Liam never found friends.

It wasn’t to say that he never had friends or never made any friends, that would just be plain untrue. It was just the fact that Liam had never found someone in his life that he had decided to go up to and become their friend. He just didn’t know how it was done.

All of his friends had sauntered up to him like they knew what they were doing and exactly why they wanted to be friends with Liam. It was always shocking at first, and then Liam would smile and accept them right into his life because they wanted to be there.

They earned it.

And somehow it had become something he couldn’t break out of. People ceased to interest him. He just sat in his own world, being himself in his own little bubble, until someone would spot him and come up to him and tell him to become their friend because somehow Liam had managed to do something to catch their eye.

Though he never knew what.

He hadn’t meant to fall into something that could seem so stuck up. He especially didn’t mean to seem narcissistic enough to believe that people would just want to befriend him. Liam rarely felt stuck up or narcissistic. He was practically the opposite. He found absolutely no reasons for anyone to even like him and sometimes felt the want to ask his friends what it was that made him appealing to them.

But he never did. He was too scared.

So he stayed, stuck with his same old friends. Niall and Zayn were huge features in his life. Danielle was pretty important too but she had found a boyfriend and since then she hardly had time to talk to Liam. He knew he could pick up his phone and call her or text her just to say hi or something but he never had. He didn’t know how to start a conversation.

Sometimes Liam couldn’t help but feel outright pathetic with how his life was, waiting on Niall or Zayn to tell him something so he could contribute to a conversation. It sometimes made him feel incredibly stupid even though he was the smart one out of the trio.

And one day, said trio sat together in their first class of the new school year, looking at their teacher boringly. Niall was eating a candy bar, chewing on it as he listened to his head phones, while Zayn had his head on his desk and was close to falling asleep.

Liam was the only one paying attention, leaning on one hand as he waited for his teacher to start the class. He was close to drooping off into slumber like Zayn when something had caught his eye and made him sit up straight, slightly nudging both of his friends into attention.

The trio looked up to see two boys talking to the teacher. One was shorter, wearing a white tee with bright red skinny jeans. His hair was lightly feathered and he had fringe going across his forehead to one side of his face, falling a bit over the glasses he wore that concealed bright blue orbs.

The other was taller. He didn’t look so much skinny as he did lanky, eyes focused on their teacher while the other boy spoke to him. Curls were like a perfect mess, falling down his head and looking incredibly inviting towards Liam’s fingers. He had piercing green eyes that never wavered, looking so focused, and he unconsciously licked his plump limps, causing Liam to lick his own in return. He wore a plain shirt and jeans with a jacket to finish off the look.

And it was in that moment that Liam was captured.

“Class, I have an announcement,” The teacher started, walking to the middle of the room as the two boys took a seat. Liam watched as the curly haired one sat in a normal seat in the front row, all the way by the door, while the other one took a chair and placed it in front of the curly haired one’s desk.

What were they doing?

“As you can see, Mr. Tomlinson is getting himself comfortable. He is the only one allowed to do so. He will be interpreting for Mr. Styles and therefore needs to be in front of him so Mr. Styles can understand us both.” The teacher explained.

“Whoa, he speaks another language?” A random student asked, looking at the boy in the red skinny jeans who looked back at them all amused. The curly haired one just grinned, leaning back in his seat.

“I wouldn’t say speaks, no.” The red skinny jeans boy answered. “My name is Louis, by the way.”

The other boy started to move his hands, the other students watching with wide eyes in shock as the hands moved too fast for them to remember what shapes and movements they made.

“And he said, ‘Hi, my name is Harry. It’s good to meet you’.” Louis translated, only having to glance at Harry to make sure he was right. Harry smiled at the students who were looking at him in surprise.

Including Liam.

“Is he mute?” Niall spoke up, causing Liam’s head to snap at the blonde. He wanted to yell at him and tell him to shut up because he was being rude by prying into Harry’s life when they were in the middle of class but then Harry grinned wider and shook his head.

“No, I’m deaf. But I can read lips pretty well, don’t you think?” Harry chuckled, his voice sounding completely normal for someone who was deaf.

“So why do you need a translator?” Niall asked, not to be rude but simply because he was Niall and he was curious. He was also good at making Liam worry and embarrassed, both of which he was doing at that moment.

“It’s a little hard to stay focused. It gives me a headache.” Harry answered honestly.

“Now, if you all don’t mind, we’re going to actually learn today so let’s get started. Shall we?” The teacher interrupted, earning a groan from the students. Louis immediately started signing out the words and Liam, along with many other students, couldn’t keep their eyes off of the two new students.

They were just so interesting.

--

It had been a week since then and Liam couldn’t keep his eyes off of Harry.

The boy was so different while being exactly the same. He could do all of the same things Liam, Niall, and Zayn could, even though he couldn’t hear. He spoke slowly, his voice so incredibly deep. And Liam was always slightly amused that Harry didn’t even know how deep his voice was.

But he stayed off. Harry and Louis were stuck in a completely different universe of just each other. They didn’t push other people out, and they weren’t always at each other’s side, but they stuck to each other in a way where everyone knew that it was only ever meant to just be the two of them and nobody else.

It easily drove Zayn insane. Which, in return drove Liam and Niall insane.

“Who do they think they are?”

They sat together in the cafeteria. The trio sat alone, even though there was room for more people at their table. Niall was digging away at his food, making the lunch food seem as though it actually tasted really good, which all of the students knew just wasn’t true. Liam was eating an apple, leaning on his arm and ignoring Zayn as he spoke. Meanwhile, the raven haired boy was watching the two other boys who were sitting off by themselves with their hands moving ridiculously fast.

“People.” Niall answered, mouth full of food. “Just like you, me, and Li.”

“No, they’re incredibly different.” Zayn answered, eyes glaring as Louis laughed at something Harry must have signed. “They’re stuck up.”

“How in the world can you possibly just assume that they’re stuck up?” Niall asked, confused at his friend. It wasn’t like Zayn to act so hostile towards anyone. Liam understood how Zayn was feeling and also knew Niall wouldn’t until someone told him clearly.

“They never talk to anyone else. They isolate themselves from society like they’re too good for us. How is that not stuck up?” Zayn asked, looking at Niall.

The blonde shrugged.

“Maybe Louis just doesn’t want to make Harry feel left out.”

“Harry can read lips, he’s perfectly capable of holding a conversation.”

“But he-“

“Niall.” Liam interrupted, glancing at the blonde who was still confused and looking between his friends as though they had shared a secret they weren’t meant to keep him out of.

Which was partially true.

“Zayn wants to get in Louis’ pants. That’s why he’s moody.” Liam explained. Zayn’s mouth dropped and Niall broke into hysterical laughter, holding his stomach and leaning on the table while Zayn glared daggers at Liam’s head. Liam ignored them, looking back at Louis and Harry. But really just looking at Harry.

“I told you that in confidence!”

“Well, Liam was nice to tell me. Since when do you keep secrets from me?”

“Since you were straight and don’t understand the want to fuck a guy.”

“I understand the want to fuck, that’s pretty much the same no matter the gender.”

The bickering continued on, but Liam tuned them out.

His eyes watched Harry’s hands. Never before had he ever found himself so fascinated with something as simple as someone’s hands. Harry’s were big and capable of holding many things at once, his long fingers clutching the objects. It made Liam realize that there actually may or may not be such thing as a hand kink and Liam may or may not have had it.

And don’t even get Liam started on those lips.

“- well, it’s not like Li’s any better.” Niall noted, bringing Liam back to their conversation. He leaned up in his seat and blinked owlishly, looking at his two friends who were giving him knowing smirks.

“What?” Liam asked.

“Nothing.” Zayn shrugged, finally paying attention to his food and eating something. The move in itself was suspicious enough but Zayn’s tone of voice completely gave away that he was hiding something.

“What?” Liam repeated.

“You’re complaining about Zayn with Louis but you’re sitting there practically making heart eyes at Harry.” Niall explained, seeing as Zayn wasn’t going to do it.

Liam blushed a color that was near impossible for a human being, making the two other boys laugh at their friend’s expense.

“So what if I am?” Liam asked, crossing his arms protectively, blush still prominent on his cheeks. “Harry’s good looking.”

“You like the curls don’t you?” Zayn smirked.

“The curls get the girls.” Niall grinned.

“I’m not a girl.” Liam looked at Niall who simply shrugged in response. “And his curls are quite nice but that’s not all there is about him.”

“The curls get the…” Niall mumbled to himself, trying to think of a name that wasn’t based on gender to properly rhyme with curls but found it quite difficult. Zayn and Liam chose to ignore him.

“He’s fit, I’ll admit that, but Li we don’t have a chance at them.” Zayn stated simply. Liam frowned, noting the tone in Zayn’s voice that signaled that he thought what he was saying was the truth. Zayn truly believed that both Harry and Louis wouldn’t even look their way.

“Why are you saying that?” Liam asked, needing to know why Zayn felt that way. It wasn’t like Zayn who was usually so confident with himself and had no qualms with going up to people. He had went right up to Liam when they were younger and just had a conversation about absolutely nothing when Niall had joined in.

They were his first friends.

“Because they don’t want to be with other people. And okay, it may not be as stuck up as I’m making it out to be but you can practically see that they’re happy just the way they are with only each other. Why would they ever want something ruining that?” Zayn asked.

Liam sat there and wondered.

Why *would* anyone ever want to ruin that?

--

Louis was sitting at his desk, reading a book with a boring look in his eyes as though he didn’t actually want to read the book but he was merely reading it because he didn’t have anything better to do. And maybe he didn’t seeing as how they had a few minutes before class and Harry had went to the bathroom, leaving the feathered haired boy alone.

Or so he thought.

“Hey, Louis.” A timid voice spoke up, capturing Louis’ attention and effectively ripping him out of the boring world of simple words that he read over five times before actually gathering what the sentence said.

In front of him was a boy. He was one of the three that sat at the back of his first class together. The blonde one had asked him questions his first day but there was nothing else really special about them. This one was always quiet, never seen speaking to anyone other than those two boys and one girl every once in a while.

What was he doing in front of Louis Tomlinson of all people?

And why did he look so nervous and shy?

“Hey. Sorry, uh, I don’t know your name.” Louis closed his book and sat up before shooting the boy a smile. Liam let out a relieved breath, his body becoming more comfortable.

“Liam. Liam Payne.”

It was a nice name for a nice boy who practically looked like a puppy. His eyes were big and brown as he looked down at Louis who smiled and stood and held out his hand. Liam’s eyes brightened enthusiastically before taking Louis’ hand and strongly shaking it.

“What can I do for you, Liam?” Louis asked, smile bright.

“I was just wondering…” Liam started, nervous demeanor coming back and making Louis incredibly curious. He just managed to keep his head from cocking to the side as he watched this new boy. “How does one… Go about… Becoming yours and Harry’s friend?”

Louis blinked.

In all his life, in all of his time of being best friends with Harry and going everywhere with the lad so he could have someone to help interpret for him, he had never been asked that question. Harry and Louis always simply assumed that people didn’t want to become part of their lives because it was too difficult to try to work with someone who was deaf.

Liam’s question made Louis go back and think that maybe that wasn’t true. Maybe, somehow, Louis and Harry had made it seem as though they didn’t want to be intruded upon.

Which made Liam’s nervous attitude make so much more sense.

“To become my friend? That’s easy, just hang out with me. But to become Harry’s friend? Well, that part is a bit harder.” Louis explained honestly.

“Why?” Liam asked, looking eager for the information. The boy wasn’t an open book but when you spend all your time interpreting based on a person’s body language then you get informed on what means what easily. “Why is he different?”

Louis shrugged.

“Deaf culture.” Louis crossed his arms as he studied the boy before him. He wanted Harry to have a chance at new friends but he didn’t want someone who would just give up in the middle of learning to communicate with him and hurt Harry. He had to make sure that this Liam kid really wanted it and would really try.

“How do I communicate with him?” Liam asked. “I know he can read lips but he prefers being signed to. How do I sign something?”

And really, that was all he needed to say.

Louis smiled wider and took Liam’s hand. He moved the fingers so they were straight and together before bringing them to Liam’s head.

“Salute like you’re a soldier.” Louis ordered. Liam didn’t even question him. He just did as he was told, bringing his hand in a saluting gesture. Louis smiled and nodded.

“What does that-“

“Index and middle fingers out on both hands.” Louis ordered, not letting Liam finished.

Liam sighed but did as Louis told him and watched as Louis took both of his wrists so his hands were in front of his body. Louis placed Liam’s right hand over the other one, making the outside of his right middle finger hit against the inside of his left index finger.

“Make sure you tap twice.” Louis didn’t stop as he brought Liam’s hand up and made his fingers into the shape of an L. “L,” Louis moved his fingers so that just Liam’s pinky was up “I,” then he moved the fingers so they were in a fist with the thumb tucked to the side “A,” And he finished by tucking Liam’s thumb under three fingers “M.”

Then Louis flattened Liam’s hands, swiping them across each other as though Liam was cleaning his hands of dirt. Louis made it so that just Liam’s index fingers were out and brought both of his hands together, his folded up fingers touching just barely.

“That’s how you communicate with him. If you were wondering.” Louis explained, sitting back down in his seat. “I’m serious about deaf culture, man. Really. So, if you want to be his friend then be prepared to put some work into it and start off by signing that.”

Liam stared.

Was Louis being serious? How in the world was he supposed to remember all of that? Louis only showed him once and it was way too many signs and Liam could already feel them slipping through the cracks of his memory.

“But… But what do they mean?” Liam asked, too shocked to really voice any of his other thousand questions running through his head.

Louis smirked.

“Now how would you learn if I just told you?”

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“Wait, wait, wait. Let me go over this one more time.”

Liam turned to Niall outside of the cafeteria. People passed by them, completely uncaring for the three boys standing outside the room, on their way to get their lunch. Some people had to slide around Zayn who was leaning against the wall but peaking his head around the door to spot Louis and Harry at their normal table.

Liam looked at the blonde and started signing what Louis had told him to sign. His hands shook a little bit but he did what he could remember, bringing his hands into shapes and sliding them this way and that. Niall watched intently, head nodding along with every sign Liam made.

“Did I do it right? Am I ready?” Liam asked nervously after finishing. He had one chance to talk to Harry and show the boy that he wanted to become his friend and the fact that not only did he not know what he was signing but also the fact that he could hardly remember what he was supposed to sign made his chances even more slim.

“Hell if I know. I don’t know sign language.” Niall shrugged, causing Liam to let out a small groan of frustration.

“Harry’s getting up. Now’s your chance. Go, Li, go!” Zayn ushered, pushing Liam into the room.

“Weren’t you against this not too long ago?!” Liam asked, shocked and scared by how fast Zayn was pushing him in Harry’s direction.

“Yeah, well, I wanna be able to say I told you so.” Zayn stated offhandedly before pushing Liam completely away from both himself and Niall. Liam just managed not to trip over his own two feet and fall flat on his face before looking over his shoulder at his friends for moral support.

Instead he got a smug Zayn and waving Niall.

So, he turned back only to see Harry a few feet away from him. The curly haired boy was looking at the chips and trying to choose which ones he wanted. Liam knew that it was now or never so he walked up to Harry and tapped him on the shoulder.

Harry looked over at him curiously.

Liam took a deep breath and saluted at Harry, trying to read how he was doing by watching the boy’s reactions. Harry blinked a few times in surprise as he watched Liam bring his hands out in front of him, both of his index fingers and middle fingers out while the others were curled in before turning his hands sideways and tapping the right hand over the left in a sort of X form twice.

Harry continued watching, a small smile working its way across his lips as Liam started signing his name. It gave Liam more confidence as he went about finishing up whatever it was he was saying to Harry, sliding his right hand clean across his left palm and then holding his hands so only the index and middle fingers were out as he brought them together.

And then Harry laughed.

It was a sharp bark of laughter, in fact he even looked shocked that he laughed in such a way, but then couldn’t bring himself to stop as he continued laughing. Liam felt his face heating up as he stood there, wondering what he had done that was so funny. Did he completely mess up what Louis had shown him? Did Louis trick him into saying something stupid?

Harry looked at him, eyes sparkling.

“Good to *meet* you too, Liam.”

Liam watched as Harry continued chuckling before grabbing a bag of chips and walking off to go pay for it. Harry looked over his shoulder, grinned, and then waved at Liam before walking away. Liam smiled slightly, curious as to what had just happened, and then walked over to his table.

Niall and Zayn sat up instantly, immediately interested in what Liam had to tell them.

“So? What happened? Did he ignore you? I see that he ran back to Louis awfully fast.” Zayn explained, eyeing the two boys across the room.

Liam just shrugged.

“I have absolutely no idea what happened.” He answered truthfully. “But I will find out.”

--

Louis was at his locker, switching text books out for more unnecessary text books, when Liam slid up next to him. The feathered haired boy cast a glance at the boy he had deemed a “puppy” and wondered why a puppy would look so upset with his arms crossed over his chest and his eyebrows furrowed up.

Puppies were supposed to be happy. Especially if they were going after Harry Styles.

“What’s up?” Louis asked, closing his locker door as he tried to put his text books in his book bag at the same time. He was almost dropping one, having it teeter on his arm.

“What did you have me say to Harry?” Liam asked back, tone stern. Louis raised his eyebrows in confusion, not realizing that Liam had already spoken to Harry. Why hadn’t Harry told him?

“Why do you ask?” Louis continued the questions, unsure as to why Liam was still so upset. What he had taught Liam should have been a perfectly easy opening to a conversation with Harry. So why was it that the boy looked so upset with him?

“Because when I finally summoned the courage to go up to him and sign things I could hardly remember and don’t even know the meaning of he just laughed in my face and said, ‘Nice to *meet* you too, Liam’ and walked away!” Liam explained, arms falling out of their folded up position to flail just slightly with pent up frustration.

Louis paused.

“Tell me you didn’t do what I think you did.” Louis ordered, a grin spreading over his face as he fought to hold back a snigger.

“I would if I actually knew what it was that I did but I don’t because the guy that taught me the signs kind of refused to tell me what they meant.” Liam answered hotly, slightly glaring at Louis.

“Tell me, Liam, when you signed to Harry did you have one finger or two sticking out at the end?” Louis asked.

Liam blinked.

“What?”

Louis’ grin didn’t leave as he shoved his book bag into Liam’s arms so he could hold it. Liam was about to argue when Louis signed. Louis brought his right hand over the left one in a sweep before putting one finger up on both hands and then having the palms of his hands meet together.

“Did you do that? Or did you do this?” Louis asked as he stuck two fingers out and then brought them together.

Liam blushed slightly, now that he was watching it he could distinctly remember Louis telling him to use one finger when he had used two. But it was just a small mistake. Harry shouldn’t have laughed at him for something so small.

“Okay, so I accidentally used two fingers instead. That’s not a huge difference, right? I mean, he should have known what I was trying to sign.” Liam explained embarrassedly.

Louis bent over and started laughing.

Liam blushed even more, wondering why his small mistake was so hilarious. People never laughed when he made a mistake in Spanish class because that was just rude, so what made Harry and Louis think that they had the right to do that to him over a language that even less people knew?

Louis was leaning against the lockers, looking for purchase to hold him up and keep him from falling to the ground in laughter. Now he was really upset that Harry hadn’t told him that he met Liam. His best friend was keeping the joke all to himself.

“Liam, what I had you originally sign was, ‘Hi, my name is Liam, it’s nice to meet you’ but that wasn’t what you signed. The sign for meet has to be done with only one finger. When you use two it completely changes the meaning so instead of saying it’s nice to meet you you’re saying it’s nice to fuck you.” Louis explained, still laughing hysterically. “Two fingers out is the sign for fuck.”

And never before had Liam ever felt his face get so hot.

He had just told Harry Styles, the first and only person he had really reached out to become friends with, that it was nice to *fuck him.*

He was pretty sure it was time for him to dig himself a hole to live in for the rest of his life. Zayn and Niall would get a big kick out of that and Harry probably thought he was a complete idiot.

Just his luck.

“Right, so, I can never show my face to him ever again.” Liam nodded his head, handing Louis back his bag. “Bye Louis, it was nice knowing you before I completely embarrassed myself without even knowing it.”

Louis laughed and snatched the bag out of Liam’s arms.

“Stop being a drama queen, will you?” Louis smiled, calming down from his laughing fit so he could finally stand and talk with ease. “That’s my job.”

“I’m sure you never embarrassed yourself quite the way I just did.” Liam stated, hating himself so much.

“No, but Harry has so it’s okay. I’m used to it.” Louis winked, grinning at Liam. “Besides, it’s not like Harry took any offense. If he laughed then that means he took it good heartedly. I mean, he did understand what you were trying to say.”

And that was relieving. Just knowing that Harry really didn’t hate him or think he was rude or stupid. Harry had just realized that Liam had made a minor mistake. A very funny minor mistake, but it was all good spirited nonetheless.

“How do I redeem myself?” Liam asked.

Louis shrugged.

“Do you really wanna know? It will be quite hard.”

Liam crossed his arms and gave Louis a determined look.

“I’m not backing out. I just want Harry to like me, that’s all. He doesn’t have to become friends with me and we don’t have to all hang out together even if that would be nice. I just want him to know… What I meant.” Liam explained

Louis grinned.

“Alright then, let’s get started.”

--

Harry was sitting at his table in the cafeteria when something weird happened.

And no, the sandwich he was eating did not suddenly grow legs and walk away no matter how many times Louis said he was sure that would happen because the school food seemed like it was all too nasty to be normal and must be mutated. No, it was something much different than that.

Louis was walking over to the table, arm hooked around a boy he was practically dragging over.

And Harry knew that boy.

It was Liam. The one who had tried to learn sign language to communicate with Harry and then messed up. That was probably one of the funniest moments Harry had with a person who wasn’t Louis in a long time.

What was Louis doing with Liam?

Harry watched curiously as Louis dragged Liam over. He wondered briefly if it was Louis who had shown Liam what to sign originally but then was too busy looking at Liam and how nervous he looked. He looked even worse than the last time, which was understandable. He had probably realized his mistake and got embarrassed.

But before Harry could save him from his embarrassment and tell him it was okay, he was signing.

*I’m sorry.*

He started off shaky, eyes darting to Louis every once in a while, but Harry noticed something right away that immediately impressed him.

Liam was using non-manual markers.

*I didn’t mean to sign wrong.*

Liam steadily grew more confident in his signing. Perhaps it was the look on Harry’s face that Harry knew read as him being impressed, but he wasn’t really very sure. All he knew was he was just really happy.

Why was Liam trying so hard? And for Harry of all people in the world?

*I want to be friends.*

Liam finished, looking down at Harry. There was a small pause as Louis and Liam stared down at Harry, wondering what his reaction would be and what that face he was giving Liam meant. Louis was sure that Liam had just nailed himself a spot in Harry’s life, meanwhile Liam wasn’t sure if he was being too strong.

He moved his hands one last time.

*Please?*

A smile broke out across Harry’s face. How could he not? Liam was a nervous wreck and all because he had wanted to be Harry’s friend? That had never happened before. Nobody could ever find the time to even learn some sign language for him, always telling him if he can lip read then they shouldn’t have to.

But there Liam was, trying his hardest, even after he already messed up and embarrassed himself.

“It’s okay, Liam. I know it was a mistake. Come on, eat with us, will you?” Harry asked, moving his book bag over so Liam could sit right next to him. Louis beamed and sat down in his usual spot, watching as Liam relaxed.

“Thank you.” Liam signed as he spoke, sitting down in the seat next to Harry and smiling at the curly haired boy. However, that was as far as the spans of his knowledge with signing and so it was up to Harry to read his lips. “That would have been embarrassing had you said no.”

Harry smirked.

“How could anyone ever say no to a face like yours?”

Zayn and Niall watched from the other side of the room, seeing Liam’s face heat up even from the distance. Niall had to laugh, practically choking on his food, while Zayn just watched.

“I never thought this could ever be as amusing as it is.” Niall laughed, finally swallowing down his food. “Our Liam is so inept at making friends it hurts.”

“Shut up.” Zayn ordered.

“Are you seriously still angry? Zayn, this kind of gives you an in now with Louis, you know that right? Why don’t you just go over to Liam like you need to talk to him about something and then ease your way on into a conversation?” Niall recommended, calming down.

Zayn didn’t respond. He just continued to pout.

“Zayn…” Niall poked his friend, eyes widening with realization. “Are you seriously jealous of not only Harry but now Liam too? This is ridiculous. Do something with your life.”

“Fuck off.” Zayn snipped, standing up to storm out of the cafeteria. Niall sighed at the dramatics before looking back over to Liam with Louis and Harry.

They were listening to Louis talk animatedly about something, signing as he spoke, and both Liam and Harry were sharing looks and grinning at each other. They were so adorable together that it very nearly physically hurt.

But Niall was happy for them.

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“Can you tell me something?”

Harry’s voice had spoken up, shocking Liam just slightly. Harry only ever really spoke when he wanted to tell Liam something and it involved signs Liam didn’t know yet. He was learning fast, seeing as Harry was very patient with showing him some of the signs, and was able to have the bare minimal conversation with a deaf person at their actual speed.

They had been sitting outside during a free class. Louis was off getting a snack and left Liam and Harry alone. They didn’t mind. They were happy to sit in comfortable companion ship with Harry doing his math homework and Liam reading a book for English class.

They had all become fast friends. Harry and Louis took to Liam like he had always been there with them all of their lives. It was strange, in a good way, and Liam was happy to be around both of them.

Liam turned to face Harry so the curly haired boy would be able to read his lips and see the signs that Liam made.

“Of course.”

Harry smiled and tilted his head, pausing before asking.

“Why do people use the term that something is louder than silence?”

Liam paused.

He didn’t really know what to say. He had heard the term many times, of course, but it was always just a saying that everybody automatically understood. How was he supposed to explain how something was louder than something else when Harry didn’t even know what louder was.

“It’s hard to explain.” Liam started, hands falling to his side because he knew he wouldn’t be able to sign the words necessary to help Harry explain. “If you want to look at it in technical terms it is quite a stupid saying seeing as everything is louder than silence.”

“But as imagery?” Harry asked, eager to learn.

“Well, sometimes silence can be the loudest thing there is. You… You’re used to the silence. Your world is silence and if you were to hear noise then that would be louder for you. But for hearing people, we live in a world of noise, always tuning in to something different. We hear even when we don’t want to and we take in things we don’t even realize. So when it happens that there’s completely silence… Well, it seems louder than anything because we are just so used to noise.” Liam explained.

Harry nodded, looking as though he was really taking it all in.

“I’ve asked Louis that before but he never could explain it. It’s sort of like asking a toddler what the meaning of life is.” Harry joked. “I just… Sometimes I just really want to be able to hear. And there’s nobody I can tell that to besides for Louis. There’s nobody else I’m even allowed to befriend but Louis unless their deaf.”

Liam sat up, frowning.

“Wait, why?” He asked, concerned and upset that Harry wasn’t supposed to be with him right then. “What’s so wrong about people other than Louis.”

“Nothing! Nothing’s wrong with you!” Harry amended, blushing slightly. “I didn’t mean it that way, it’s just… My parents are deaf. They grew up in the deaf community. Deaf people prefer to be around other deaf people. It’s just part of the culture.”

“Except with you?” Liam asked.

“Well, I wasn’t born deaf, Liam.”

Liam blinked, not expecting that. But really he should have. Harry spoke as though he was completely normal. It really only made sense that he was hearing once and had lost it. But why? And would Harry tell him? He really didn’t want to push him to tell more.

“Am I interrupting something?” Louis’ voice cut in, making Liam jump slightly seeing as Louis was behind his back and Liam didn’t realize he was there until he spoke. It made Harry smile just slightly.

“Um… Uh…” Liam stuttered, not sure of what to say.

Louis turned to Harry and pointed at him before slapping the side of his leg and snapping his fingers. Then he brought his fingers up to his eyes and traced down his cheeks as though he were crying.

It confused Liam because he didn’t know what any of those signs meant. All he did know was that Louis used the sign where he slapped his leg and then snapped his fingers a lot and he wanted to know what it meant but neither Harry nor Louis would tell him.

Harry stuck up his middle finger. A sign Liam knew fairly well and caused him to laugh with Louis even though he didn’t know what Louis had said.

He really liked Harry.

--

Liam and Harry waited for Louis to come out of the bathroom.

*I think you should tell Louis to hang out with other people.*

*Want me for yourself?*

*Obviously.*

Harry chuckled.

*I have told him. Many times. He doesn’t want to leave me. He’s like my brother.*

*Is he gay?*

*Why?*

*Because my friend Zayn has a crush on him.*

“Oh…” Harry said, because sometimes you just can’t sign what you really want to say.

*I get it now. I wish Louis would try. But he doesn’t want to make me feel like I’m alone so he doesn’t live his own life.*

Harry paused.

*Are you gay?*

*Yeah.*

*Me too.*

Liam smiled at Harry, a slight blush across the hearing boy’s cheeks.

*You’ll need to help me get him with Zayn.*

*What? You just want to throw your best friend at Zayn?*

*It’s the only way it’d ever work. I see the way Louis glances at Zayn too. Your friend is fit.*

*Funny. He said the same thing about you.*

Louis walked out of the bathroom then, looking back and forth between the two. He looked to Harry, slapped his side, snapped his finger and made the sign for signing. Liam still didn’t know what that sign meant, but by knowing the rest of what Louis had signed he was able to know that Louis was talking about him.

He said *What* something *sign?*

He and Harry had a nickname for Liam and he was determined to know what it was.

*Nothing, Lou. Come on.*

--

For weeks Harry tried to convince Louis to spend less time with him and more with Zayn.

For weeks Liam tried to convince Zayn that Louis wouldn’t shoot him down if the darker haired lad just spoke to him.

For weeks both Louis and Zayn ignored them both.

--

Liam got a call from Louis.

“Where do you live?” Louis asked, voice urgent and upset. Liam grew worried, wondering if there was something wrong with Harry.

“I’ll text you the address. Everything okay?” Liam asked back, hoping that there wasn’t anything wrong with Harry.

“I’ll talk to you when I get there.” Louis answered before hanging up.

Liam was able to relax. If Harry was hurt then Louis would have told him right away, the boy knew how important Harry was to him. Also, there was the sound of anger and hurt in Louis’ voice that made him realize in no possible way could Harry be hurt because Louis was the one who was really hurting.

What Liam didn’t know was why Louis was going to him and not to Harry.

He could do nothing but text Louis his address and wait.

Not too long later there was an urgent pounding on the door before Louis just walked into the house, looking more upset than Liam ever thought possible. Louis stormed right up to him, grabbed Liam by the shoulders and pushed him on the couch before saying,

“You can’t have him.” Louis glared down at him with a glare that had lost its venom. Instead the eyes were shiny with tears and hurt all over. “You can love him and he can love you but you can’t have him.”

“What are you talking about?” Liam asked.

“What do you think I’m fucking talking about? Harry. My best friend! My- … My only friend.” Louis replied with gritted teeth. “You can’t have him!”

Liam’s chest hurt with that and all he could think was he had done something wrong to not deserve Harry.

“Why not?”

“Because he’s mine!” Louis yelled, and Liam was grateful his parents weren’t home. “I get it, Liam. I do! You love him and he loves you, I can see it so clearly that it’s really kind of annoyingly cute but that’s okay! It is! You can date him! You can love him and make him happy and have his butt babies after riding off into the sunset on your wedding day! I’d love that! I’d love to see him happy!”

Liam was so confused he didn’t even take in the part about Harry loving him.

“Louis, you’re not making any sense. Can you please just slow down and explain?” Liam asked, watching the bright eyed boy standing before him.

“You see, I can’t slow down because I’m just feeling all these things I don’t understand and it’s all your fault really because I wanted Harry to have more friends but I never wanted him to do this where he just starts pushing me away to try to get me to hang out with Malik and he keeps fucking ostracizing me and I wanted him to like you and love you but I didn’t ever expect to lose best friend status, Liam! I don’t have anybody else!”

And that was when Liam understood.

All this time Liam had thought that Louis stuck around for Harry’s wellbeing and so that Harry could have a friend but it couldn’t have been more wrong. Harry had been Louis’ rock. Harry had been the one Louis was latching onto because Louis was more alone than Harry was.

Louis didn’t know how to survive without Harry.

“Lou…” Liam’s voice broke in the middle because he knew how Louis felt. He knew what it was like to be dependent on people who could just easily leave you behind and with nothing at all in the world. He didn’t make friends. Except, with Louis and Harry, Liam did. And that was awesome. “Lou, you’re still his best friend.”

“No… No, I’m not.” Louis looked down at the ground. “He only cares about you. I don’t matter anymore.”

Liam grabbed Louis’ hand and tugged him down, getting the blue eyed boy to fall into his lap and his embrace. Liam slid his arms around his small frame and held him close. Louis melted, snuggling up to Liam and holding onto him for dear life.

“Lou, you’re so stupid.” Liam whispered.

“You’re not making me feel better.” Louis muttered.

“Yeah, I’m pretty shit at that. Cause I don’t have many friends either, Lou. You and Harry were the first two I ever really tried and it was so scary and I know how scared you feel. I do. But Louis, you’re not alone and Harry’s not trying to get rid of you. He wants to do what you were doing for him. He wants you to have someone too.” Liam explained.

Louis looked up at him.

“My own Liam?” Louis asked, causing Liam to burst out into laughter, holding Louis even tighter.

“Yeah. Your own Liam.” Liam nodded.

They sat in silence for the longest time, just cuddled up to each other before Louis spoke up again.

“You need to convince him.”

Liam looked down.

“What?”

“You’re the only one who can.” Louis murmured. “You need to convince him it’s the right thing to do.”

“What are you talking about?” Liam asked.

“Surgery. To get him to hear again.” Louis answered. “You need to convince him or else he never will.”

Liam paused.

Harry… Would be able… To hear?

He’d hear Liam’s voice and all the other things in the world?

Louis looked up at him and those bright watery blue eyes that were just pleading for him to say yes. And Liam didn’t even need those eyes for him to say yes.

He would do anything to give Harry all he deserved.

--

*What do you look for in a guy?*

Liam signed the words, ears blushing hot as he did. He couldn’t believe he was actually asking Harry Styles, the object of his affections, for what he looked for in a guy. Liam was probably nowhere near Harry’s type.

Harry grinned.

*A good singer.*

And that response was just such a Harry response that Liam should have been expecting it because Harry loved to be able to just make stupid little jokes all the time, especially at his own expense.

“Ha ha, you’re so funny.” Liam rolled his eyes, a smile tugging at his lips regardless.

“You ever just take a moment to think about how good you’ve become at signing? It’s like you’re practically fluent.” Harry explained.

Liam paused.

He hadn’t realized that because he had just been working so hard on learning sign language and understanding Harry that it never really processed how well he went that he didn’t need to ask Louis and Harry to slow down anymore or even need to keep asking them what certain words meant.

It had only been a few months and because of how much he hung out with them every day he had gotten really good at it.

He smiled proudly because, come on, that was pretty awesome.

“You’re ignoring my question.”

“Am I?”

“You are.”

And Harry smirked that signature Harry Styles smirk where his dimple appeared but it was in that stupid cocky way that could turn Liam on and make him want Harry so much.

Harry signed something then but it was a word that Liam didn’t know.

*What?*

That smirk wasn’t disappearing.

*Want me to show you?*

Liam nodded.

*Please?*

Harry chuckled before stepping closer to Liam. Every time Harry was that close Liam would just be shocked by how much taller Harry was than him. It wasn’t a huge size difference but Harry could act like such a child sometimes that he could easily forget how tall the boy actually was.

And then Harry craned his neck, leaned down, and kissed him.

And Liam felt himself melt.

Harry was kissing him. Harry Styles was kissing him! How did that work? What did Liam do to deserve that? He had tried hard to get Harry’s attention, was it finally paying off?

Did he finally earn something?

Harry pulled away and smirked.

“It meant kiss me.”

Liam was so happy he couldn’t help himself from blurting, “How do you sign, will you be my boyfriend?”

Harry just smiled brightly.

“Doesn’t matter. My answer’s yes.”

So Liam did the only thing he could do. He signed.

*Kiss me.*

And Harry happily obliged.

--

They were at Liam’s house.

They sat on his bed, well, not so much sat as cuddle. Liam was lying flat on his back, head dipped in the pillows, as Harry curled into him. Harry had his leg thrown over Liam’s, arm curled around Liam’s waist, and Head against the boy’s chest with his eyes closed.

Harry smiled.

“I can feel your heart beat. It’s so loud it’s almost like I can hear it.” Harry muttered, humming quietly. Liam loved Louis listening to Harry hum, amazed that he could even make a tune when he was so deaf.

Liam would have answered but Harry’s eyes were closed so there was no communicating with him.

“Sometimes it’s amazing that you’re here. I’ve…” Harry took a deep breath, stealing himself. “I’ve grown up really lonely, really sad sometimes. Louis’ great but… You’re special Liam.”

Liam felt his breath catch at Harry’s words, so amazed and elated that it was unbelievable. He knew Harry could feel his heart beating faster in his chest and his breathing go uneven but he didn’t really care.

“I mean, I didn’t do anything to deserve you. I’m really quite boring. I can’t do much and I haven’t done much. The most exciting thing about me is that I’m deaf and that’s not even exciting because I had been born with bad hearing. A few too many blasted songs on head phones took away what little hearing I had. So, every day I wonder…” Harry turned his head, placing his chin on Liam’s chest to look into Liam’s eyes with a look Liam had never seen before.

Those green eyes were looking at him with such love and adoration that Liam felt like he couldn’t breathe ever again.

“What did I ever do to deserve you?”

Liam felt like he was glowing. Harry felt exactly the same way as he did.

Or maybe that was just how everybody felt. Maybe the world was just filled with people who didn’t think they deserved something and were too afraid to go out and get it because if they didn’t succeed then it only confirmed that they didn’t deserve anything.

Liam had thought he was safe like that. He had thought that by hiding himself away and letting others come up to him that it was okay and he would be better off that way.

But he was wrong. Because he couldn’t wait for Harry to go up to him or notice him because Harry was too busy trying to live without his hearing and surrounded by Louis all the time. In order for Liam to have been happy he had to risk himself, and sure he had embarrassed himself a few times and he still didn’t know what Louis kept calling him behind his back but it didn’t matter because he was in love with Harry Styles and Harry Styles loved him back.

All because he took a chance.

“You deserve the world, Harry.”

Harry moved up and kissed Liam hard. Liam was smiling so hard into the kiss it almost broke but eventually he steeled himself to kiss his boyfriend back correctly.

And they were just so happy they couldn’t stop. They were touching each other everywhere and feeling on fire. They couldn’t stop and they didn’t want to.

So they didn’t.

--

It’s at the end of the school year that Liam finally got to meet Harry’s parents.

He had never questioned or pressured Harry on introducing him to his Mom and his Step Dad before because as Harry had told him many times before they were both deaf since birth. Liam probably wouldn’t be able to keep up with their signs and Harry was extremely worried about whether he was even allowed to have Liam over.

Louis had tried to give Liam pointers but was really only succeeding in making Liam even more nervous about going. For a boy whose best friend was deaf he sure did love to talk. He didn’t stop and the only way Liam actually got him to calm down was by agreeing to listen to him so long as Louis actually talked to Zayn. Louis was reluctant to agree but eventually he did and so Liam had listened.

So, there Liam stood outside of Harry’s house. He was a little lost on how to enter. He couldn’t knock because nobody would hear. And there was a doorbell but did that really work or was it just dumb for Liam to even think of using that?

Liam texted Harry quickly.

**do i ring te dorbll or ..?**

It didn’t take long for a response.

**Yes you dope, it flickers our lights in the house. Ring the doorbell.**

Liam smiled and braved himself to ring the doorbell. If it was even called ringing when it made the lights flicker. Maybe he would just start saying that he pressed the doorbell, yeah, that sounded much better to him.

He pressed the doorbell.

It didn’t take long for the door to open and Liam to come face to face with a woman that couldn’t be anyone but Harry’s Mother. She was beautiful, stunning really. She smiled a smile at him that he knew Harry got from her before bringing him into a tight hug. Louis had warned him about deaf culture and how deaf people loved to greet people with hugs.

So Liam hugged her back.

She pulled away and signed to him.

*Come in*.

Liam followed her instructions, signing a quick *thank you* as he was ushered inside. He was led to the dining room where he found Harry and who must have been Harry’s Step Dad signing back and forth in conversation.

Anne, Harry’s Mother, flickered the lights in the room to get their attention. Robin, Harry’s Step Dad, looked over and smiled softly while Harry beamed at him, both of the boys standing up to walk over to them.

*I’m Anne.* Anne signed to Liam. *Harry’s mother.*

Robin walked over and gave Liam a big hug before signing as well.

*I’m Robin. Harry’s* and Robin did a sign that Liam had never seen but knew that it must have meant step father.

Liam smiled at them and signed back.

*It’s good to meet you.*

And Liam grinned because he had successfully signed meet and not the embarrassing mistake that he did with Harry. Somehow, he knew, Harry’s parents would not be nearly as accepting of his mistake as Harry was.

*I’m Liam. Harry’s boyfriend.*

*It’s good to meet you too, Liam.*

They were about to sit down at the table to eat dinner that Anne had cooked for them when Liam heard a sound that almost made him jump out of his own skin.

“Liam! You’re here!”

The voice was female, soft, but actually in tune. Liam turned to see a girl that looked like Harry and Anne. She was smiling brightly as she tackled Liam into a hug and grinned, not letting go of the younger boy.

Harry’s sister Gemma.

“It’s so good to meet you, Harry talks about you all the time.” Gemma beamed, looking over at Harry who was glaring at her. She covered her mouth with her hand. “And yes, actually talking. He rambles on about you and he can’t even hear how in love he is with you!”

And that was when Liam understood.

“You’re hearing?” Liam asked, looking at Gemma in confusion.

Gemma cocked her head at him, slowly lowering her hand away from her face as her smile transformed from beaming into something more endearing. It was a smile he saw many times on Harry whenever Liam made him proud or extremely happy.

He loved that smile.

“That’s the first time someone of hearing has met my family before meeting me and not called me normal.”

Liam looked around, meeting each of Harry’s family’s gaze and seeing the same happy smile on all of their faces. Then Liam looked over at Harry who was biting his lip in such happiness that Liam knew.

He said the right thing for once.

--

Harry had to go help his Step Dad with something. What it was, Liam couldn’t tell, he didn’t understand the sign that Robin had signed to him. All he knew was that he was sitting with Anne and Gemma when Gemma spoke.

“Do you know about the surgery?” She asked, not bothering to sign as she spoke. Anne watched them carefully and Liam glanced over at her, wondering if she felt left out or if she read lips just as good as her son.

“Yeah.” Liam answered, nodding his head to make it easier for Anne to follow. He didn’t want to alienate her from the conversation, especially in her own house. He wasn’t rude.

“So, why haven’t you convinced him to say yes?” Gemma asked.

Liam blinked. It was the second time someone had told him to convince Harry to get his hearing back. First Louis and then Gemma. Everyone seemed to think that Liam was capable of making Harry make a huge, life changing decision and he didn’t really understand why because he could hardly make his own decisions.

He looked down.

He and Harry had talked about the surgery, but they never really got to Liam’s view on it. Obviously, Liam would have loved for Harry to be able to hear him and music and everything else the world had to offer. He wanted the best for Harry. But the best was whatever Harry wanted. He didn’t want to force Harry to do something he would be miserable with. Harry needed to want it. It was Harry’s life after all.

“It’s not my decision to make.” Liam answered.

Anne moved them, holding out her and slightly waving her hands in a sing Liam knew was used when deaf people were trying to get someone’s attention politely. It was the equivalent of saying, “hey”.

He looked over and watched her hands sign. They were slower than they should have been, obviously she was taking into account that Liam wasn’t as experienced in signing and trying to make it easier for him to understand, but she still used words out of his vocabulary.

Liam signed back.

*I’m sorry, I don’t understand.*

Gemma cut in.

“She said the decision is Harry’s. We all know that. Except for Harry.” Gemma interpreted, eyes on her mother.

“Yeah, I know. Harry’s thick headed.” Liam stated, forgetting to sign but not even knowing what the sign was for thick headed.

Apparently, it didn’t matter. Gemma signed for him and instead of thick headed she signed the word, “dumb”.

What a good sister.

Anne signed again.

“So, that’s why we’re asking for your help, Liam. You’re the only one who can make him understand.” Gemma said.

Liam shook his head, eyebrows furrowed together. “Miss. Cox, please… I love Harry, I do, but… I’m not that special. I can’t make him think any differently. He wants to stay deaf for all the people he loves so they won’t have to deal with the change. He wants to stay deaf for you and his step dad and Louis. He cares too much to think differently.”

Anne sighed and let a half amused smile ghost over her mouth as she signed and Gemma spoke, real emotion seeping through what was her Mother’s words.

“Liam, you are just as dumb as Harry is. You just said that he’s staying deaf for the people he loves. Harry is the kind of person to do anything for the person he loves most. The thing is, the person he loves most is you, Liam. He loves you more than anything else and it’s beautiful and that’s why I’m asking. You are special Liam. You are the only one that can get through to him!”

“But…” Liam bit his lip, nervously twitching in his chair.

There was suddenly so much responsibility on him. He had so much to do and he didn’t even know if he could or should. No wonder Louis had been so protective of Harry when Liam had first gone up to him and made him work so hard. Nothing about the relationship was going to be easy and Liam was seeing it then. Nothing about dating Harry was easy.

But it was so worth it.

“You’re asking me to use his love for me against him.” Liam stated. Gemma didn’t even bother signing to her Mother, leaning over to hit Liam upside his head. The boy clutched his head in pain.

“Seriously, Liam? We would never ask that of you! We’re asking for you to use your love for him!” Gemma argued, annoyance peeking out. “We’re asking you to use the love he has for you for his own health. He’s holding himself back and you’re the only one that can make him step forward and move on with his life, making something better for himself. *That’s* what we’re asking.”

Liam swallowed hard because he got it. He really did.

“Alright. Alright, I’ll try my best.”

Anne smiled brightly and signed.

*Thank you.*

--

Louis and Zayn were officially dating.

It wasn’t the completely head over heels in love kind of dating that Liam and Harry had, no. It was weird. Well, at least, it was to Liam and Harry. Because they constantly bickered over everything and always liked to tease the other prove each other wrong but in the end they would kiss each other quiet or say something that would cause them both to smile and leave everyone else so confused that eventually there would need to be a new topic starter.

Which was what had just happened.

The five of them (don’t forget Niall) were hanging out together at Liam’s house. Niall, Liam, and Harry were staring at the two “lovebirds” (if they could even be called that) when Liam decided that he should change the topic.

“So, what do you guys think it’d be like if Harry could hear?”

Harry looked confused. His eyebrows knit together and he frowned slightly but Liam purposely ignored the look, watching as Niall got excited.

“Well, that’d be pretty great! I mean, why wouldn’t it be? He could communicate better with society and I could finally know what you guys are talking about behind my back-“

“He’s still going to know sign language, Niall.” Louis smiled, amused at the blonde.

“Yeah, well, now I can actually pester him to tell me because he’ll have to endure hearing me say it.” Niall explained, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Why the sudden question anyways, Li?” Zayn asked, turning to Harry for a moment. “I mean, I’d love for you to be able to hear. Music has evolved since you’ve last heard it and there are some songs that are just… Inexplicably amazing. Also, my voice is pretty damn sexy.” Zayn winked and then looked back to Liam. “But yeah, why the question?”

Liam looked at Harry who seemed to slowly have realization dawn over him. His green eyes widened and his mouth opened slightly into an ‘o’. Then he moved his hands, pointing at Liam and then tapping the top of his head.

*You know?*

Liam nodded.

“Harry can get a surgery to let him be able to hear again.” Liam turned the other three lads, two of them watching them curiously and Louis sitting there nervously. “But he doesn’t want to get it.”

Harry was giving Liam a look that was unreadable to Zayn and Niall, but Louis and Liam understood it clearly. It was betrayal, and that was not what Liam had been expecting. He had been expecting some kind of anger or upset feeling to cross over Harry’s face but he never expected Harry to look so hurt.

“Oh, Harry, why not?” Niall whined sadly. “You can finally hear what an Irish accent sounds like! It’ll be great. I could even teach you how to do one!”

“Yeah, Harry. Maybe you can sing and you don’t know because you don’t know a tune to go off of. Sorry, I’m pretty much stuck on you hearing music. I love music, mate. To think you live without it is just… Really fucking terrifying.” Zayn explained.

Zayn and Niall were excited and talking fast, and Harry was trying to watch them both and keep up, looking at their lips and trying to read Niall even though his accent made it a bit harder.

“Seriously! Man, you have to hear Justin Beiber-“

“As long as we keep you away from The Wanted then I’m okay with you hearing Beiber-“

“Yeah, and Demi Lovato-“

“Harry.” Liam looked at his boyfriend who looked distraught and in pain. Harry grasped at his head, trying to keep down a headache as he translated the words as Zayn and Niall kept talking. Liam reached over and touched Harry’s shoulder, causing the boy to jump and look at him, looking… scared. “Harry!”

Harry was breathing heavy.

“Why would you fucking tell them? How do you even know?” Harry asked, shocking all of the other boys.

“Harry, I’m sorry, I just-“

Harry turned to Louis and glared.

“You told him, didn’t you? You want to get him to tell me to say yes to the stupid surgery?” Harry asked.

“Harry,” Louis started, signing as he spoke. “It’s not stupid. And-“

“And I’m just concerned.” Liam interrupted, signing as well. Harry looked taken back but then shook his head, making his curls bounce. “I want you to make your decision for the best of your future. I want to make sure that the choice you make is what will make you happy-“

“Then what fucking right do you have to tell everyone? To even bring it up? I can make my own decisions on my own! I can take care of myself! I don’t need everyone in the fucking world to tell me what they think! I don’t need to hear about everything I’m missing out on! I just don’t fucking need this, Liam! I thought for sure that you of all people would understand that!” Harry yelled, standing up from the table they were all sitting at and getting Liam to stand as well.

“I do understand! But, Harry, you care too much about everyone else to think for yourself!” Liam kept signing, not even realizing how fast he kept his pace up.

“And what do you think you’re fucking doing right now?” Harry hissed, glaring at Liam. “I’m deaf, and a lot of people consider that disabled but us deaf people don’t. We function and we’re happy. We don’t need to change- *I* don’t need to fucking change! And all of you who just keep fucking pressuring me, who keep telling me that I need to say yes, you, my Mom, Step Dad, Gemma, and even you Louis! You all can just fuck off, okay? Fuck! OFF!”

Harry turned and stormed away. Liam was going to call after him but he realized just how useless that was as soon as the thought crossed his mind. Instead, he tried to run after Harry while being obnoxiously loud with his stomping seeing as how Harry had told him he could feel the footsteps.

Harry didn’t stop though.

And Liam didn’t catch him.

--

The thing about Harry is that Liam could text him and all but in order to really have a meaningful conversation they had to be in person because Harry couldn’t talk on the phone. It was what had made speaking to Harry so difficult that Liam hadn’t seen the curly haired boy for a week.

He sent text after text message to Harry, talking about how sorry he was and that he should have spoken to Harry about it quietly.

Harry’s only response was;

**I’m not talking about this through text.**

And so that left Liam with nothing. He couldn’t go up to Harry and talk to him about what was going on, he was too afraid of Harry hating him so much he would break up with him. Liam didn’t think he could deal with a break up, or the disappointment in Anne’s and Gemma’s eyes when they found out that he failed not only to help Harry but also to stay Harry’s boyfriend and friend.

God, he sucked.

He was moping in his bedroom, occasionally answering a text message from Louis who was feeling just as bad as Liam, if not worse. Louis had actually tried to go up to Harry in person and Harry had specifically told the feathered haired boy he didn’t want to talk to *him* and slammed the door in his face.

Liam’s phone vibrated and he was shocked to see it was from Zayn.

**Stop texting my boyfriend, it’s hard enough to get him to smile without you and your depressing attitude taking it away again.**

**Sorry. That was mean.**

**But seriously, stop texting him.**

And Liam supposed Zayn was right. He was probably ruining their still good relationship and one ruined relationship was enough for Liam to put on his resume so he stuffed his phone under his pillow and then laid down, eyes closed.

After a moment, there was a knock.

“Come in.” Liam answered, even though he really didn’t want to talk to anyone that wasn’t Louis and wallow around in self-pity.

There was a long pause, much longer than either of Liam’s parents would have ever usually waited after his approval to open the door. It caused him to open his eyes and sit up.

The door opened slowly and a head of curly hair poked in.

“Harry?” Liam gasped.

Because what the hell was Harry doing at his house when he was so angry at Liam and had every right to be because Liam ruined their happiness and their perfect little world and God, he missed looking at Harry’s green eyes, had it really only been a week it felt like a yea-

“You’re a coward.” Harry hissed, voice harsh and only making Liam feel worse. He recoiled and realized it was too dim in his room for Harry to properly read his lips so he had no choice but to sign and hopefully have a large enough vocabulary to have this conversation.

*What?*

“Coward. Funny, I thought I was the one who was deaf, not you. Isn’t that why we’re in this fucking predicament?” Harry asked.

Everything in that moment gave Harry the upper hand. He could talk and therefore use more descriptive words than Liam could with Sign Language. He was standing and Liam was sitting. He could talk fast and Liam could sign slow. He was in the right and Liam was in the wrong.

*I’m sorry.*

Harry snorted.

“Of course I know you’re fucking sorry, Li. I’m not stupid. You’ve probably been beating yourself up about this and I felt bad at first but then I realized how big of a fucking coward you are and changed my mind. I *waited* for you. I waited for you to come up to me and talk to me. I waited for you to put on a brave face and just be a man but it seems like you went back to being the same fucking coward you were before you met me. The same one who couldn’t make friends with anyone because he didn’t know how to go up to them.”

It hurt.

It hurt so much to listen to Harry and to know that everything he said was right. It hurt to sit there and take it all from the boy he loved so much. It hurt to know that he was being a coward.

But it also oddly pissed him off.

*Yes. I’m scared. I was scared a year ago, a few days ago, and I’m scared today.*

He had actually wanted to say that he was always scared and will always be scared but he still didn’t really know how to go about doing that in Sign Language when he wasn’t the best with tenses. He didn’t care, he was going to make do and he stood up to sign better.

*You’re scared too. I don’t know what you’re scared of. I don’t know what you’re hiding from. You’ve always been so outgoing and the idea of you becoming hearing is terrifying you.*

God, it was hard. He wanted to be in depth and say things but no matter how he phrased it in Sign Language it wouldn’t go right. It was easier when he was able to talk along with what he was signing so that Harry could read his lips and pick up on the things Sign Language didn’t allow.

“Yeah. Yeah, I’m scared. I have every right to be. I don’t know what to do and everyone is pressuring me and it… it’s too much for me, Li. It’s too much for me to think on my own and out of nowhere the guy who I am totally in love with springs the subject up with my friends and they’re all talking about how amazing it would be for me to hear and *how do you think that made me feel, Liam*? What were you *thinking*?” Harry asked, looking deeply at Liam.

Liam shrugged pathetically.

*I love you. I want the best for you.*

Harry’s eyes softened. His shoulders relaxed and he watched Liam with a strange look Liam couldn’t really decipher.

“And how do you know what’s best for me?” Harry asked, his voice softer than Liam could ever remember it being.

*We’re the same. We make choices for our friend’s happiness and never ourselves.*

Harry paused.

And then he smiled.

And then he signed.

*You really are a* and then he did the thing Louis did when he would slap his leg and snap his fingers when talking about Liam.

Liam was about to ask what that meant when Harry simply turned and left the room, leaving Liam alone again.

But nowhere near as sad as he was before.

So he went to his bed and picked up his phone to text Louis.

**Tell your boyfriend/my bestfriend that I’m sorry for disturbing the date but I need some assistance…**

--

Harry was sitting in his room.

He was contemplating the idea of texting Louis so they could talk and maybe work things out but Louis had no idea how much going behind his back to tell Liam about his surgery hurt his trust. Louis was his best friend ever since he could remember. Louis’ voice was one of the few things he could remember.

And he had betrayed Harry.

And then Liam had gone ahead and instead of privately talking to Harry and asking him what his thoughts were, he had cornered Harry around positive comments about getting his hearing back. As though being hearing was the only choice.

He stared at his door and he knew Liam was right. Harry was afraid of getting the surgery. He was afraid of throwing himself into a world he didn’t understand and had to learn from all over again. In the never ending silence that he was engulfed in he wasn’t afraid of sudden noises, didn’t have to strain to hear, didn’t have to hear bad comments about himself.

He was scared.

But that still didn’t give anyone any reason to make him make a choice.

The lights to his room flickered and he got up to go to the door. He opened it smoothly to see his Mother smiling gently at him.

*Liam’s here to see you.*

Liam? Liam actually came to Harry’s house? He got over his fear and was able to come over to talk to Harry with a real conversation?

Harry was in shock.

He signed a quick thank you to his Mom before turning to the stairs. He walked down them to see Liam’s back to him. The boy was wearing large headphones and looking all around curiously. Harry smiled in spite of himself and knew that he couldn’t approach Liam like he would with a deaf person. Where he would normally flash the lights he instead called out, “Hi.”

Except, he got no answer.

“Liam?”

Still. Nothing.

“Liam!”

Liam started humming softly and then turned around, smiling brightly once his eyes landed on Harry. He ran up to the curly haired boy and hugged him tightly before pulling back to sign.

*Hi.*

“Why were you ignoring me?” Harry asked.

Liam blinked, eyebrows furrowed together, before shaking his head and singing.

*Sign please.*

Harry had never been so confused before in his life.

*Why were you ignoring me?*

Liam put his hands up to sign before pausing, thinking hard. Then he smiled sheepishly and began to sign the letters one by one. He started with his hand in a fist, then brought his fingertips together, put his middle and index fingers over his thumb, brought all of his fingertips back together but with the index standing straight up, then left the index straight and made a ninety degree angle with it and his middle finger as his thumb tucked into them and pointed his hand down, brought his hand back up to cross his middle and index finger, put all of his fingertips back together (making the slightest movement with his hand), and then ended with his index and thumb touching on the tips and all the other fingers spread out. And then he made another sign.

*S-O-U-N-D-P-R-O-O-F headphones.*

Harry gave him the most incredulous look he could muster.

*Why?*

Liam smiled.

*I want to see what your world is like for a day.*

And Harry got it.

Liam was proving a point, he was doing what nobody else would or could. He lived in a world of hearing but was making himself deaf to see the difference, to see what Harry saw, and help him make a choice in that way. Liam was breaking the wall that nobody ever broke before.

And it was so endearing that Harry felt his eyes tear up a little bit.

Liam cocked his head and smiled, moving close to Harry and placing a hand in his curls. It was probably the most sincere Liam had ever looked at him. It was as though Harry was looking at Liam for the first time.

And then Liam wiped his thumb across Harry’s eyes, getting rid of the bits of tears that made their way out of his eyes and then pecked Harry on the cheek.

Harry smiled, all dimples and probably looking like an idiot as Liam signed to him.

*Take me on a date!*

And so Harry obliged.

--

Liam liked the date.

It had started off with Harry and him having lunch with his family which only consisted of Anne and his Step Dad for the time. Liam had understood why Harry did it too. Harry was showing Liam every aspect of a world in deaf culture and Liam had never been so out of his element before.

They had eaten a delicious meal but Liam didn’t really get to tell Anne that until after they were done. It was one thing to talk and eat at the same time but to sign and eat was too much work and just ended creating issues and was also found as impolite. So, they ate in the biggest silence Liam had ever known.

After lunch Harry had taken Liam’s hand in his own and led him out of the house. The curly haired boy didn’t sign where they were going or what they would be doing and Liam didn’t really mind. He trusted Harry to show him everything and he was sure Harry would.

They walked down the sidewalk, hand in hand, and all Liam could do is watch. With his sound cut off he was more in tune with what he saw. The light was a little bit brighter, the colors a little bit more vibrant, and the people all so much more… different.

Liam could tell more about the strangers as they passed by. One woman was very obviously stressed out about something, but judging from her briefcase it was probably work. A couple were in that happy stage of love, the guy giving the girl a piggyback ride and her laughing. A little boy was upset with his mother, glaring at her and the action figure in her hand that she probably took away.

It was so weird to see them and hear nothing.

Harry led them into their town park.

Liam looked around, still watching, still observing. Harry glanced at him and cast him a real smile, showing off all his white teeth and his perfect dimples. Liam smiled back and tightened his grip on Harry’s hand.

They didn’t need to talk.

They went to an open part of grass and lay down on it, their shoulders just brushing and their hands still locked. And Liam got lost like that for however long they stayed there, which ended up being an hour, before Harry sat up and pointed at something, tapping at Liam’s shoulder.

Liam looked and saw the most adorable puppy he had ever seen. He literally wanted to run up to the dog and squeal in delight when he saw Harry sign.

*Look at that* and then Harry did the sign that Louis always did when referring to Liam. He slapped his leg and snapped his fingers.

Liam paused.

Harry’s smile slowly started to fall the more Liam stared, watching Harry with an incredulous expression. After a while of staring Harry finally managed to recover.

*What?*

And so Liam answered.

*You and Louis have been calling me a D-O-G? That’s what this* he slapped his thigh and snapped his fingers again *means?*

A look of realization crawled over Harry’s face. He covered his mouth, looking as though he didn’t know what to say for a moment, before he finally let out a small laugh that Liam couldn’t hear.

*When naming you we use dog meaning P-U-P-P-Y.*

Liam blinked.

He watched his stupid boyfriend who really was stupid but so adorable with his stupid curls and stupid dimples and stupid bright sparkly green eyes. He watched his stupid smile and his stupid hands and how amused he was to call Liam a puppy.

And Liam started to laugh.

Harry brightened even more and Liam suddenly was laughing harder than he should have. He leaned into Harry, held his stomach, and ached from the pain that was created from laughing too hard.

He loved Harry.

He loved him so much, even without being able to hear him.

He could finally understand.

--

“So what do you think?”

“I think you should do it.”

“Even after wearing the headphones?”

“Yeah, cause… Even though I could see everything so much better, I… sound is too beautiful to say no to.”

“Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay.”

--

Harry had never been so scared in his entire life.

He was seated in the hospital bed, in one of those stupid hospital gowns, waiting for the doctor to wheel him away to get surgery. His stomach was churning so much he probably would have puked if he had eaten something that morning. But he hadn’t, even with all of Liam’s persistence.

Liam was sitting by his side, holding his hand gently. Louis, Zayn, and Niall were standing at the foot of his bed, having some conversation that he really didn’t care about enough to keep up with their lips.

His Mom, Step Dad, and Gemma were at his other side, quickly signing words of encouragement and how very proud of him they were.

He didn’t care.

He was still scared.

He looked over at Liam who took his hand away to sign.

*What’s wrong?*

Harry gave his family and Louis a pointed look that said, “Don’t you even dare to try to watch what we’re saying to each other” that made them all turn away.

*I’m scared.*

*Of what?*

*I don’t know. The worst that could really happen is that the surgery fails and I don’t hear again which isn’t all that bad because I’m used to it. I…* Harry paused, eyebrows knit together as he thought hard. *I guess I’m just scared of being thrown into the hearing world.*

*I’m going to be there for you. We all are. We’ll ease you into it, I promise. You can even use my headphones.*

Harry smiled at Liam who smiled back, glad to see Harry not so terrified anymore.

*I love you.*

*I love you too. Deaf or hearing.*

And that was what really made Harry’s jitters go away.

He was going to be able to hear, he wasn’t changing completely. Sure, being deaf was a part of who he was but that didn’t define him. It was like his sexuality, he was gay and happily in a relationship but that wasn’t all he was. He was dorky and stupid and clumsy and…

And he could be hearing.

The doctor came in then, he started talking and Harry read his lips like the pro he was.

“Are you ready, Harry?”

Harry grinned and nodded. He looked over at Liam and took his hand one last time.

“Thank you.” Harry whispered (well, what he hoped was whispering) before he was whisked away to face his fear.

--

When he wakes up it is loud.

There wasn’t any actual noise to be heard. There was silence in such a different way that it was engulfing him, making him drown in the sound of silence. It even made him nervous, finally helping him understand what it meant for something to be louder than silence.

Because silence was the loudest thing there was.

“Wow.” He whispered to himself, opening his eyes when he heard his own voice. He didn’t think he sounded like that! It wasn’t bad but it was… weird.

His hospital room was dim and he sat up to look around, hoping to find someone there.

The door opened.

His doctor walked in with a smile playing at his lips. He stood next to Harry who looked down at his shoes and blinked every time he heard the footsteps.

He could hear that!

“I told your friends and family to wait in the waiting room so you wouldn’t wake up to too much noise.” His voice was deep, warm, and comforting. Harry never thought a voice could be that way. “I’ll let them in whenever you think you’re ready.”

There was no chance that he was going to get more ready than he was.

“I’m ready for them to come in.” Harry smiled, trying to get used to his own voice. He could hardly even remember what it had sounded like when he was a child.

“Great. They’re eager to see you. And then afterwards we’re going to do some tests, okay?” The doctor asked as he walked to the door.

“You’ve got a really nice voice.”

The doctor chuckled. An actual chuckle. Harry’s first time at hearing a chuckle.

“You’ve got so much more to hear, Harry.”

The doctor left and for a moment Harry was left in that silence again. He shifted and he heard the sheets move. He twisted and heard the fabric move. He slapped his hand and he heard that too.

And then he heard the door open.

He watched as they all walked in, his family and his four stupid friends. They were all trying very hard to be quiet, and only really Gemma was succeeding.

She was the first to speak.

“Do I sound as fabulous as you expected?”

Wow, her voice was so soft and smooth and nice. It was like a cloud and Harry blinked at her before snorting, surprising himself with the sound.

“I think I sound much more fabulous.”

That got a round of laughter from all of them which surprised Harry because laughter was… strange. It had the faintest hints of their voices in it while sounding different at the same time.

Harry turned to Louis.

“Your turn.” Harry grinned. Louis grinned back.

“Hi Harry.”

There were two things Harry immediately noted. The first was, Louis was naturally a bit louder than he probably expected he was. Secondly, Louis’ voice was much different than he had expected, sort of edgy really.

“That was not what I was expecting, wow Louis.” Harry laughed slightly, getting a pout from Louis.

“Hey! What’s wrong with my voice?” Louis asked offendedly.

“Nothing babe.” Zayn answered.

Harry tried to think of a way to describe Zayn’s voice and the only word he could think about was cool. It was low but not deep with a different sort of twang to his voice than either Harry, Louis, or Gemma had.

“Your voice is really cool, Zayn. Much cooler than Louis’.” Harry nodded.

“You’re the worst best friend ever!” Louis whined, cuddling into Zayn.

“Me! Me next! What do you think of the Irish accent, Harry? Cool or what?” Niall asked, entirely too smug with himself.

It actually took Harry a good moment to understand what Niall was saying. His accent was pretty thick and made the words sound much different than what he remembered.

“I think I’m actually going to need you to slow down when you’re talking or else I’m never going to understand you.” Harry explained, getting a shrug from Niall.

“Only so many people can handle the Irish.” He replied.

Harry finally turned to Liam who was smiling so happily at Harry that Harry couldn’t help but smile back. This was the moment that Liam was waiting for. And Harry would finally be able to hear him.

Liam seemed to sense that Harry wanted him to speak next because he shakily licked his lips before letting out a small,

“I love you.”

His voice was nice. It was so pleasant, Harry could literally never get tired of it. It was deeper then Louis, Zayn, and Niall but sort of neater than them too. It was so pleasing and then those words just had the most emotion in them he had ever heard in all of his few seconds of actually hearing that he just melted in his spot.

“I love you too.”

And Harry knew, as long as he had those amazing friends and his family and Liam at his side then hearing things louder than silence wouldn’t be that bad after all.