

Progress - Take That

Pairing: Gary/Robbie

Von abgemeldet

One

Chapter One

It's summer 2011, the first week of the Take That tour. The band had realized their idea to rent a big house where they could spend the time between gigs, to save money and time. They didn't, however, bring their families. That way they figured they could improve the group dynamics and have some more fun and freedom.

„No I don't really think so. I'll have a quiet one.“

“You're sure?”

Gary paused.

“Yeah, quite.“

Mark just nodded and let it be. He looked at his watch and then up to Rob.

“We're gonna meet in about an hour in front of the bar, then.“

He stated, flashed Rob a smile and turned to leave.

“Na, count me out, Markie.“

“You don't wanna go either?” Mark asked, startled.

“It's not that strange, is it? I'll have a quiet one, as well.“

“Well as a matter of fact it is. You're sure Rob? Or do you have some other plans?”

“If I had, I'd tell you. No, it's nothing really, just will you join me mate? And talk and play some music, what do ya say, Gaz? Up for some company?”

This time it was Gary who was surprised; he didn't however, let it show. He turned to Rob and smiled at him.

"It's fine with me, Rob. You know I'm always in for the music."

Rob smiled back and focused on him.

"I know." He said simply.

Mark seemed to be disappointed but eventually shrugged and crossed the space to Gary. He placed his hand on his shoulder and gave it a short squeeze.

"Well then, have a nice evening." He said warmly and looked over to Rob.

"You, too, of course."

"Gonna, Markie. I'll make it up to you another time." Rob answered and waved him good-bye.

"Oh, you will." Mark agreed sounding happier again, waving back at him.

Then he closed the door and left the two of them alone. Gary, still seated on the rug, grabbed the book from the table and continued reading. After a while he heard some movement from Rob's direction, followed by some footsteps and a dramatic plopping Rob.

He looked up to Rob, who had sat down next to him, and was now busying himself trying to read the pages he had been reading a few seconds ago. He glanced at Rob's face, but Rob wasn't looking back at all, he seemed to be focused at the book, and Gary found that he didn't really mind. He went back to his book and continued reading as well, glancing at the quiet Rob once in a while. Sometimes Rob interrupted him, laying his hand between the pages, stopping him from turning them, whenever he wasn't finished with reading. After a while their reading tempo grew similar and the incidents got fewer. They read like this for a few hours and Gary was almost surprised when he noticed the light getting less and the room growing darker and Rob was still reading. He laid the book on Rob's lap, who looked up at him puzzled at that sudden interruption and then got up to turn on the light.

"Ah. You're just . . . never mind."

"Thought I'd get up and leave without a comment? That'd be rude."

"Very." Rob agreed.

"And not your style at all. But, you never know, maybe you don't like me reading your book."

He sat down next to Rob again, taking the book up again. He didn't open it though, but left it closed in his hands.

"Care to fill me in?"

"Huh?"

"Not that I'm complaining, but you know Mark was quite right, you're not behaving like your usual self, you know."

Rob's face split into a grin.

"I'm thirty eight now, can't I have a quiet evening without being questioned like some dirty man robbing a bank?"

"Well. First, you're thirty-seven and second . . ."

"Please officer, please! Believe me I'm innocent. I would never ever do something bad, would I? Oh please officer you have to believe me! My Mum sits at home crying all day and the Misses can't pay the rent."

Gary laughed.

"Why the interest in the book?"

"You mind me reading?"

"No, not at all. But why the interest in first place?"

"Well, just wanted to get an idea what you were reading, so I read a few lines, and they were quite interesting." Rob shrugged.

"I had nothing better to do so I thought I might as well continue."

"Well then, let us resume." Gary answered grinning.

"With joy."

They finished reading some hours later, and the evening being still fresh Gary invited Rob to join him in his room. They could jam, watch some TV or just talk, it was up to Rob. The men left for Gary's room, when Rob suddenly startled and made an excuse to go back for something he had forgotten in his own room. It didn't take him too long to return. And when Gary opened the door to let him in, he almost fell over laughing-but because he was the bloody band-leader a grin had to be sufficient. The things Rob had claimed he had forgotten turned out to be some special lollipops, and he was holding them in front of him, presenting them to Gary like some ridiculous flowers. Rob's grin was wide and when he saw his face it turned into laughter.

"How great is this?!"

"Are they . . .? Are they really the same?"

"I really do hope so. Would have been a waste to have spent one thousand dollars on them, otherwise."

"You spent one thousand dollars? On lollipops?"

"Not simple lollipops, but cherry flute lollipops. This is just too awesome. Open them, open them!"

Gary fought with the wrapping, opened the first, and when he was done offered it to Rob, who took it with a mocking bow of his head. Gary unwrapped the second one, and when he was finished held it up to his face. Then he glanced at Rob.

"Where did you get them from?"

"C'mon Gaz, let's quit the talking and eat them already, I've been dying to try them for about a week now. I tell you later. Everything what you want, mate, but. . ."

"Yeah. Okay, mate. Guess you're right. Cheers."

Gary said raising his lollipop like a glass, and licked. It was fantastic. They were indeed the same lollipops they had eaten all that time ago. But the best thing about it was watching Rob looking like a happy idiot. Not that that itself was a rare occasion, Rob tended to use every opportunity to be funny and make a fool out of himself. But as it had been back then and as it was now, most times it all was an act. Some things never changed. This time, however, it wasn't. Rob was genuine. Licking and babbling stuff about the incredible taste and chuckling all the while. They ended up on Gary's bed lying on their stomachs, their legs swinging up in the air and facing the other wall. Gary's thoughts drifted away and so it took him a while to notice that Rob was looking at him, his face turned to the side. His glance was serious, but once he noticed Gary watching he cracked a small smile.

"What were you thinking about, Gaz?" He asked quietly.

Gary hesitated before he turned to face the wall again and answered:

"I think you have a pretty good idea what I was thinking about."

He felt how Rob moved next to him but resisted the urge to look at what the other man was doing.

"You know, Gaz, something did change in all that time. You didn't kick your shoes off. That's some advancement."

That made Gary turn his head to look at Rob, who was lying on his left side by now, facing Gary. He had propped his head on his elbow, a lazy smile tugging at his lips.

"That's a given. Only you would think that becoming messy is an improvement of one's character."

"Well obviously not for everyone." Rob said ironically, then he changed his tone to a more serious one.

"For you though, it is. I mean, you know, it's just. . . I . . . I like it that you care less about that stuff, now."

That Rob was sounding genuine and almost shy was weird enough, but it was also awaking some memories Gary had worked hard on to erase. So he just snorted and his smile grew tighter. Rob seemed taken aback by this change, Gary felt him staring for a moment, before he punched him on his shoulder.

"D'ya remember that one picture in "Shout"? It just looked so bloody ridiculous; with you licking that thing like there was no tomorrow."

". . .Yes. One of the photo-sessions I actually remember. We had quite a lot fun that day."

"I mean really? How you could you keep a straight face is beyond me."

"It's not . . ."

"-I thought you were Ironman or something. . . so incredibly serious-"

"-Probably not Ironman. . ."

"-Probably not Ironman, well yes, me minds a bit blurred, you know. But I remember the important- What?"

Gary had hesitated for a moment. And Rob had noticed.

"Nah, never mind."

"C'mon" another punch in his side this time. "You can tell your old pal."

Gary considered him.

"It was actually you who put the idea in my head in the first place."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah quite. You remember trying to embarrass . . ."

". . .The ear stuff? Ah C'mon that wasn't really. . ."

"Well anyway, I thought back then that it was quite unfair that you were the only one getting all the attention, and having all the fun so I . . ."

"The first time you did it, you were practically giving it a blow-job! And you were staring at me. Your fucking eyes were practically glued to mine. . . I felt like. . .I dunno. . .It was. . ."

"Intense."

"No."

"Yes, Rob. Yes."

"You are a weird one Barlow, really you are."

"Well I wanted to get back at you, that time. A bit, at least. And I wanted to make you blush."

"You totally succeeded then."

"How did I succeed? If I remember correctly you were cracking up of –"

"Well Yeah. . ."

". . . laughter and ended up rolling on the. . ."

"-yeah I did-"

". . . ground. That's not a sign for shy behavior, Rob."

"Just saying that it was for me, Gaz."

Gary gave him a skeptical look and Rob just raised his brows as an answer. Gary shook his head.

"Never mind then. I still don't get how you could keep so serious though. . . It was bloody hilarious."

"It's called acting, Rob."

"I know acting. I can do acting. But how old were you back then, 14 or somethin'?"

"-Rob."

"-well not 14 then. Doesn't matter. It was great though."

"Yeah, I think so, too."

Rob turned back and laid on his back again. Gary smiled and also leaned back, both of them watching the ceiling.

"Where did you get these lollipops from, anyway? A thousand dollars. You must be nuts."

"Funny story that. You remember the short trip Ayda and I took to Spain last autumn? I think I. . ."

“Yeah, I think you e-mailed me some pics . . .”

“Yeah, I thought so. Anyway, we were in Barcelona, I think, and . . .”