

# —ARMOUR

## STORY OUTLINE

OCTOBER 2022

### EPISODE ONE: **KICK/BEAT**

*Teaser:* Harry, a mid-twenties footballer at a Northern England based Premier League club, Fountains City, prepares for a major TV interview. Precisely what he is about to announce we aren't sure, but one thing is for certain; he's got his loved ones with him and it's a momentous occasion...

*Five years earlier.* Harry, having won Young Player of the Year at Fountains, moves to his first flat where he is reunited with his childhood best friend, Charlotte, who has recently come out as a lesbian. There is an assumption from Harry's brother and agent, Aiden, that Harry and Charlotte are dating and Harry does little to dispel that myth. Lorna, Fountains' Welfare Officer, realises something is up with Harry - his attitude is off and he is continually hot-headed. Harry allows his teammate, Mason, to stay at his flat. Drunkenly, Mason masturbates to porn in the same room as Harry; a completely solo act on Mason's part, but Harry finds himself watching furtively. Mason catches him and enquires if Harry is gay; Harry realises his own attraction to the same gender but denies it. Training is odd the next day - Harry takes his aggression and embarrassment out on Mason but calms down when he is introduced to a new young player, Zac, who Harry is clearly attracted to. Harry and Charlotte attend a camping trip with school friends where one of the party is homophobic toward their bisexual friend, Matt. To Charlotte's chagrin, Harry, despite his elevated status in the group, does not call out the behaviour. Harry learns that Matt is living with his boyfriend in London where, he's told, attitudes toward gay people are more accepting.

At Harry's 21st birthday party, Harry and Mason have an awkward encounter where Harry tries to brush off what happened. He then spends the night playing along with the concept that Charlotte is his girlfriend. Harry learns that Charlotte is moving to London - he is devastated. Before Charlotte can give him the details, she discovers Harry's lie, that they are romantically involved, and storms off. Harry drowns his sorrows at the bar where he meets a bartender, Theo, who is instantly flirty. They end up going for a walk and Theo kisses Harry. Harry is initially reluctant, but allows Theo to suck him off. Harry spots the flash of a camera - a pap having followed them. Harry chases the pap to the party venue and physically threatens him. Aiden sees this and forces Harry to let the pap go. But, before the pap leaves, he reveals to Aiden what he saw. Harry is forced to admit the encounter, but is insistent it was a drunken mistake and Theo led him on. Aiden kicks into action-mode to block the publishing of the photo. Harry returns home, crying his eyes out - could his sexuality be exposed and his career over simultaneously? He's not even accepted his own sexuality yet and he's at the start of a potentially incredible career. The next morning, Aiden comes to Harry's flat with the newspaper... the headline is obscured... Harry looks terrified...

## EPISODE TWO: **SAVE/TOUCH**

Harry looks at the headline, flooding with relief; it doesn't mention his name. Aiden has saved him, though Harry still obsesses over the article for weeks. Harry refuses to speak to Aiden about the incident, insisting he's not gay. Harry and Aiden travel to London where they have an encouraging meeting with Camden Athletic - a top division side interested in signing Harry. Whilst in the capital, Harry apologises to Charlotte for his lies about their "relationship" which she maturely accepts, albeit with caution. She drags him to Notting Hill Carnival where he is enamored by the diversity and open queerness of London, though he is hesitant to appear too fond of it lest anyone suspect his sexuality. Harry returns to the North and attempts a disastrous hook-up with a woman he met at his party - he physically can't do it. He makes an impulsive decision to text Theo who, to ensure they aren't seen, drives them out to the countryside where they have animalistic sex. After losing his virginity, Harry's fear prompts him to leave Theo in the middle of nowhere. Feeling guilty and stressed, Harry is sent off in his next match and Lorna arranges him counselling sessions.

Harry feels obligated to show up at a WAGs dinner where Mason gets off with Harry's date, in whom Harry has little interest. In front of witnesses, Harry feels compelled to protect his sexuality by shoving Mason, who responds by making a quiet but targeted joke about Harry being gay. That night, Harry Googles "openly gay professional footballers" - there's not one in all of Europe... The next day, Harry is anxious about training and he and Mason are kept apart by the coaching staff. Aiden says the bad press may have jeopardised his move to Camden but, determined to run away from the North, Harry implores Aiden to ensure the move to Camden completes. After training, Zac finds Harry, having heard his transfer has gone through. There's instant sexual tension between them and with Harry leaving and therefore nothing to lose, Zac initiates a kiss. Harry is afraid but after a pause, returns the kiss. For the first time, Harry allows himself to indulge in a passionate and romantic connection with a man...

## EPISODE THREE: **SWITCH/TRAP**

Harry's move to Camden has completed and he's living in London with Charlotte. He seems more confident already and is regularly texting Zac - Charlotte spots their cute messages to each other but doesn't say anything. Harry is persuaded to donate blood but when he fills in the form, he sees that gay men cannot give blood and he has a panic attack. Despite his personal problems, Harry is an instant success at Camden and gets called up to the England squad. Charlotte moves to Copenhagen for a job and, when catching up with Harry on the phone, she spots a pap at her window, terrifying her - Harry's increasing fame causing problems for his loved ones. Harry is selected to be one of the players to front Camden's anti-homophobia campaign. Terrified at being associated with the LGBTQ+ community, he tries to get out of it.

Harry returns to Fountains for a friendly match where he is reunited with Lorna. She still has a motherly affection for him and Mason; who is his usual macho self. He also meets up with Zac, their secret romance starting to blossom. Determined for them to spend time together, Zac forces Harry to go on a trip - Harry is initially wary but when they are nestled away in a cottage in a remote part of the Highlands, he loosens up and they spend a romantic time together. They have an honest conversation where Harry expresses his frustration at how his profession and fame means he cannot be himself. Upon their return, despite how much he enjoyed the trip, Harry is cold toward Zac and puts their romance on hold as he is freaked out by how close they were getting. Whilst abroad for an away match, Harry logs onto Grindr for the first time, rebounding after ending things with Zac. He goes for a clandestine hook-up with a guy who "knows nothing about football" but on his way, he is spotted using the Grindr app by a group of men. They homophobically attack Harry but he manages to get away. Once returned to his hotel, he realises that his knee has been badly injured in the attack and he breaks down, everything getting to him. He makes a call... "Charlotte, I've got something I need to tell you..."

## EPISODE FOUR: **PLAY/CROSS**

Harry's knee injury is bad - he's going to be out for at least half a year and had to lie about how it happened. Aiden questions Harry and asks if he was "up to that gay shit again" - Harry tells him to fuck off. The one silver lining - he is now out to Charlotte and can be open about his sexuality with a friend for the first time. Zac gets back in contact with Harry and they end up sleeping together. Harry promises to go and watch Zac play a match but, again, freaks out and bails at the last minute, ghosting Zac. When back from his injury, Harry is off the pace and is offered a loan deal to regain fitness and form. He rejects an offer from an English lower league side, instead opting to run away again and choosing Buckman United - a Portland-based club in the States. Charlotte joins Harry's family for Christmas due to her estrangement with her mum, who has far-right views. She tells him how progressive Portland is and suggests he tries going on some dates since he won't be so famous there. She also reveals she's in a relationship with a Danish woman, Tove.

Harry feels quickly rejuvenated in Portland. Feeling confident, he goes on a date with a flamboyant guy called Jeff. There's no romantic connection but they make friends and Jeff takes him on a wild night out where he gets a guy's number. Harry video calls Aiden, intending to 'come out' to him but he is shell shocked when, before he can say his piece, Aiden announces he's dropping Harry as a client. Harry is no longer a hot commodity and he can't keep him on for sentimental reasons. Harry begins his life as a Buckman player - the locker room is more open than back at home. He is inspired to revisit his psychologist, to whom he is finally open about his sexuality. Harry meets up with Lorna, who is visiting the States and invites him to her wedding. He bravely tells her he is gay. They talk about his career, how he's still young and that the lower table Premier League teams could be interested in him. As she leaves, Lorna cryptically states: "keep your emails open - our new manager at Fountains is an open book..."

## EPISODE FIVE: **PRESS/TURN**

Harry is three months into his flourishing Buckman United career and is dating a guy named Kyle. Now firm friends with Jeff, they spend lots of time together and Harry drunkenly cheats on Kyle during a foursome with Jeff. Harry and Jeff have an honest conversation about gay versus straight relationships. Jeff says Harry is still a "baby gay". Even though he's mid-twenties, he's going through the sexual and romantic exploration that straight people usually go through in their teens. Harry travels home for Lorna's wedding and meets up with Charlotte and Tove, who are pursuing IVF to have a child. He forces himself to 'come out' to Aiden, saying that he feels like a new man and accepts his sexuality. Aiden now realises that his past comments and dropping Harry as a client made it even harder for Harry to achieve this. Harry tells Aiden about Lorna's hint of a return to Fountains. Aiden speaks to Fountains - would they take Harry back? He - with Harry's permission - is open about Harry's sexuality. If Harry decided it was the right thing for him, would Fountains support him to safely 'come out' professionally?

Kyle finds out about Harry cheating on him and dumps him. Harry, realising he's fucked up again and feeling lonely, ambushes Zac at his job working for the England Academy. He apologises for how he treated him and pleads for forgiveness, but Zac brushes him off saying he's now dating someone else and, anyway, Harry is too emotionally unpredictable. Harry attends a celebration for Charlotte's new job. Having partially reconciled with her, Charlotte invites her mum as well. Harry accidentally 'outs' Charlotte to her mum, who holds homophobic views. Charlotte is devastated and lambasts Harry for his lack of care and thought. What's more, Charlotte lied to Tove about being 'out' to her mum, which Tove now realises and feels betrayed. Harry is genuinely sorry but she can't forgive him. Harry attends his trial and impresses, despite his love life and closest friendship being in tatters. Lorna persuades Fountains to offer Harry a short contract. Harry goes to his medical, but the doctor looks concerned... could his dream return be at risk?

## EPISODE SIX: **COUNTER ATTACK**

COVID. Harry and Jeff are housemates and confined to their flat. Harry had failed his medical and ended up staying at Buckman for another half a year but eventually tries again and passes. Upon his return to Yorkshire, Harry visits his old local pub where he bumps into Theo, who has now bought the place. Theo's now 'out', with a husband and son, and the locals are all surprisingly relaxed about his sexuality - giving Harry a sense of hope. Harry's training at Fountains goes well and his performances in the reserves are solid. Now 'out' to everyone in his life, Lorna suggests that this could be the time for Harry to consider 'coming out' professionally. Fountains start preparing to enable Harry's announcement - all seems to be falling in place but then Aiden gets a call. The pap he paid off years ago, who snapped Harry and Theo together, has kept the photo and is threatening to release it if Harry 'comes out'. Harry is distraught and decides to call off his announcement - Aiden tries to talk him around, saying he has nothing to be ashamed of... but to no avail. Aiden persuades Charlotte to forgive Harry - they need each other. Charlotte is about to have a child and Harry is on the threshold of taking an historic step. Charlotte acquiesces and speaks to Harry - she tells him he could make a difference for young people all around the world. He says he will discuss it with Theo, who will be affected too. Theo encourages him to go for it, they didn't do anything wrong and whilst it will be tough, it was so long ago.

After a lot of back and forth, and struggles with his mental health, Harry decides to go for it. He tells his teammates he is gay - they react positively and Mason apologises for making things difficult for Harry. He suggests a new alternative to 'WAGS', appreciating that it's not an inclusive phrase. The plan is put into action - Harry takes part in a pre-recorded interview to announce his sexuality and a number of other measures are enacted, too, including: stadium safety procedures, endorsements from players former and current, pro-LGBTQ+ campaigns, training courses and statements of support from football organisations.

Jeff comes over to England to support Harry as they await the compromising photo to be published. At the last minute, Aiden sacrifices himself. Having already briefed Fountains about what happened, what could happen and that he had bribed the pap previously, Aiden agrees a deal with Fountains. Fountains threaten the newspaper with legal action for breach of privacy and in return, Aiden must resign from the Association of Football Agents. To celebrate, Jeff and Charlotte persuade Harry to go to a gay club for the first time and they drag Aiden along too. At the club, Harry bumps into Zac. They have an emotional conversation - Zac offers his congratulations to Harry. Harry's new maturity is clear and Zac says he's no longer with the guy he was seeing. They realise that they are going to be in each other's lives but that they are both not ready for a proper relationship. They could learn and grow together. They agree to go for dinner to properly talk and share a kiss upon their goodbye.

With nothing to lose in the last match of the season, Lorna reveals that Harry will be on the bench for the game. The club holds a reception for Harry before the match which his family, Charlotte, Tove and Zac attend. Harry introduces Aiden to Zac - a milestone in his life. Aiden states how he's so proud of his little brother for making history - but his well intentioned comments do the opposite and Harry panics at the thought of his imminent unveiling in front of thousands of fans. Charlotte takes him aside and manages to reassure him. She suggests that he takes time to compose himself by going for a solo warm-up before the turnstiles open. He takes her advice and goes to get changed. He sends a copy of the team sheet to Jeff who is back in the States - he is getting ready to perform at a drag show. Harry showers, steadying his breath and preparing himself. As he pulls on his boots, he gets a text from Charlotte - it's the picture of the two of them from Notting Hill Carnival, the first time she had seen him truly be himself. He smiles and lets a tear out. Harry walks down the tunnel and shares a hug with Lorna as they pass. He heads out towards the centre of the pitch and pauses, looking around at the empty rows of seats. A faint smile. He starts to run.