I knew he was compiling a lecture in his head.

**“So.”**

“So?”

*“Go ahead and start with the lecture.”*

“What lecture?”

*“You know the one where you tell me it’s too early for me to be working and I should have stayed home.”*

“And?”

*“And what about Harry? Oh shit, Harry! What’s going to happen when he wakes up? He’ll understand... I think.”*

“I left a note for Liam.”

*“Oh. Okay.”* I kind of felt guilty but my pride was on the line. I wasn’t going to give in and admit I wasn’t well enough to go, so I kept my mouth shut and so did Zayn.

I made it until about noon until I got really sleepy. I started doing the head bob thing until I fell asleep on the desk

Zayn woke me up with a shake on the shoulder. He didn’t say a word, just gave me a look to say we were going home and I had no say in the matter. I followed obediently, too tired to argue. I must’ve fallen asleep in the car, because I blinked and we were home.

I walked in the door and Harry practically tackled me yet remained mindful of my side.

**“Are you out of your mind?! What did you think you were doing? You’re not well enough for work.”**

*“I’m sorry, Babe.”*

**“You’re sorry? I’ve been worried all morning.”**

*“The pamphlet said I could go back after one week.”*

**“They were talking about younger kids, Lou, like ten years old. They can go back to school not a high stress job!”**

*“Mhm.”*

**“That’s all you have to say?”** He was just frowning a lot and sounded so worried.

*“I’m just so sleepy, Haz.”* His face instantly softened and he went back into caretaker mode.

**“Do you want to nap out here or do you want to go to our room?”**

*“Can we just cuddle on the couch?”*

**“Sure.”** We snuggled in and before I could fall asleep Haz spoke. **“Promise you’re not going to try and go before you’re ready, again.”**

*“I promise,”* though it wasn’t much considering I thought I was ready today, oh well. Thoughts for another day.

I waited another week before going back, this time taking Harry with me. There wasn’t much he could do there, but he insisted on coming especially after last time. That day went fine, I was a little sore and had to leave early but I made it to three this time.

Over the next two weeks I worked up to a full schedule and we finally planned on going back to the tour. Gemma had started calling during these two weeks and keeping me updated on the tour. She also tried having general conversations outside of the topic of politics. She only tried that once. It got awkward and I quickly found a way out of the conversation. I made sure to keep our phone conversations short after that.

I could tell Harry was jealous, but one of us had to keep up with what was going on. I tried to spend extra quality time with him after the conversations and that typically calmed him down. Then we were packing and heading out again to catch up with the rest of the family.

## Chapter Sixteen

~Louis' POV~

We were finally back to the organized chaos that came with the tour. Gemma was being pushier than before we had left. She found more and more reasons to pull me aside and talk to me and do what I believe was flirting, but I wasn't quite sure. I was never quite sure of anything as far as Gemma was concerned.

She even managed to convince Robin to give Harry a day off to focus on his online courses while she and I went to visit a St. Jude's Children's Hospital. I kept a cool face the whole time. I managed to make sure the kids were taken care of and Apollo was being his cuddly self. It was all I could do not to visibly cringe every time she got close.

I just wanted to superglue her hands together so she would learn to keep them to herself. She tried to hug a poor kid for the camera and the kid was not happy at all. As soon as she let go, he bolted off to hide with Apollo. I wished I could join him.

When we went to the hotel, she insisted on walking me to Harry's and my room. Harry wasn't there; he was probably walking the puppy. She decided to invite herself in in the meantime. I sat on the couch and she sat a little too close for comfort.

"So Louis."

"Yes?" I said apprehensively.

"So I've been thinking." That's not a good sign.

"I've seen the way you look at me lately and it's okay to have a crush on me."

"What?!"

"Shh," she said putting her hand over my mouth.

"It's perfectly normal, there's no reason to be ashamed. I mean I can't blame you. Most guys fall for me eventually. It was only a matter of time until you got tired of Harry I mean, really." I tried to protest but her stupid fucking, sickly sweet smelling hand was in the way. The bitch decided that that was an agreement and kept going on with her speech.

"I mean I knew from the first moment I saw you, that you weren't really gay. I know how guys put on an act to become unattainable in order to attract girls attention." She leaned closer. Too close. I was cornered with nowhere to go.

She moved her hand and smashed her mouth to mine as I heard the lock click to let Harry in. She waited for him to let out an audible gasp and then popped off me to prance out the door, thinking she won. Harry waited until she was out the door.

"**Lou?**" He asked in a voice that was almost heartbreaking in its softness.

*“Hazz- “*

**“It’s fine. I understand,”** he said as his eyes started to leak with tears.

*“No, Hazz! Don’t do this! Don’t let her get to you. I’m not like the others, I swear. I don’t want her too squishy curves or her over all nastiness. I just want you, Babe. Please believe me.”*

**“Mk, Lou.”** He said and gave me a hug. I could tell he didn’t believe me but I had no choice but to let him work it out for himself. Plus we had to get ready for another banquet. It was going to be another long night of champagne and suits and posh rich people with trophy wives. Today was going to get even worse.

We were riding in silence the whole way, earlier still pressing heavily on our minds. Harry was still hurt and I was too pissed to be able to do more than seethe in my misery. I was going to get her one of these days.

We arrived in usual fashion except with less sincere smiles, not that anyone noticed. We also had this awkward space between each other that I just didn’t know how to fill. I went off to grab us drinks and got pulled away in the madness.

Gemma managed to sneak up and snag me mid-transit. We were in public so there was nothing I could do besides act like the friendly future brother in law. She decided to drag me around to all of her snotty friends who only wanted her for the connections. Little did they realize that she was using them probably more than they were attempting to use her.

I tried to get away, but every time she would come up with a new excuse to keep me around. She finally tried to drag me off somewhere quiet and I was practically fuming, but she didn’t notice at all.

She pulled the door shut and exhaled a Louis. “So what do you want to do?” she said with an eye waggle. “No one can hear us, we can do whatever you like.”

*“You know what I’d like?”*

“Tell me,” she breathed in an attempt at seduction.

*“I would like you to...” “Yes?”*

*“Leave me the FUCK ALONE!”* She jumped back startled.

*“I can’t believe you actually thought I wanted to have sex with you. Honestly, you have all the wrong equipment. You are so fucking arrogant to believe every fucking man you’ve ever met instantly falls head over heels over you. I mean really?*

*I know politicians have inflated egos, but your balloon should have burst by now. I will never like you. I will never love anyone but Harry. Why can’t you let us be happy? Better yet, why can’t you ever let him be happy? I mean he’s your brother. You should want what’s good for him, not to ruin his life at every possible turn. He hates you. I hate you. Ha! I can finally*

*admit it. I hate you more than I probably should. Who cares? I have my love and that's all I need.*

*What do you have Gemma?"*

*"I have my integrity."*

*"By stealing peoples boyfriends."*

*"I have my looks."*

*"Which will fade over time."*

*"I have more money than you will ever make."*

*"More like your dad's money."*

*"Money's money, Louis."*

*"You just don't get it. Money doesn't mean shit if you aren't happy. The poorest people in the world could be happier than you if they have someone they cherish. If Robin lost his money or divorced your mom, all your money would disappear. What would you have then, Gemma?"*

*"Well, I, uh-"*

*"Exactly. So back off. I am tired of your shit. If I go down, I will not hesitate to take you with me."*

*"We'll see..."* she said as I walked out the door. That was not a good sign. She gave up way too easily. I had to find Harry.

~Harry's POV~

I can't believe Gemma tried it again. I don't understand how she timed it so perfectly. I mean every fucking time I'm always there to see the worst.

I knew somewhere that Louis didn't want it and probably didn't have much of a say in the matter. Another part of me thought maybe she could give me an out. But that was stupid because we loved each other and that's all we need so who gives a fuck about the rest of the world.

Louis' been gone for a while, which never bodes well for my sanity, especially when Gemma is toting him and hanging on his arm like he belongs to her. But there's something else that endangers my sanity and it just clung to my arm. Paige.

"Hey Harry!" she greeted.

**"Hello, Paige,"** I returned.

“Oh my gosh! I’m so glad I finally found you.” Of course there was never a sober moment for her.

“I’ve been searching for you all night. When I heard you’d be back on the market soon, I couldn’t resist coming to see you.”

**“What are you talking about?”**

“I heard you and Louis were breaking up. I was like ‘oh my gosh we’d be the best couple ever.’”

**“But I’m gay.”**

“I know that was just a total joke to mess with your dad, but think about the future. We could go around the world, a new country every couple of days. At the end you could propose or we could get married in various different styles as we travel everywhere. I’m so excited! I can’t wait to start planning!”

**“I’m still engaged. To Louis. Whom I am totally gay for.”**

“I know it was just a rebellious phase, but now you can come back to reality. You can come back to me and we can live happily ever after in a big castle. You can be my knight in shining armor. We could run off into the sunset.”

**“You’re delusional.”**

“What?”

**“You. Are. Delusional.”**

“But you shouldn’t say mean things. We’re each other’s love of our lives.”

Louis came and wrapped an arm around me.

*“You were saying?”*

“Me and Harry are meant to be together. You should just bow out gracefully now and save him the trouble.”

*“Are you off your rocker?”*

“Absolutely not. Bow out gracefully now and you can be invited to our wedding.”

He turned to me. *“Did she really just say that to me?”*

**“C’mon, Lou. Let’s just get out of here.”** I was too tired to watch them squabble. I was too tired to do much of anything. Louis seemed to sense that because he didn’t press and walked with me out to the car so we could go. Robin would probably be mad at our early departure, but the press would probably just assume we were leaving so we could go fuck, so we’d still be maintaining our cover.

I know I should have tried to say something, but I was just tired. I was sad. It sucked that these kinds of people lived in the world. I just wanted to sleep and have some time to think.

Apparently that time wouldn't come, because I slept as soon as we got there and then we were being ushered to a press conference the next morning. It was absolutely awful.

We had to listen to them gossip around us while everything was being set up. We had to listen to them discuss our relationship like they knew everything. Knew us. We had to listen to them judge and piss over something they could only wish they could have.

The journalists were overly invasive, even more than normal. They were questioning what we did last night and asking about hickeys that were a couple of days old, but we had forgotten to cover up in our tired haze this morning. It was awkward and invasive and all we could do was smile and answer as coyly as possible.

We had to pretend that everything was perfectly fine. We had to pretend to be a perfect family. We had to smile and laugh at the perfect moment. We had to hold back on the flirting so we wouldn't appear 'obscene.' We had to answer every inappropriate question that came our way.

I had to pretend Gemma wasn't trying to steal my fiancé. I had to pretend she wasn't trying to steal the love of my life. I had to pretend she didn't sick Paige on me as a distraction so she could parade around with Louis. I had to pretend she wasn't trying to keep me from my happiness. I had to pretend Robin cared about my well-being. I had to pretend that I gave two shits about this campaign.

I had to pretend.

That says it all right there. I have to pretend. But Louis shouldn't have to.

~Louis' POV~

Something was off. Harry was still being quiet. We were back in the hotel room after the press conference and had retrieved our dogs and gotten them settled down.

It was way too quiet.

It was the calm before the storm.

There was an electrical charge in the air and all you can do is wait for the lightning to strike.

**"Louis?"**

*"Yes, Haz?"* I'm scared. I'm so fucking scared, but I can't do anything but wait.

**"We need to break up."**

*"What!? But why?"* I knew this would be bad but I never thought he'd go that far. I could talk him out of this though. I hope.



**“I just can’t do this anymore. I can’t put this all on you. The invasive questions. The bitchy sister. The controlling stepfather. The cameras. The mobs. The stupid fuckers who never understand. The high-class pricks who stare down at you. You shouldn’t have to deal with this.”**

*“I signed up for this! You can’t blame it on yourself; it was my choice.”* I tried to reach out for his arm, to comfort him, but when he saw what I was doing he immediately stepped back. He didn’t want to lose eye contact—he was trying to prove to me that this was the best solution.

**“No, Lou. It wasn’t your choice. It was Robin’s. You didn’t know what you were getting into. He only showed you a piece of what you were going to be involved in. It was the equivalent of trying to see a picture of a thousand piece puzzle from only one piece.”**

*“I don’t care. I have you.”*

**“But that’s not enough.”**

*“Yes it is! It is enough!”* Somewhere I had lost my calming down and my voice was quickly rising in pitch.

**“It shouldn’t be. I’m not enough. I don’t matter. I’m not worth watching your life being shit on a daily basis. You don’t deserve the shit that happens all the time. You can still get out.”**

*“But I don’t want out! Listen to me! I want you! Hazza, I need you!”*

**“No Lou, you don’t. You think you do but it’s better if we split now.”** He wasn’t fucking listening to me!

*“How is it better if it’s splitting my heart in two?”* Everything was spinning and blurry and I was becoming disoriented. My world was caving in and all I could do was hold on.

**“Trust me. It will be better in the long run.”**

*“No! NO! I don’t believe you! I won’t believe you!”* I was probably screeching like a banshee by then but I needed him to hear me. I needed him to...I need him. Nothing else. I need my Hazza and only my Hazza. Nothing else matters.

**“You don’t have to. But it still has to be done.”**

He walked out the front door to walk the dogs. I ran to the bed and flopped down. I pulled the pillow close to me. It still smelled like Haz and all I could do was cry into it. It wasn’t fair for him to do this. It was my decision to come into this relationship just as much as his. It wasn’t his place to decide what’s best for me.

Yeah this has been a pretty shit weak, but that doesn’t mean we should break up because the times are tough. Besides, how are we supposed to continue on? I’ve signed a contract. I need this. We’re going to have to keep going through this anyway because there is no way Robin’s going to let me out now that the tour has started.

How am I supposed to deal with him everyday, while he's forcing me away? How can I keep up a smile when everything's crumbling inside of me because he's no longer there? How am I supposed to survive as just Harry and Louis instead of *HarryandLouis*? The one continuous word that is the only way to describe us. How am I supposed to survive without my missing piece?

Living without him would be like a house without a foundation. A car without an engine. A canvas without a painting. A solar system minus the sun. How could a person survive when they are incomplete?

I was outright sobbing at this point. Full crocodile tears that were completely soaking the pillows. I cried and cried until I passed out somewhere between one wrenching sob and the next.

~Harry's POV~

It had to be done. This was the only way to save Louis. He didn't deserve the pain of being in the spotlight. He deserved to go home and find some-someone who could make him happy in a quiet life that is peaceful with no intrusive people trying to trip him up. I'll figure something out with Robin to void the contract. A good politician is up for a trade right? One soul for another.

Though I wouldn't really be trading a soul, more like an empty pit where my soul would be. Louis would have it. It belongs to him now. It has for a while actually. He deserved to keep it. He deserved the world. He deserved so much more than I could give him. I had been honest. I was never going to be good enough for him. The sooner he realized this, the sooner he could be truly happy.

One thing was true. Wherever he went from here, he was taking my heart with him. He deserved better, but there was no room for happiness in the world I lived in.

I came back with the dogs and it took everything I had not to go back to him.

I had to keep reminding myself it was better this way. I curled up on the couch and stared at the ceiling hoping the blackness of sleep would take over and relieve the ache for a little while.

## Chapter Seventeen

~Louis' POV~

I woke up feeling like Hell. It was weird. I know it wasn't a hangover but I didn't feel right... Harry.

One word. One name. Enough to bring me back to tears. I can't cry. I have to get up. I have to get ready. I don't want to look like hell in front of the cameras, despite the fact I feel empty inside.

Maybe, just maybe, he's changed his mind. I hope so. There's no other alternative. I got up, showered, dressed and picked out clothes for Harry. I walked into the living room and found him on the couch.

*"Wake up."*

**"Huh, uh what?"**

*"Wake up. There are clothes for you laid out on the bed. I'm going to go walk the dogs."*

**"Thanks, B-B-Bud."** That hurt. It was like he was going to reach out for me but he stopped. He's pulling away. Why won't he let me back in?

*"C'mon, Apollo, Cerberus. Let's go for a nice long walk."* I could sure use one. If he didn't want me here, there was no reason to stick around while he changed. It would just be temptation. So close I could touch him, but so closed off that there was no way I could try.

~Harry's POV~

It was so hard to push him away this morning. All I wanted to do was drag him back, close to me. But I can't. It has to be this way. He'll be better off. That's what I have to keep telling myself.

It took me three tries to get dressed. I kept stopping to take in the scent that was Louis. I wanted to steal his clothes and curl up in them, but I can't. I wanted to curl in the pillow and wait for Louis to return and his warmth to surround me. I have to keep moving, though. I have to make sure to keep my distance.

I was sitting back in the living room when Zayn and Liam made an appearance.

"Ha ha! I remember that. And then Harry tried to go over the banister." Liam said. They were talking about an old story from about two years ago. It involved a not so sober me trying to escape an extremely not sober Paige. It made last night sting even more.

They instantly ceased laughing when they took in my not so bright and sunny exterior. I didn't have the energy to keep up the façade in front of them.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” Liam asked. Always the caring one. The first one to try and comfort when something went wrong.

**“It’s-It’s-It’s-“\*sniff\***

“Just spit it out.” Zayn said.

**“I just-You see-I had to-I broke up with Louis.”**

“WHAT!?” they screamed simultaneously. “WHY?!”

**“It had to be done. For Louis’ sake.”**

“That’s bullshit, Harry, and you know it,” Zayn said in a harsh tone.

**“No it’s not. You have to listen to me. Louis doesn’t have to be in the spotlight. He doesn’t have to deal with all this crap. He deserves to be happy.”**

“Dude, you’re insane if you think he’ll be happy without you” Liam said. None of them understood. He may be happy now but I wouldn’t always be enough. When he realized that, it would be too late to break things off. I had to do this for him now.

**“I don’t care what you have to say. I just need to talk to Robin about getting Louis out of the contract.”**

“You know he’ll never go for that,” Liam added.

**“He will if I make a deal with him. I’ll go into politics. He can train me up how he wants and Louis can go free.”**

“But-“ Liam started.

**“No buts. It’s got to happen.”**

Louis walked in and we immediately shut up.

**“Are you ready?”** Before he could respond I said, **“Let’s go.”**

We didn’t have to do much. We just had to sit and look pretty on the stage while Robin gave another speech. I don’t think I had the energy to do much more than that. When we got there, Louis got a phone call and walked off so I walked off with the dogs. The car ride had been awkward. Nobody had been able to speak in the car so it had been completely silent. I had no choice to think over our happy moments and realize they were gone.

Then I started to realize all the shit he’d been through the past few months. He deserved more and the only thing holding me together was the fact I knew he would be better off. He could still get away. I never could.

~Louis’ POV~

I was going to go get ready to be on stage when my phone went off. It was my mother, why was she calling me?

*“Hello?”*

“Hey, honey. I need to ask you about something.”

*“What’s going on, Mom?”*

“I got an envelope today.”

*“And?”*

“Inside was a contract with yours and Harry’s signature. Is there something you want to tell me?”

*“No. Nonononono. Crap! You weren’t supposed to find out. It was supposed to stay confidential. It shouldn’t have gotten out. Why? Who would... Gemma. Gemma must have sent it.”* I knew she wasn’t done with me but I never expected this. There is no longer a doubt in my mind that she has no heart.

“What’s going on, sweetie?”

*“Well, you see. Uh...”* I don’t know how to explain this. Everything is so fucked up. Where do I even start?

“Honey?”

*“Yes?”*

“Do you love him?”

*“Of course.”* I tried to keep the pain out of my voice but everything felt so raw.

“Then whatever Gemma sent me doesn’t matter.” I wasn’t expecting blank acceptance.

*“Wait, so you don’t care that I signed a contract to get married to Harry to help Robin’s campaign?”*

“I’m a little annoyed that you didn’t tell me yourself, but as long as you’re happy it doesn’t matter. Relationships have a weird way of beginning. I’m just glad you two found each other.”

I ran into a dressing room and started bawling again. It was so sweet and endearing and entirely ill timed. I guess that was the point. Stupid Gemma.

“Honey, what’s wrong?”

*“You don’t get it, Mom.”*

“What don’t I understand, Sweetie?”

*"I don't have him anymore. He broke up with me."*

"But you two are the cutest couple."

*"That's the worst part. He's not dumping me because we had a fight, or because there's something wrong with our relationship. He broke it off so I wouldn't have to face the press."*

"But you're under contract." I'm glad this wasn't making any sense to her either.

*"I know. Which is why instead of enjoying our spare moments together we now sit in awkwardness and pain. It doesn't make sense."*

"He's just trying to take care of you. He may be extremely misguided, but it just shows how much he loves you to try and let you go."

*"You're not helping, Mom."*

"I know. But that means there's hope for you two to get back together."

*"Okay."*

"Just keep with it. He'll only last so long." He seemed pretty determined to last forever...

*"Okay, I love you."*

"Love you too."

*"Bye." \*click\**

I turned around to see Zayn standing there.

*"How long have you been here?"*

"Long enough. You should know he's going to go and try to get you out of the contract."

*"But that's impossible! How?"*

"He wants to trade himself for you; figuratively speaking of course. He wants to commit to politics so you can get out."

*"No. He can't do that! He hates politics! It would be his own personal Hell! Plus he'd be all alone..."*

"That's why I'm telling you. You need to come up with a plan to stop him." He just stared at me with a mixture of pleading and worry as I processed what he was saying.

*"I have an idea. It would only be temporary, but instead of getting him time with Robin, I need to talk to Robin. You have to keep him away from Robin at all costs."*

"Okay. I'll see what I can do."

The speech was normal. Our behavior was anything but normal. We were stiff and awkward. Everything was tentative. There was this giant thick line that we knew existed but we weren't quite sure where the line was. We probably looked like a typical politician couple.

The plastered smiles in front of the cameras. The carefully maintained distance that was close enough to imply relationship but far enough to discourage intimacy. Isadora would be so proud.

After the speech, Harry practically ran to go walk the dogs, while I snuck off to find Robin.

*"Hey! Robin!"* He insisted I call him Robin in public because it looked more family like.

"Hi, Louis. What's going on?"

*"Um, you see. I was wondering if we could head home tomorrow so Harry could concentrate on studying for his midterms."* He studied my face for a bit.

"That's reasonable, I guess. You can have one week and one week only."

*"Thanks."* Now I just had to get us back home before Harry found his way to Robin as well.

"Is there anything else I should know about?"

*"Uh. No, Sir. Absolutely nothing to worry about."* That didn't sound convincing to my own years, there was no way he bought it.

"Okay. Safe travels." I know he wanted to say more but as long as we were still behaving like a couple I don't think he wanted to interfere.

We went back to the hotel and packed. Harry had seemed a bit confused but Liam and Zayn made it out to be this big rush to beat traffic or something so he had no chance to argue. Then we were in the car and Harry instantly fell asleep.

He probably didn't get much sleep last night on the couch. I know I didn't. His sleep was fitful and I wanted to reach over and calm him. I didn't right away but I couldn't put up with his whimpering much longer before I would start crying again. He had restless nights sometimes so I knew how to soothe him without waking him up. But I was still tentative when I reached over to brush my fingers right above his knee.

When he didn't react I began to softly draw little shapes onto his leg. Almost immediately he sighed and stopped fidgeting. I kept up my doodling for another fifteen minutes until I was sure he was in a deep enough sleep to stay calm and then moved back to my original position so he would never know.

Zayn caught my eye in the rear view mirror and I knew I had been caught. Instead of saying something he just tried to give me an encouraging smile. At least Zayn still trusted me to take care of Harry despite the current situation.

He slept the whole trip and I bolted out with the dogs as soon as the car stopped. I hadn't told him we were heading home, though I don't know if it could be called that anymore. Nowhere

was home when we were apart.

I detached the dogs from the leash and headed straight for our room. But I couldn't turn the handle. I couldn't go inside. There were too many happy memories that I didn't want to taint. I headed for a guest room and Niall followed me.

"What's going on mate? You weren't supposed to be home for a while."

*"He dumped me, Niall."* That wasn't the answer to his question which is what I had meant to say.

\*Silence\*

*"He said my life would be better without him so we should break up."* I apparently was no longer in control of my vocal functions.

\*Silence\*

*"He was going to go to Robin to get him to let me out of the contract and sell his soul to the Devil, so I had to get Robin to let us come back so he couldn't ruin his life."*

\*Silence\*

*"Niall! Are you even listening?"*

"Um-yeah. I just. How am I supposed to respond?"

*"You're supposed to tell me he's an idiot. Or say something like he'll come around soon enough. It's just been a shit week. I need you to be my friend."*

"Ok... Are you being serious about the break-up?"

*"Yes, I'm being completely serious, Niall! He dumped me and I didn't want him to break the contract so I told Robin we needed to come home so he could study!"*

"Wow."

*"Is that all you have to say?"* I was getting angry by this point. Angry was good. It felt better than sadness. Rage burned and kept me warm while sadness left me cold and listless.

"Well, it's just unbelievable. I mean you two are so perfect together. I mean I visibly gag around you sometimes you radiate love and gushy feelings that much. So I'm just confused as to why you two 'broke up.'"

*"Exactly! He's under some misguided belief that I'll be better off without him. He thinks I can't handle the pressure of being in politics. It's ridiculous."*

"It is but they say those in love are blind."

*"Really, Niall? Really?"* I love him but he's never been good with this kind of stuff.



“I’m sorry. You should get some sleep. Yeah? Maybe things will be better once he’s relaxed at home.” I was probably getting snippy and crabby from lack of sleep. I guess I should take his advice.

*“Okay. Night, Niall.”*

“Night, Louis.”

~Harry’s POV~

I woke up with a chink in my neck and realized we were home. That was weird; I thought we were heading somewhere else. I walked in expecting to see Lou on the couch and he wasn’t there. I must’ve had a puzzled look on my face, because Niall told me he had gone to bed.

I thought it was a good idea. I was exhausted. I had barely gotten a solid hour of sleep last night and while the car had been strangely better, I still felt like I could sleep for several days.

I jumped on our bed expecting to startle a very cute boy. Instead, I found a cold and empty mattress, devoid of said fringed cutie.

Then I remembered we weren’t together. That meant no sharing beds or cuddles late at night. I really needed to stop forgetting that. I didn’t want to be here anymore. I went down the hall to hide in a guest room. I could feel the others’ gazes on my back. It was better this way.

I went to bed hoping to find relief in the darkness of sleep. Instead I dreamt of a lonely future in politics where I was a puppet and Robin and Gemma were manipulating my strings.

Louis had been right about one thing. I need to study. One problem: he’s a major distraction. I can’t study because I keep looking at him and when I turn away I can feel his gaze on me.

I want him. I want to give in to temptation. I can’t. ‘But why?’ a little voice inside of me asks. I almost agree with it, until I remember the Hell we went through this week. I’ve got to keep holding back.

I tried to continue working. I swear I’ve read this line twenty times. I can’t fucking take it anymore.

**“Louis, you need to go somewhere. I can’t study. I can’t concentrate. I’ve read the same question 20 times.”**

*“Fine. If I’m not wanted here, then I’m going to the office.”* I turned away before he could see the wince on my face and before I could see the pain in his eyes.

He stormed out, taking Zayn with him. Maybe I could finally get something done.

I got almost too much work done. At this rate I was going to run out of things to do before my break was over. Then I would have to face Louis. No. Better to find more to do.

Louis stayed at the office so late I had long since given up on productivity and went to bed. At this rate I wouldn’t have to worry about facing him because he’s never going to be home.

~Zayn's POV~

I went with Louis to work and watched him completely throw himself into what he was working on. If this doesn't end soon, he's going to work himself to death. Harry needs to get his shit together.

Louis is spending way too much time working and not enough time eating or even drinking water for that matter. This wasn't good for his health, especially since he may or may not be fully recovered from his appendicitis.

I had to practically force Louis back to the house hours after the sun had gone down. Harry was already asleep, because a certain someone wouldn't leave and it was really late. I guess that had been Louis' goal.

I ordered him to eat something and drink a couple of glasses of water before sending him off to bed. We had to do something. Louis' health will suffer if they keep this up.

I pulled Liam and Niall into the living room.

**"What did I miss today?"** I asked.

"Harry worked all day. I mean all day. He was more studious than I have ever seen him before. Luckily Niall's cooking is tempting so he stopped for food breaks. What about Louis?" Liam answered.

**"About the same except I couldn't get him to leave his desk except for bathroom breaks. He didn't eat anything until I made him eat when he got back. We need to do something."**

*"Agreed"* Niall said.

"I'm in." Liam looked determined which was always a good sign because Liam gets shit done.

**"We need a plan. We have to force them in a room together. Alone. Harry's already started cracking, but he won't give in unless there's no one else around. We're going to have to get him to the office because there's no way Louis' going to be staying home after Harry practically threw him out today. He's a workaholic, especially now that he has no reason to go home."**

*"We could tell Harry Robin wants to see him."*

"But Robin's not here to call him in."

*"Oh."*

"We could tell him they want his help with the campaign designs."

*"There's no way he'll buy that. We could tell him Louis wants him."*

“But that won’t get them in a secluded location.”

*“How can we even get him out of the house? He was working ridiculously hard today.”*

“I still think he’d be easier to move than Louis.”

We just sat there in silence for a while.

**“Guys, I have a plan...”**

## Chapter Eighteen

~Louis' POV~

I didn't even bother to wait for Harry to tell me to head out. I was gone before he made it out of bed. Zayn accompanied me again, like an ever-present shadow. It didn't matter though. Soon enough I was lost again in my work. Rodger gave me a look, but I ignored him.

My projects never judged me. They never made stupid, rash decisions. Work was a safe zone.

Zayn made me eat lunch. He pulled my roller chair to the break room and wouldn't let me go back until I ate or drank something. Afterward, he still wouldn't let me go.

*"What do you want, Zayn?"*

"Nothing. Robin just asked me to tell you he wants you to retrieve a document from his desk."

*"What kind of document?"* I was wary of his request.

"Here's the details," he said as he handed me a sheet of paper. It looked official enough so I went to Robin's office to start searching. I started with his filing cabinet and sighed. He has a shit load of documents in here.

~Harry's POV~

I woke up and moved to the living room to get working again. I made some solid progress until about lunchtime when Niall snagged my computer, forcing me to stop for a lunch break.

Liam got a phone call and walked into another room to talk. He came back out and started talking to me.

"That was the P.R. team and they need you to come to the office."

**"Okay."**

"That means go get dressed so we can head out."

**"Fine, fine. I'm going,"** I grumbled as I stalked off to go get ready. What could they possibly want from me this time?

I sulked the whole way in the car. Not only was I going to have to face the team of hellions, I was also going to have to pretend me and Louis' relationship wasn't completely falling apart.

We were walking down the hall when Liam pulled open the door to Robin's office.

**"What's going on?"**

"I just need to grab something." I didn't care enough to argue. I got to the doorway and felt Liam shove me in and slam the door closed behind me.

**"What the fuck?"** I turned around to walk out and the door had been jammed shut. I wondered why. Then I saw Louis as he shut the filing cabinet he was looking through. He must have heard the door slam shut.

*"I guess this paper hunt is a fool's quest."*

**"Probably."** This was getting awkward and it hadn't even started.

We both kind of awkwardly stood there, not really knowing how to act. I have to keep us apart. For his sake. I have to stay back. I have to stay away.

I must not focus on his hot, curvy ass. Or, or his perfectly messed fringe. Or the bags under his eyes that were probably my fault. Or his beautiful blue eyes that weren't quite as full of mirth as they used to be. Those eyes get me every time. Fuck it.

**"You're right. I am an idiot."**

*"And?"* His eyes didn't soften and he kept his arms crossed over his chest. It was physically painful how defensive he looked as if he needed to protect himself from me.

**"You're not going to make it easy on me are you?"** I had to look down because the sight of him was too painful now that I was giving in and I still couldn't hold him.

*"Why should I? I mean, I've spent the last couple of days alone in misery. I couldn't be in the same room without you trying to throw me out. Those days may have been hell on the tour. I understand that everything was sort of collapsing at once but we didn't have to. We were supposed to give each other comfort and tell each other it will get all better. You took away my stress relief. You took away my outlet. You took away everything I had."*

**"I'm sorry."** I didn't deserve for him to forgive me at all. Everything he said was right.

*"You're sorry?! Really that's it? You've spent the past couple of days in denial because of some idiotic notion that I can't handle myself. That I can't handle Gemma. Most of all you assumed you weren't enough. Harry, you're all I need to be happy. I know that's hard for you to believe but you should have trusted me to decide. No matter where we end up, there's always going to be ups and downs. You can't back out because of the bad times. You can't have pure joy without some sadness."*

**"I know."** He so fucking right though and now I've screwed it all up and he probably won't take me back because I have hurt him and he doesn't trust me not to do it again.

*"Really? You know. If you know so well why the fuck did you dump me? I mean seriously, is this how you always act. Something gets too hard or scary so you just run away?"*

**"I guess yeah. I just never had anything to run towards before."** I said softly as I tried to open up for once in my life.

**“I just really miss you, Lou. I can’t sleep. I can barely focus. I search out your scent in the house. We’re miserable without each other. I want to come back home, to you. I don’t deserve another chance. Hell, I still don’t think I was good enough to be with you in the first place but I don’t know how to be without you anymore. I..I thought I was strong enough to do this. I honestly thought this would be best for you. But I can see I was wrong and I know I hurt you. Is there any way that you can trust I won’t leave again?”**

*“Why should I? It’s not that simple Harry, I mean it’s hard to feel you drift away so it’s down-right torture when you’re just...gone. It hurts because you’re taking pieces of me with you. If you don’t bring them back I will never be the same. I will never be okay.”* He had dropped his arms by this point and was rocking back and forth just a bit on his feet. I didn’t want to be hopeful but some part of my mind kept saying that he looked like he wanted to hug me and just say fuck it.

**“I know”** I said it softly in some attempt not to startled him as I took a hesitant step forward. **“I feel like what makes me *me* has been gone the past couple of days.”** Another step. He noticed my movement this time but didn’t react. **“I haven’t been sleeping, I’ve barely been eating, and everything has been painful because you’ve been gone and it’s even worse because it’s mine own fucking fault but I can’t lose you.”** I can tell he’s trying not to cry but the tears are starting to slip out of his eyes. All I want to do is take the last few steps and wipe the tears off his cheeks but I don’t think he’s forgiven me yet...**“I can’t lose you”** I started singing.

**“When you’re gone, the pieces of my heart are missing you**

**When you’re gone, the face I came to know is missin’ too**

**When you’re gone, all the words I need to hear to always get me through the day and make it okay**

**I miss you”**

*“Avril Lavigne, Haz, really?”* He let out the most pitiful laugh I had ever heard but I just needed him to stop crying.

**“I thought it suited the moment.”** I took another step forward.

[MH1] *“You’re a nutcase.”* He was actually smiling now and took the smallest step towards me. I could still see the tear tracks on his face.

**“But I’m you’re nutcase,”** I said as I took the last few steps over to him and wrapped my arms behind his back.

**“Plus,”** I said pressing a kiss to his neck. **“I’m really good at,”** I pressed a kiss to the other side of his neck. **“This.”**

And then my mouth was on his and our bodies were slotting together perfectly as if we had never split apart. I belong here. Kissing the boy I love. Safe in his warm embrace. I’m an

idiot for trying to deny that.

Louis' tongue swiped against my lips, seeking permission, which I immediately gave. I should be concerned that we weren't at home, possible even more concerned because we were in Robin's office, but then his hands found my nipples through my shirt and all thoughts were gone.

~Louis' POV~

It still hurt a lot to know that he had thought he could walk away but we could have that discussion later. It was really hard to concentrate on anything when I felt him hardening again my thigh. It had only been a few days but the sudden flood of sensation was so overwhelmingly Harry that my breathing was haggard and my cock was quickly becoming painful in my jeans.

I turned him around and pushed him back against the filing cabinets I had been wasting time on earlier. I pushed my hips forward for added friction and we simultaneously moaned into each other's mouths. Harry's hands moved down my back to my hips where they grazed at the skin underneath my shirt before continuing on to grab my ass and pulling me harder into him. I gasped as the feeling of his erection combined with his hands kneading motion caused me to break our kiss. He instantly moved his mouth across my jaw line and onto my neck. I tilted my head back so that he could have better access to the spot he was focusing his attention on.

While he was busy redecorating my collarbones, I moved my hands down his chest unbuttoning his shirt. I didn't want to pull back from his lips so it was harder than usual to unclasp all the buttons when we were pressed so tightly together. Eventually though my need to feel his bare skin against mine had me pushing his back to the cabinet again to finish my task. As he slipped his arms out of his sleeves I quickly pulled my shirt over my head as well.

~Harry's POV~

After we had our shirts off Louis went to trap me again but before he could I reattached our lips and moved him over toward Robin's desk. Putting my hands back on his ass I lifted him up onto the surface and he wrapped his legs around my hips. I ground down into his crotch eliciting an absolutely pornographic moan that shot heat straight to my groin.

**"Lou, can you..."** It was taking me a while to get my words out between kisses and my racing breath but he must have figured out what I wanted because unwrapped his legs and stood up. He moved his hands to the button on my jeans and after undoing the zipper as well stepped back to take his own pants off. I quickly did the same. When I returned my gaze to him he was giving me a look I wasn't sure how to interpret but it spread warmth through my entire body.

*"Are you still trying to earn my forgiveness, Hazza, because there is definitely something you could do to win my favor"* His intention was punctuated by the shifting of his eyes from mine to my mouth.

I immediately guided him back to the edge of the desk and dropped down to my knees. He tangled his fingers into my curls as I started pressing wet kisses to his inner thighs. I made my way up to his dick slowly earning gloriously frustrated moans. Eventually neither of us could take much more of the teasing and I licked slowly up the underside of his erection before taking the head into my mouth.

*“So good, baby. Your mouth is so good.”* His tone was delicious and raspy and that alone had me moaning around him. He tightened his fingers in my hair as a response pushing me down just enough so I got his meaning. I quickly took as much of him into my as I could working my hand on what I couldn’t reach. When I felt the muscles in his thighs started to shake ever so slightly and his moans had grown to a possibly disruptive volume I pulled off suddenly and completely and surged up to press our lips together and swallow his protests. I didn’t kiss him long though before I pulled off and nuzzled my nose against his cheek so I could whisper in his ear.

**“Didn’t want you to come, yet. I want to feel you inside of me. Please, baby, I need you inside of me.”**

I had barely gotten the words out when he let out a sort of growl and spun me around to bend over the desk.

~Louis’ POV~

I had been so close to slipping over the edge when Harry pulled his mouth off of me so I was more than ready to reach my release but I needed to prep him first. With one hand on his hip, I put my other against his mouth so he could suck my fingers. Once they were well lubricated with his spit, I bent him forward and gently pressed my first finger into his entrance. We both moaned at the feeling and it wasn’t long before he was thrusting back onto three of my fingers. I teased him for a bit longer though until he was begging for me to fill him. Happy to oblige I pulled my fingers out and before he could whine about the loss I had my cock pressed to his hole. I let him bristle for a moment before quickly thrusting my hips forward and my dick all the way into him. He cried out at the feeling of my stretching him, **“fuck Lou, yesyesyes, you feel so good.”** I let him adjust to me then though only moving my hips in a small circle and pressing kisses up his back. After a few minutes he was whimpering again and I took that as my cue. With a final kiss to his spine I pulled out almost all the way and thrust back in hitting his prostate immediately.

I set a quick pace hitting his spot every time because the heat of him was driving me dangerously close to the edge. I pulled him back against me and sat down in the desk chair without leaving his tightness.

*“Show me what you can do, Hazza. Show me how good you are.”* I brushed my thumb across his head as I said the words spreading the leaking pre-come down his length causing him to moan obscenely and reach for the desk to gain some leverage.

I sat back and watched my dick move in and out of him as he fucked himself on me. I helped him along by matching his pace with strokes to his own cock. We were both panting heavily and Harry was moaning louder than he had any other time we had sex. I briefly wondered if anyone could hear us but then Harry was clenching around me and spilling over my hand



with a cry of **“Louislouislouis yes ohgodfuck yesyesyes”** and that finally sent me over the edge as well with my own cries.

After we had ridden out our orgasms together Harry pulled off and laid back against my chest. I moved my clean hand up to card through his curls.

**“I never stopped loving you”** he said it so softly and he sounded so sincere.

*“Hazza, I kn-”* **“No, please let me finish”** He hopped off my lap but sat back down instant but this time facing me.

**“I never stopped loving you and I will never stop loving. Louis, you are everything that is good about my life. I promise I will do everything in my abilities to never hurt you again but please just-”** I couldn’t wait for him to finish; I had to press our lips back together.

The kiss was sweet and lingering but short. *“You are stupid. But you’re mine and you always will be.”*

# Epilogue

~Louis' POV~

I was so sososososo so nervous. Today was finally the day. Harry was waiting for me somewhere on the property. I hadn't seen him for almost eighteen hours. Not that I was counting. While Niall had argued that we should be separated for our bachelor parties Harry had made the case that it would be pointless because Zayn, Liam, and Niall were our only close friends that understood the whole situation and, therefore, separate parties would be difficult. Despite having one bachelor party, we weren't allowed to spend the night together, so I fully blame Niall for my less than restful sleep. He made us stay in separate guest rooms and even slept in the hallway so that we couldn't sneak out, the little bugger.

I tugged on my tie again, trying to make it perfectly straight. Once I was satisfied with it, my attention shifted to my bedazzled suspenders tucked safely beneath my tuxedo jacket. I had rarely found a good enough occasion to wear them outside of the bedroom. Nobody had to know exactly how much fun we have had with my favorite birthday gift. Besides they gave me a warm sense of comfort every time I looked at them simply because they were from Harry.

I felt even better when I glanced down and saw the key on my finger. It had hurt like hell but I loved it nonetheless. Despite my initial hesitation to the idea, as soon as I saw our tattoos beside each other I understood. Rings were lovely and traditional and considerably less permanent than they proclaimed to be. Our tattoos however were perfectly us and forever. I'm not going to lie, it was also priceless to see the look on Niall and Liam's face we got home with our tats. They looked like they were going to explode partially with fondness and partially with lectures about how 'tattoos are permanent, what were you thinking'.

"Lou!" my mom called pulling me out of my thoughts. "It's time." I guess I had gotten distracted by my reverie.

*"Okay, I can do this. I can do this. There's no reason to be nervous,"* I muttered to myself. I yelled back to my mom, *"coming!"*

My mom walked me down the aisle where the twins had just tossed an array of flower petals onto the grass. Gemma, Niall, Zayn and Liam were standing on one side of the altar and my sisters were standing on the other. We had gotten our outdoor wedding at one of those old cottages with acres and acres of land. Dozens of old trees surrounded the chairs set out for our guests, just as we had planned almost a year ago now. It was fall and the leaves were a beautiful mixture of oranges, reds, yellows, and greens.

But let's not forget the piece-de-resistance. As soon as we reached the proper aisle and began to walk between the rows of guest, I looked up to undoubtedly the best sight of my life. Harry looked absolutely beautiful. His hair was its usual style of unruly curls unable to be tamed by the stylist. He was sporting his signature bowtie that was quirky and just so him. My eyes finally drifted to his face where I saw the soft grin adoring his face revealing a small glimpse

of his dimples. When our eyes locked we both widened our smiles and all my nerves melted away. This was finally it, the day I get to seal my promise of forever with my love.

The actual vows passed quickly as all my attention was focused on the man in front of me that would soon be irrefutably mine for the rest of our lives. Eventually we were saying our “I do’s” and sealing our promise with a kiss. Everyone cheered and clapped and I was so happy. Nothing could be better than this.

Our reception was large and full of people that Robin had invited. I didn’t care because I had Harry and that was that. It was time for our first dance and I couldn’t help but admit how perfect our song was.

*We were strangers starting out on our journey  
Never dreaming what we’d have to go through  
Now here we are and I’m suddenly standing  
At the beginning with you*

**“I love you so much, Lou.”**

*“I love you so much more.”*

We continued swaying back and forth. We added a few little moves that a poor dance teacher had try to teach us. We are coordinationaly challenged, but Robin had insisted that we take lessons, not that they had helped much.

*No one told me I was going to find you  
Unexpected what you did to my heart  
When I lost hope you were there to remind me  
This is the start*

*And life is a road and I wanna keep going  
Love is a river I wanna keep flowing  
Life is a road now and forever  
Wonderful journey*

*I’ll be there when the world stop turning  
I’ll be there when the storm breaks through*

*In the end I wanna be standing  
At the beginning with you*

And while I danced in his arms I knew all was right with the world.

~Harry’s POV~

Ever since our fight, we’d been stronger than ever. I felt bad for a few wayward staff members actually. You see, now whenever one of us got jealous, or frustrated with the media we had a habit of taking it out on each other in quite a ...sexual manner. And it tended to result in lots of hickeys and occasionally left someone mentally scarred.

That resulted in some more adventures with Isadora Fontaine. Soon enough we stopped caring about her idea of public indecency, not that we had cared much in the first place, and started to see how much we could piss her off with said indecency at our meetings.

But things got better. We still worked for the campaign but decided to spend less time in the public eye. We started doing short rotations between touring and home and everything got better. I finally told Robin I wasn't going to go into politics—ever. I still didn't know what I wanted to do, but we still had time to figure it out.

I was so happy to finally have Lou that I didn't care about anything else. I could finally tune out all the people. I could ignore the shitty fancy food Robin had picked out. I was finally truly happy and it was all because of this boy with his fringe, bright blue eyes, and funky suspenders.

When it was time to cut the cake and I use that term loosely, we ended up smashing cake in each other's faces. The icing tasted good when I licked it off Louis' lips though. I heard a few aww's from Jay and Anne's general direction.

Most of the people were probably annoyed at our childish antics, but who cares? Today was for us and they could enjoy their lonely misery. We had to compromise on music, so we ended up with an odd combination of hipster, classical, and pop.

Louis had somehow slipped "You're the One that I Want" into the playlist and we chased each other throughout the reception hall when it came on. We startled quite a few people and we laughed at the looks of shock they sent our way. Then Louis would start moving again and I'd chase after him before I could send out an apology.

At the end of the reception, we lit off lanterns and watched as they floated away with whispers of our dreams for what the future may hold. They looked absolutely beautiful as they faded into the sky, blending in with the stars. I turned to Louis when I could no longer find our lantern and pulled him into my chest. His hands splayed across my chest and moved to encircle my waist and return my hug.

I was looking forward to my forever with Louis, the man I loved.

## End Notes

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