

Laying in the old bed, back in Cardiff a half-naked Arty in your arms, you just stroked her head, caressed her neck, brushed her slightly messed up auburn hair as she snuggled in tightly. The two of you... after she snuck up to your room and the two of you began some foreplay, which had rapidly progressed to something *more* when her expression suddenly shifted and she quietly asked you if it was okay to stop while looking ashamed since it had been a while since you and her had done more that make out and touch one another some.

It didn't take a second to even process it before telling her, of course. After she had pulled her cute underwear back up and you tossed your yellow and black striped boxers back on, she just curled up close to you, silent.

You wanted to ask what was wrong but... you rarely had seen your tiny Fury like this. *Small*, in spirit not size. It reminded you of when you and your friends had been threatened on the way back to the castle on the weekends, when she felt like it was her fault, since she wanted to keep working. All you could stand to do was just cradle her until she wanted to speak. It took a while until she eventually shifted some, put her hand on your cheek and moved your head a hair so she could lock eyes with you.

"I'm really, really sorry, Elliot. I want to but... I don't know. I started think about stuff earlier today, while we were out with Helen and Kendrick. Though I would just get over it like I usually do in an hour or two. Could keep myself busy like normal. Thought maybe *this* would help when helping Helen with the housework didn't. Talking with Helga didn't do it... But... I want every time I am with you to be special, be amazing. And... I don't feel amazing right now.", she said, her hand back down to caress a simple ring you gave her in a Murder Forest right before school ended.

"I have... these thoughts sometimes. I don't like myself sometimes. It... it's not you, really, but since I got you, they feel like they are getting worse, happening more often."

"Oh-oh fuck. Am I doing something wrong? I'm sorry, Arty. Just tell me and we can fix it. Are we moving too fast or-"

"No. Not at all. It's nothing you do... you have been sweet, kind, gentle, supportive... I saw the look you gave one of them. When Salazar told his cronies. To kill me first. How furious you were. How afraid... I know you would be willing to end the world. If I died. I do love you, Elliot. And I think that is part of it, actually."

"Arty, I would... I don't want to. To have mom and dad die. Linda, Apollo. To not get the chance to bring Taylor back. Even Brighton; I want to be able to give him shit for a long time. Make him apologize to

you... I... I scare myself sometimes. With how much I care for you, even if the Beast is gone now. What I would do. What do we need? If we need to take a break, whatever I will still love you want to be your friend, I-“

“No! I do want be with you, for as long as I can, as long as I have. I- it is hard to explain. What this kind of love is, how it feels... for a long time... no... you saw. I lived without love for a long time aside from ‘Pollo, you get that. Apollo, I know would never hurt me. Just like you. When we got taken to our caretaker? I don’t even recall. Three, four? But it was fine for a while... he only starting hitting us after a couple of years, started yelling at us. I think his alcoholism was getting worse. He was even nice at times. Bought me and Apollo cupcakes on our birthdays... And I really am sorry, I know you wanted to do something else tonight. Not have to listen to me whine.”, Arty said, a sad almost detached tone coming into her voice.

The fear that had began in your gut, that she didn’t want you any longer began to fade, replaced by a different one; something was very much wrong. You just kept holding her.

“Arty, don’t apologize. Being with you? I love it. Always. Whether I am just with you or *with you*, okay?”

“I-I know. That might be part of it too... you are so good to me. Maybe the solution is to be a little worse? Slap me around some or make fun of me a bit? Just... take me, despite what I say. Do it even if I said no... you are stronger than me, could hold me down. S-stop me from struggling too much. And I am sure after a bit... I would start saying yes, instead of no.”

“What! Arty! I would never-“, you said, a small sick feeling in your gut rising at the idea, horrified at the idea of hurting her, hurting like *that* ever.

“I-I know you wouldn’t, Elliot! A-a joke; very bad one. No... not a joke, something else. I’m not all the way right in head, I don’t think, Elliot. I just... I love you so much. But... I went a long time with out love aside from Apollo’s and I even though care for him so much... you know him. How he is, how all that made him. What finding mom like that and being beaten every other day by that dead Bastard did to him. You saw those memories... but you didn’t see what came after, didn’t know me till a year ago. Didn’t see me burn the place to the ground after we packed up what we could in our old cheap backpacks and ran, being homeless. I haven’t told you... I-I was paranoid for a long time. Didn’t want people to be close, have another chance to hurt me, had panic attacks for a while if an older person even got near me. Only person I trusted *was* my brother. Wh-why I like animals so much, because they don’t hurt you like people do.”

"I am so sorry, Arty. You know I am never going to judge you; I love all of you, right? I'm right here, come a bit closer into my arms, and please, tell me anything you need to. I know you didn't have a great childhood; you are such a strong person but... that's is going to leave scars no matter what. So if I can, let me try and make them hurt a little less; anything you need."

"Thanks, Elliot, you really are too good for me and to me... I know. There are scars, that they are part of what makes me myself. I love me, who I turned out to be, usually, even the scars. Sometimes though, I feel ashamed. Hate them. Feel them ache. Don't want people to see that I *am* messed up so bad. I love you so much for...for accepting them. Me. Wanting me. You normally help so much if it starts up, those thoughts. Knowing I have someone who loves me, truly loves me in the way you do. But... sometimes it also makes it hurt more, to be loved so much. Sorry, it is probably stupid."

"Never stupid. Scars aren't always fun to have but they do make us who we are. And, we can't always control where our thought will lead us. How we feel. Memories just come up and all we can do is deal with them how best we know how. I get it. Just keep going if you want, or don't. We could get to bed, play some games for a while to take your mind off it, get some midnight snacks; whatever you think might help. And... if for what ever reason you don't want to sleep next to me, if I am making it worse, I can always spend a night on the couch or whatever."

Curling in closer, Arty sniffles just a bit. Rubs her head against your chest.

"So, so good to me... no, please I want you. I want you here and I want you to hold me tight when we sleep. I never, ever have nightmares, you know, when we share a bed. I don't have them that often any way but... not even once when I had you there, Elliot. Maybe...maybe a snack or two in a while though."

"Of course Arty. I'll keep them away if I can. Always, I can't stand seeing you suffer, even if it is just a bad dream. So... what where you thinking about? What is bothering you?", you ask, returning her gentle acts of affection.

"S-stuff, things, how they were after killing him, smiling when he died screaming. Seeing it again and me still grinning. Being on the street. How it was after we started going to school...a lot there is a lot messed up in me, Elliot..", she says and takes in a deep breath before continuing.

"And you can tell me all of it. Any of it. Every bit of it."

“When I found out what we really did, understood what it really meant, I researched those kinds of curses later, when we were at the school... I *didn't* regret it for a long time but I was afraid. That people would find out. Afraid of *myself* for figuring it out when I was eight years old. Wanting to hurt someone so much, make them *pay*. Smiling when a person was dying in agony. Realized, even if I might pass out from using it... I knew I could do it again, *myself* this time. Found what the movements were in my research, knew the incantation. Had a wand now, could channel my power. The intent... I feel it sometimes, rising up; felt it back then and now too. When people say things 'bout Apollo behind his back, poke fun at him for how he is. When they picked on me, made fun of my old shabby cloths, stole my things.”, she said both pulling in and pushing in at the same time, conflicted. Left a few tear drops on the sheets and a small line of snot on your old tee.

“Its alright. It is... kids do things. People feel things. I have urges too... when Salazar returned, when he threatened you... I can probably use the Killing Curse like Linda. I *know* I can if anyone hurts you. Me, Linda, and Taylor got picked on a lot too. We had one another so it made it okay till people stopped, learned to not fuck with us. I- can't understand what you went through but keep talking if you want. Stop if you want. I- love you all the same, no matter what you might tell me. My dear, dear Arty.”

“Elliot, please, I am messed up in the head and heart, I don't deserve it. You can love me...just don't love me so much, overlook everything that IS messed up... I don't deserve unconditional love, not from someone as amazing as you are...”

“Yes you fucking do. You deserve everything in the world Arty. There are only a few things I will not tolerate from you and believing you *should* be ashamed, somehow unworthy, hating yourself *is* one of them. I will drag you to therapy, oblivate them afterwards if I need to. Break into a muggle pharmacy, steal some medication for you if we thought it would help. Talk to you every single night, all night. Anything and everything. We are probably both kind of messed up some... you are the first girl I ever cared about. Statistically...you probably aren't the one. But I know you *are*. One and only. Gonna spend the rest of my life with you So... what ever you need, anytime you need.”, and your petite fiancé begins to sniffle more.

Arty gives a sad, soft and high pitched whine almost, but just pulls back in and keeps talking.

“I-I learned some time in second year, when I wasn't as strong as should be, wasn't growing, got hurt from things a normal witch wouldn't... I learned I was going to be dead so soon. *Why* I was like this. I was so angry for a while. Life hadn't done enough already so it just decided I would never live long enough that I could see children grow up, be with my brother any longer than a couple of decades. So *angry*... then sad. Depressed that entire summer. Wanted to hurt the world so much, felt empty, hollow. But Apollo was there; didn't know what it was but he knew something was wrong. Was so worried he got physically sick some while we stayed at Potter's Charity together; they made an exception for us and let

us share a room you know? Apollo just... made them back when we first got there. They might have felt sorry for him, I guess but I was so glad he did. I crawled into his bed so many times just to hold him some even though being touched can make him anxious, he always let me. I tried to resent him some, for a while, but found out I couldn't do it. People... they think he needs me, because of how he is. No, I need him, needed him badly that summer. Still need him."

"Apollo... he is my friend for a good reason. He is an amazing person. He might not be quite the same as most but so what? I am still going to be so happy to have him as my brother-in-law. I know you could never feel like that about him, resent him... that is the person you are. A part at least. A great part and one of the things I love so much about you. And there isn't anything wrong with you needing him at all; he is your brother, your twin. Muggles have sayings about twins and how they share a single soul, that they need one another to be complete, at least when they are growing up."

"A-a lot of people don't see that in him-didn't before last year when he got his army, started connecting more. I was the only person who ate with him for years, Elliot and it never bothered him even if it hurt me to see him isolated like that. You...you were probably his first real friend, Elliot. Weren't afraid of him, didn't talk down to him, be around him because you *had* to be. Respected him and how he is, always treated him just like anyone else. Included him with stuff, relied on him at times. Forgave him for almost hurting you. Brought us back to your house for a real Christmas then... helped him when it was too much... I'm so happy for Apollo, so, so happy but... I'm scared. I'm scared too and I don't understand why; I don't want to be scared, Elliot.", she looked at you and began weeping honestly.

"Its okay. It's okay, Arty. Get it all out.", you say and stroke her back, kiss the top of her beautiful auburn covered head. Want to cry a little to seeing her like this but stayed strong for the moment.

After a minute or so and with a new damp spot on your tee, the fierce tiny Hufflepuff was able to get her voice under control even if she kept her head down against your chest and sheets.

"He... you saw what he did when I was a baby... tried to kill me. Were with us when we talked..."

"Yeah. Yeah I was and it hurt me to see it. But... you told him it was okay. I did too. Forgave him, asked him to forgive himself. Scared, alone... didn't know what he was doing. You so small... fuck-", you stop before needing to wipe your eyes a little.

"After I learned I wasn't making it past 35, I tried to stop holding grudges, work past the things in my past, what I did, what I lacked, how I am. Was able to mostly. But... when I learned about that I-It started again. I wasn't mad at him, he helped me more than he ever hurt me... never ever laid a single finger on

me besides that, was always there, protected me and... Sometimes I wish he had kept the pillow on longer. Started sooner so they couldn't bring me back. That... I was miscarried. Maybe then mom wouldn't have done it, wouldn't have left him alone. I-sometime-I wish I hadn't been born, E-elliot. He would have never had to go through all that. Maybe dad wouldn't have abandoned mom, thought she cheated, been disturbed when I was born looking nothing like him. Ah, fuck, god-it... Apollo would have never had to kill if I wasn't there, had a normal childhood. Learned how to be like everyone else if it wasn't for me. Fuck, it hurts so much-", she let out crying against your body, movements almost like she was twitching from *physical* pain as you felt a cold, sick sensation deep down.

You wanted to scramble to protect her but fought to remain calm. Find words. Soothe her somehow. Grew ill knowing no potion, no charm would fix this; that you had been so blind you never picked up on what she felt, had been going through. How all her emotions, experiences could get jumbled up so bad and make Arty feel...wrong. Ashamed to have been fooled by her constant smile and never looked deeper.

You had seen Arty cry before. Relived her worst memory with her, something she didn't want you to know, not yet at least. Seen her screaming in pain. Had her go a bit odd when you were together to the point it was almost frightening. Seen her ashamed and small.

This was more. Scarier, worse in so many ways.

You cradled her, almost like you would a scared child...

"Arty... I never knew you felt like this. Had those kind of thoughts... Were feeling so many things, all smashed together like this. I am sorry I didn't see it, never asked. Its alright, its okay. It's not often, not as bad as it sounds for you but I've had a few bad thoughts too. When Taylor died. When my friends got hurt. Once or twice because I was a walking timebomb, will destroy everything if I mess up, get myself killed. Linda has had them to. It- its not good to think that way but you aren't alone. It's okay Arty. You- I am so glad you were born. I wouldn't be able to love anyone but *you* in the same way I do now and I would never give up this feeling. And Apollo? He would *never* ever trade having you with him, being here, showing him love and kindness for a "normal" childhood... He loves you far, far too much for that."

She managed to stop sobbing after a minute. Started to speak, softly.

"You really mean it don't you?"

"I wouldn't lie about it for all the galleons in Gringotts. If an army of Dark wizards kidnapped you, I would fight through them all to bring you back into my life. I love you Arty. So do Apollo and Linda. So do your friends and your old soldiers. Every single one of us are happy you were born, became part of our lives"

"Elliot- I am so so sorry, my head is all messy, all these things going through it at once... really not liking myself sometimes... it, it just gets too much sometimes... part of why I work till I am exhausted, so I am too tired to think like this."

"It is fine, no need for apologies. I get it, I really do. I'm here and I don't mind if things are a little messy up there, okay love? But, but Arty... you've never hurt yourself, right? Tried to really die?", you asked, understood it was a difficult question but needed to know. Your best friend... she had a few very well healed scars that you hated after she explained them, hated that in 6 years you hadn't asked or even noticed them.

"No... no I thought about it a few times but I couldn't leave Apollo by himself, even before learning what mom did, I didn't want to put him through something like that. He... he was even worse than he can be now, back when we first started school, you know. But after I learned how short my life would be... I mean I befriended a graphorn when I was 13. Sleep in the Forest whenever I could get away with it despite knowing I could just be bitten in the neck by a giant spider, get my face eaten by about 50 things that live there. Enrolled in a class I had no business being in, nearly killed myself from exhaustion fighting Crouch, was willing to chug potions till my heart gave out... I never tried to commit suicide, didn't hurt myself with my own hands but... I don't think I valued it that much. My life. I didn't, not really, until... until I met you. Now I am scared. I knew I was going to die, made peace with it. Now I am engaged, have new friends, things I have to protect. I had mostly given up on some ideas. Having kids... just a pipe dream, something to keep me warm at night when I fantasied about it. *Now* I can't get the idea out of my head after being with you. Have begun looking seriously into what I want to do when I graduate. Trying to take a few less risks... not because of you or 'Pollo. For *me*. So I can do that stuff, stay with the people I love a longer. And it hurts, it scares me so bad sometimes I just want to run and hide."

"Arty, I know it can be scary. Life. The future, everything we are fighting against. Fighting to keep. It wakes me up sometimes, even though Helga helped a lot with the nightmares. But I understand. There are days I almost want to throw up from thinking about it. It isn't terrible, pretty rare when I feel like that... but after Last Light? Having you threatened? Avalon? It was bad enough I just skipped class and hid in the Room, up on the Tower a few times. Studied till I passed out so I didn't think about it. Spent a lot of time with Linda, talking about important stuff or just chatting to distract ourselves. But you are brave, much more than I am. You have said before it is about confronting the fear, not running; if you run from a graphorn, probably going to get trampled, right? The only way... it is to confront it. Stare it down. So I tell myself it doesn't control me.", you said, as gently as you could while still keeping a confident tone, even if confidence was the last thing you had. What Arty was saying... going through? It *terrified* you and hurt somewhere deep down, deeper than something like *crucio* or a dementor could reach.

"I don't think I am very brave, Elliot. Just... didn't care, have a messed-up brain. Followed you, kept smiling, fought through all that stuff be-because I need you, don't want you to be disappointed in me, stop loving me and I-I am just a dumb Hufflepuff and you were nice, and-and h-house o-of the hardworking, loyal... and I didn't want to go back to before being with you-and-and", she said, and began to dry sob some. Had a death grip on you.

And rather than calm? You felt angry. Not at Artemis Perting-Hallaster, never at her. But just at her feeling like this toward herself, not seeing herself like you did and at the world which had made her have thoughts like this. Angry at yourself for being a bad fiancé to let her hold this in when she had helped save you so many time, in so many ways.

"Arty."

She had a start from your voice raising a bit and changing your tone, hid under the covers some, barely peeking out at you. Hated yourself some for frightening her but would deal with it because she had to hear what you are going to say.

"You are not "a dumb Hufflepuff", you are the girl I fell in love with. You are so fucking smart, you are brave; you are the reason I am buying some ice skates for this winter and learning to use them, why I have kept fighting when all I want to do is give up. You don't need me Arty. *I need you.* I will never ever be disappointed in you, never stop loving you. You are the girl I am spending my life with, that I gave my grandmother's old engagement ring to. If anyone *ever* calls you dumb for your house or anything besides, says you are a coward because the world gets the better of you sometimes... *I will* send them to St. Mungo's for a month. I don't care if it was Albus Dumbledore returned; he would need to buy a different silly hat to match the patient robes. I... I've never told anyone this but... the first House the Sorting Hat offered me was Hufflepuff; I went to Slytherin because Taylor did and he looked sad and disappointed. Thought if I went there so I could cheer him up. I made friends with Raven because she looked cool but also kinda sad and other people hadn't talked to her in any of our classes that first day. Went up to her because she sat alone in all of them even though she looked like she really wanted to share how awesome it was to be a witch with someone else. And... I am very, very proud to have been given the chance to be in the same House as you. Be chosen by the Queen of the Badgers to be her host. Be that kind of person, the kind of one you fell in love with.", and it is your turn to tear up some.

It takes a minute for her to settle back down, stop shaking but you kept stroking her hair and back so she can talk if she needs; you wouldn't try and just lecture her, Arty deserved better than that.

"I'm sorry, I- I think it is so cool you could have gone into my House. People have given me shit before about my House but... I forced the hat to send me there about 2 seconds after it started talking so I could be with my brother. And I-I am proud of it. Myself and my choice. My House. You kinda did it for a similar reason... maybe we were always supposed to meet and fall in love, ha. Wouldn't that be something...I love you. G-guess I figured out why you are such a bad Slytherin."

"I think you are cool too, Arty. For doing that for him; for a lot of things, really. And *hey*... I can be pretty cunning when I need to be. You know my ambitions... even though I have reprioritized some since I got you. I am a bit sad, perhaps, since if it went differently, I might have met you sooner, got to share even more time together with you."

"Heh... that would have been nice, but part of why I was so interested in you? Slytherins seemed dangerous; dark and dashing. I know the House isn't like it used to be, most of my bullies we from Gryffindor even, but... it felt exciting, some. After you beat my brother, seemed so strong and cunning, had scared off Brighton, even came back to the tavern so you could walk me to the castle?"

"W-what? You *knew* I wasn't out collecting ingredients... that I just wanted to come back, to see you again?", you say a bit shocked that your clever ruse had been seen through so easily.

"Of course... I always knew. I thought it was very nice, very sweet of you. And even back then, I already wanted to be with you some, heh...", Arty tells you with a coy smile.

"You seemed so amazing, Elliot. If I was going to die soon, might as well live dangerously, I thought. And I- I'm sorry, again. I did want to use you some. I didn't really even intend it but I have had to, well, fight dirty, take advantage of what I could since I was little. You could help me with potions because I wasn't very good at them, maybe show me how to fight better. Another layer of protection if you started to really like me some.", she said and the small amount of mirth faded into shame.

"Arty. It is fine. We all "use" each other to some degree. It is how you knew how to live and I know it wasn't just because of that, since... we did fall in love after all.", you say and stroke her hair, the back of her neck before going on.

"I really wanted a girlfriend, before I graduated. Used you too. I snooped around a bit, heard you never had a boyfriend either so... I thought it might be easier, to impress you, a-ah seduce you because of it. S-sorry. And I-I did want to protect you, after we met. Because you were small, not very strong, naïve seeming... had a difficult background. That wasn't right, even if I *will* protect you forever now. Not right to have wanted to be around you just because you looked like a victim, because I heard rumors you

weren't well off. I shouldn't have started our relationship for those kinds of reasons; I will say, however... you being so terribly beautiful did also play a big part of it however and I will never apologize for that."

"Heh, Elliot. It's okay. I don't resent you at all for it. Can't no matter all the other things I feel. You have been so good to me, are being good to me right now. Even if I hate people taking pity on me... it got me you, so its okay. Though, I'm not sure about you going after me because you thought I might be "easy."", Arty said, softly, so softly and caressed your face with one hand. Held your scarred left hand with another.

"What? No, I didn't mean it like that!"

"Sure...", she says with a tiny sniffle and a wane smile.

"Really! It was more like... easier for me. Never been all that good around girls who weren't Linda... and you know. I didn't want to be the less experienced one."

"Haha... I get it Elliot. I... I don't think I would have started dating you if I heard you were some ladies man, honestly. Always wanted a b-boyfriend but, it was hard. Scary. I didn't want to be taken advantage of, have my heart break along with the other things I feel sometimes. And it was always kinda low on my list of priorities given my lifespan, until I met you. But... I felt safe with you, even when I was just thinking I might lead you on some... I felt so safe. I *always* feel safe with you, Elliot, even when we are doing crazy dangerous things. Felt completely safe when you took my virginity despite being nervous and scared because, well, no going back then; can't have two first times. So glad I picked you..."

"I'm so glad I picked *you*, Arty. You make me feel... at peace. Brave. Even when I am angry, or anxious, or terrified. Just being with you calms me and... it gives me courage. I would never have wanted my first time to be with anyone else than you. It was... magical. *Real* magic. I know it hurt, but you asked me to not stop and... that made me feel amazing, that you wanted it even then. To be with me like that. And when we are together now, I feel so...connected with you. You are so much more than I could have ever hoped for.", you offer back, kissing her lightly then much more deeply for a time.

When you broke the embrace, you got to see the most beautiful sight in the world, a sight that made sunsets seem dull; Arty just staring up with her clear blue eyes free of tears, of most of her pain and a 1000 watt smile which you couldn't help but return.

“Hey, fiancé, Elliot, do you want to-”

“We don’t need to have sex, Arty. I know you are going through some stuff and we just had that talk, and all.”

“Weeeelllll I was going to say go downstairs and have some ice cream and pickled olives with me. But if you want the other...heh, we could do *that* instead. I could let you eat me out instead of eating something myself.”

“Oh! Oh ha. Okay, I see. Sure, let’s just head down stairs... for now. Don’t know why you seem to like such weird combinations so much lately. We don’t need to do the other thing, even though you do look really good, very tasty... Can you do something for me though?”

“Unhuh.”

“Please put your sleeping pants on. I bet Apollo is still at it with MineCraft in the TV room and I don’t want him speculating on why we came down and all you have on are panties and that tight little tee.”, you say as you rise from the bed and done your own pajama pants.

“Ha!”, she barks out in a warm laugh. “Sure. In exchange... will you hold my hand, while we go down; I just really want to touch you... and can I sit in you lap on the couch while we eat? Hang out with my brother for a minute or two before coming back up?”, she asks while beginning to get dressed.

“Sure, Arty. Though it is still a bit awkward to... show affection like that when he is right there, even if his glares are less intense now a days. Just perfunctory I suppose.”

“Heh. I don’t know why you worry so much. Apollo likes you. And he already knows we have sex any way.”, Arty says completely nonchalantly as she takes your hand and rises from your shared bed. You may have squeezed a little hard, evidenced by a soft yelp of discomfort.

“S-sorry. You said he...knows what I do to his little sister? That we... that I am fucking you stupid several nights a week? Ha ha...”

“Yep. Not in detail of course, that would be weird. But Apollo knows. He isn’t dumb but just needed to make sure he got that when we were up here to always knock. Thinking about putting a sock on the door knob, just to make sure.”

“How... and since when, Arty?”, you ask with a small twitch in the corner of your right eye.

“Well, I told him of course. And I guess... since after the 3rd or 4th time we did stuff? Why do you look pale, Elliot?”

“Oh you know. Very over protective brother who might give Dumbledore a run for his Galleon’s knowing about me *violating* his little sister... said sister telling him that I am doing it regularly... wondering why I haven’t been hexed yet.”, you say with a gulp, slowly walking into the hall with you hand wrapped around Arty’s much smaller one.

“Elliot! You don’t violate me...okay sometimes that would be a good term but still, Apollo... you know him. You know that, in the end he *is* normal. Just a bit different, has been hurt so many times in the past... One of the many, many reasons I love you is that you get that. He understands that people in love, in a relationship much less engaged are going... do things with each other. He is fine with it. He...Apollo trusts you. Like a lot. He knows you aren’t going to do something bad to me, take advantage or hurt me.”, Arty says as you near the stairwell, popping up on her tip toes to give you a couple of quick kisses.

“Yeah, yeah I get that Arty. Apollo is Apollo but before that, he is just another 16 year old boy. So he didn’t freak out or get mad or anything? Good.”

“I didn’t say that, Elliot. It took me like ten minutes to calm him down but in the end, he accepted it; that I love you and wanted it. To have sex with you. Said he was just going to not think about it, which is fine. But he, a-a couple weeks ago... Apollo did come up to me...wanted to know. About sex stuff... not what we do, specifically! Just like, in general.”

“What? Why-oh. *Oh*. Mom and dad are letting Riley come and spend the weekend next Friday. Okay... did you talk to him about it, Arty?”

“Ah...some. I tried. J-just general stuff but... trying to give your brother sex tips is embarrassing, a bit too much for me. I told him, he should ask you... I take it he never did?”, she says shyly, her cheeks pink and blushing

“Nope. Just FYI might be a bit embarrassing for me *to*, given any advice I could give him would come from me fucking his sister...”

“Yeah. But, will you do your amazing girlfriend a favor? Talk to him a little? Maybe... ah give him a tip or two? I think Riley is probably only experienced with her hand, isn't going to be too upset if any thing they get up to is a little awkward... but I really want Apollo to get to enjoy something like what we have, Elliot.”

“Arty... are you sure you are his little sister? Not the older sibling, given how much you worry? But... I suppose if it is the girl I am madly in love asking, I can be a good brother-in-law. Talk to him some. Just... I don't think Riley is going to be disappointed regardless. Me and him have had to go drain the lizard when we had gone out for the day and... I am just glad Riley looks, ah, sturdy. Ahem.”, you say and look down a bit with cheeks flushed pink.

And the pair of you got to enjoy each other's company for just a bit longer. Got to learn pickles and strawberry ice cream was quite good. Got to have a somewhat awkward conversation with a man who could toss you around like a ragdoll if he wasn't one of the kindest guys in the world.