Seamus Is Seamus and You Are Yourself by Ari Munami

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Chapter One

HERMIONE.

Now. I don't want you thinking that I fancy Harry or anything like that. I don't. I definitely don't. I've got a boyfriend who I'm very happy with, and Harry is just like a brother to me. Thinking of him any other way simply seems to me terribly wrong.

But as a person with eyes, I have to concede that Harry… Harry has turned out, in our Sixth Year at Hogwarts, as just… good-looking. All right. EXTREMELY good-looking. Alright! If the cliched words "breathtakingly beautiful" had to be applied to anyone, I have to say that they would have to be applied to Harry.

It wasn't expected, I'll be the first to admit that. I remember Harry from the first train ride to Hogwarts. Not ugly, certainly, but not handsome. He was very thin and short- probably due to the fact he had never had a proper meal- his hair was in absolute tufts and his NHS-style glasses really didn't do him any favours. At a pinch, you could say that he was sweet. At a very, very large pinch. He was just normal. An average boy, you might say.

In Fifth Year things began to change somewhat. I didn't notice really, because Harry's one of my best friends. I see him every day. There was no drastic change. He was still extremely short- almost the shortest in the year. This annoyed him to a colossal extent, of course. But everyone, especially the girls, only saw his scar. They seemed to skim over his other features. He wasn't usually the talk of the girl's dormitories, if at all.

Then something very disturbing happened, towards the end of Fifth Year, which made me look at Harry again.

As usual, Harry and Malfoy were having yet another slanging match. You know the kind- mudblood-lover, Death Eater-in-training, your mother's a whore, blah blah BLAH. No different than any other fight they'd had for the last five years.

But as Harry turned away, I noticed it. If I hadn't been looking at Malfoy disgustedly at that precise second, I would have missed it.

In a millisecond, Malfoy had looked Harry up and down. His eyes had flickered from Harry's feet up his torso to his turning head.

He- sickened as I am to admit it… it's MALFOY, in case you hadn't noticed- he had… checked Harry out.

Now, as much as I hate Draco Malfoy (the slimy git) I'm not one to lie. Yes, he's awfully good-looking in a very evil Prince of Darkness sort of way. There, I've said it. I'll never, ever repeat that sentence.

And if he was looking at Harry…

The next few days I watched Harry. I tried to see him from an outsider's point of view, not as one of his closest friends and basic sister.

It hit me. Despite the fact that Harry was still tiny, despite the fact that his glasses were, in one word, dreadful and his hair a mess, the material was there. I realised that with a little nudge in the right direction, Harry could be…well, he could be gorgeous.

Then, a few weeks later, Harry got rid of his glasses. Sirius had sent him contact lenses, and he had duly worn them.

By the end of Fifth Year, quite a few girls were saying that Harry could be presentable, if he tried. If only he grew a bit, they said.

I didn't see Harry for the entire summer holidays. Voldemort had gained even more power, and Dumbledore had told Harry that he would have to stay at his relatives for the entire summer.

So on September 1st, myself and the Weasleys waited at the Platform entrance for him. I was looking around the other way, saying, "oh, where is he? We've only got a few minutes!" when there was a noise behind me, I turned around and my mouth dropped open. I couldn't even stop it.

"Hiya, Herm."

"HARRY??!" I squeaked. I know that I sounded like a complete idiot. But I couldn't help it!

Have you ever met someone that was so… beautiful, sexy, whatever you wanted to call it, that even if you were straight and they were the same sex as you, even if you were in a perfectly happy relationship and weren't even thinking of straying, the person made your stomach hop sharply up to your throat, and you suddenly got. rather warm for absolutely no reason at all?

Marilyn Monroe had It. Paul Newman had It.

And Harry Potter definitely had It. In bucketloads.

He had grown his hair, and it curled over his collar. The blackness of his hair seemed to make his eyes stand out even more. He wasn't tanned despite the warm weather, (he told us later that his uncle had kept him locked in his room for most of the holiday) and his skin seemed almost luminescent, like it was glowing. He had finally had his growth spurt and he towered over you and all this seemed to hit you like a warm, solid mass. I found that I was leaning backwards from him even though he wasn't even close to me.

He didn't have that comfortable, earthy kind of beauty that you saw more often. He was… no other world for it, otherworldly. I felt very uncomfortable in his presence.

I looked around at the Weasleys. Mrs Weasley was actually fanning herself very rapidly with one hand, her cheeks rather pink.

Ron was staring at him slightly incredulously. And Ginny…

Well, I don't think we need to go there. Let's just imagine that your long- term, rather average-looking crush suddenly turned into someone with 'It' practically overnight.

Not very pleasant, to say the least.

Harry stared around at all of us, looking very confused.

"What?" he asked suspiciously.

After a few more seconds gawping, Mrs Weasley pulled herself together enough to bustle us towards the train. When we had loaded our trunks into a compartment she had gathered herself together enough to smile mistily at Harry and tell him how he had grown into such a handsome young man. Harry blushed bright red.

By the time we were approaching Hogwarts, I had just about gotten used to Harry. And when we arrived at Hogwarts, it was absolutely hilarious from my point of view, since I had adjusted myself. As we entered the Great Hall, a few heads turned in our direction, then the whispering broke out. Everyone, girls and boys, were staring at him. Even the staff table. Most of them didn't let their reactions show, but Professor Sprout turned bright red. Snape scowled even more than usual.

The entire Gryffindor table silently watched our approach. As Harry sat down, Seamus, being… well, Seamus, broke the spell.

"Look at you, Harry!" he called out.

Harry looked up at the staring eyes, and began to get a panicked look in his own.

"What?" he asked. "What?"

He turned to me. "Is anything wrong with me, Hermione?"

Then it hit me. Harry had no idea that he now looked like... how he did. It was obvious that the Dursleys had told him how freakishly worthless he was so many times that he now actually believed it. Subconsciously, he has been affected. Perhaps it was a good thing he didn't know how he had changed- it seemed to add to his absolute adorableness.

It's halfway through Sixth Year now. I've tried to tell him what he looks like. I've pointed out that all our female Professors, including McGonagall, look visibly flushed when he stands too close to them. I've pointed out all the girls that huddle around in groups and stare at him.

"Oh, don't be silly, 'Mione," is all he says.

The only thing that backs up his statement is the fact that no girls do approach him. I know why. They're too scared. Even Parvati, who's known Harry for years and is one of the prettiest, most confident girls in the school gets tongue-tied in his presence. Only Seamus seems brave enough to do anything.

"Ah, but your gorgeous, Harry," he says at regular intervals, mussing up Harry's hair, while both girls and boys look on rather wistfully. Harry laughs and flushes, but certainly doesn't take it seriously. Because Seamus is… well, he's Seamus.

So, despite the fact that Harry is the most beautiful person in the entire school, he remains the most innocent 16-year-old in the entire world. It's rather sweet, in a way. But Harry has a bigger problem. One that's been plaguing him for months now.

The Wizarding press.

It was bad enough when Harry was an average-looking Boy-Who-Lived. But now he's turned into the

Boy-Who-Lived-Who's-Got-IT it's completely impossible.

Harry would always receive press attention as the Defeater of Voldemort. But now he was an absolutely gorgeous wizard in a society just looking for a pin-up. It's reached huge proportions now, getting attention from every country in the world. Soon girls from other countries were simply begging to attend Hogwarts because of Harry.

The final straw came when Witch Weekly got hold of some photos of Harry emerging from the shower after Quidditch practice. It was an inside job; I suspect Colin. Anyway, the combined charms of Harry in a very small white towel with steaming, curling hair and a bare, wet chest made the issue the highest seller in the magazine's history. They had to print thousands more copies to keep up with the demand. The magazine was passed round the school for weeks and I know it's now been hidden in most people's trunks.

Harry had never been so embarrassed in all his life before. Ah, the price of fame. But I think the population of Hogwarts is getting restless. The 'pretty girls' as I call that group are looking particularly wild-eyed, staring at Harry.

I think they're going to try something to get Harry's attention soon. What they'll do, I really couldn't tell you.

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Chapter Two

DRACO.

I, as a Malfoy, have always looked for outward beauty in all things, as my father has done. I have always had the most beautiful, most expensive possessions, my clothes have always been specifically cut to fit me. My father chose my mother based on her heritage and looks, and I have inherited both my mother's beauty and my father's yearning for beautiful things.

So I was the first to notice Potter's change. I pride myself on this fact, even though I can't tell anyone about it- ever the cool, detached Malfoy- I noticed before anyone else did, before anyone else began to want him. I. Was. FIRST.

Potter began to change towards the end of our Fifth Year. I don't know what it was- perhaps he had just grown up. I thought at first it was simply in my mind- I was perhaps trying to justify why I spent so much time on him- because nobody else save me seemed to see it. But I quickly realised it was because I had been trained to notice it. My other, stupider and uneducated peers never notice anything.

But that was Fifth Year. Now Potter has returned, considerably taller, with a new haircut and no awful spectacles. And people have begun to sit up and take notice. Potter becoming what he has become has confused my fellow Slytherins to an enormous extent. The majority of them have been taught from birth to despise Potter and all he stands for. And now, despite this, they all want to fuck him. The first few weeks of Sixth Year were filled with every one of my housemates scowling at Harry in a confused manner, before holding their breaths when he laughed.

Apart from a few silly girls in the lower years, Blaise is the only older Slytherin who goes on and ON about him- the others (including me) just keep our own, usually dark little fantasies inside our own heads. But Blaise won't shut the hell up, AND he's in my dormitory. If I have to spend one more night with him groaning on about how he HAS to have Harry I'll bash his fucking brains in.

And that article in Witch Weekly. I shudder to think how many times Blaise has wanked off to it, I swear- not to mention everyone else in the school. But I have to admit that Potter's physique is just as good as the bits you DO see everyday.

I should be so jealous of him. I was, at first. It seemed infuriating that Potter had yet again beaten me in some way. He bests me in Quidditch, he interrupts my, I must say, extremely devious plans at every turn, goes against the Dark Lord and comes back unscathed. And he's so good, so noble, it made me sick. Now,

I thought, he had become better looking than me. He couldn't even leave me that. Before then, even though everyone loved Harry, I was the one they all wanted to fuck. Even Pansy, who's adored me for years, has changed camps. Not that I valued her affection; but at least I knew it was there, if I ever needed my ego boosting. Now, she follows Potter with her eyes and then asks me what my father and his friends have got planned for him. She's a sick bitch, I swear. She snorted over the Witch Weekly article but I noticed her carefully fold up the magazine afterwards and slip it into the pocket of her robes.

My only consolation on this score was the fact that Potter had absolutely no clue that everyone is in lust with him. I've heard him protest a dozen times to that Granger girl that no-one liked him at all, and that she was imagining all of it. It was rather amusing to see the frustrated look on her face, I must say. At least, I thought, only I know how he's beaten me again. There also seems no shame in wanting him-Christ, even McGonagall fancies him in her way, and- disturbing as it may seem- Snape blatantly wants to push him up against the nearest wall. I've seen him in Potions look at Potter with a glazed, slightly confused look before he shakes himself back to his usual scowl.

The only one who seems completely exempt is Dumbledore. He watched everything with that goddamned twinkle in his eye- he enjoys the messed up feelings of his colleagues. He thinks it's fucking funny.

But hey, when you're his age, I suppose you have to think everything is funny. Otherwise you can't really carry on.

But it's changed, for me. I don't know why, exactly. I know why I want Potter, just like everyone else in the wizarding world. I always have the best things and Potter is the most gorgeous person of either gender I've ever seen- but I knew that was coming,

I knew before anyone else did. But now…

I don't just want to fuck Potter. I want to know him.

Jesus. You know how hard that is for me to admit to? I'm not meant to feel like this, I wasn't built this way… but every time I get close to him the fucking tiniest violin in the world starts playing its little

melody just for me The birds start singing. It's a wonderful fucking day.

I don't know why this is. Myself, and Slytherins in general don't have time for little virgins. Which of course Potter blatantly is. You might find that hard to believe- I do too, sometimes- but I've realised that nobody here feels worthy of him. They don't think they're good enough for him. Jesus.

As I said, Slytherins never normally want a virgin. They don't want it all lovey-dovey, rose petals on the pillow and waking up in your one true love's arms the next morning. We don't want to teach, be gentle, be understanding. We want someone who won't break, and doesn't expect kind words.

Leave the sentimental shit for the Gryffindors. They're so noble, they actually think you should be in love before you sleep together- or at least think you are. Except Finnegan of course. But Finnegan… is… well, he's just Finnegan, alright? Ravenclaws are easier, although clinical. They see it as a bit of a learning experience, they want to better themselves, and are willing to try most things, if only for research purposes. Hufflepuffs- let's not even go there. Just getting them to put the right bits in the right places is a bloody challenge.

So I know how each house's little fantasies about Harry go. Gryffindor would see it as loving and sweet. Ravenclaw, as a chance to work with the best, and so everything should be tried. Hufflepuffs… I'm not sure they think past the kissing, quite frankly.

Naïve fuckers.

But Slytherin…

Hard and rough, with restraints as a preferable option.

This is what worries me, what started off these sentimental thoughts on Harry in the first place. Because, despite what he has seen, what his background might be, Harry is still an innocent. He needs to be preserved.

I know he can't stay completely innocent for much longer- someone will make a move on him soon, I'm sure. I'm just praying it won't be a Slytherin. Hell, even a Hufflepuff would be a better option. Harry wouldn't understand pain, and dominance, and humiliation. He needs someone who cares for him, wants to be nice to him, perhaps even lo…

Fuck. There goes the little violin and bloody birds again.

Harry is as naïve as hell. Usually that would piss me off so much I would want to destroy it. But in Harry's case… he needs his innocence, that spark in his eyes that rings out true and clear, he needs it to remain himself. I don't want anyone ripping it away from him.

Let me tell you a little memory that remains for me the most Harryish moment I've ever witnessed.

It was towards the end of Fifth Year; and yet again Harry Potter and myself were fighting for no apparent reason. Just a few inches from Harry, who I had noticed by that time as becoming very heavenly, and was getting rather flushed through his anger, rather turned me on. Perhaps not the smartest thing to do, but it was only one little look, alright??

Jesus.

Anyway, just my luck that the mudblood had to go and notice. Her eyes widened, her mouth dropped open slightly, and she rushed after the rapidly disappearing Harry. All I could think was: fuck.

I followed them at a distance, but I didn't need to be too close to them to hear Granger, in that eardrum-shattering voice she adopts when she gets worked up, say:

"Harry! Malfoy was looking at you! I mean up and down! He FANCIES you!"

And Harry's reply, accompanied with a slight chuckle.

"Don't be silly 'Mione. He's a BOY." I mean, for fuck's sake. Doesn't that just sum up the innocence that is Harry Potter?

"Don't be silly 'Mione. He's a BOY."

If anyone other than Harry had uttered those words, I would be desperate to get hold of them and show them just exactly what a boy could do. But since it was Harry, something truly amazing happened to me- something that's never happened to me in my life before.

I… melted.

As in I felt all squadgy and happy. As in I thought what Potter had just said was endearing. And sweet. As in if little fluffy bunny rabbits had come hopping up the corridor, instead of trying to kill them I would have cooed "awww!" like a fucking seven-year-old future Hufflepuff.

I mean, really. I'm a MALFOY, for Christ's sake!

So why oh WHY does Harry make me feel this way?

That's why I'm pissed at Blaise. He's just desperate for a piece of Harry. But he wants it like all the other Slytherins want it. And he wants it badly enough to go on the offensive. He IS a Slytherin, after all.

Just as well I'M one as well, then. Lucky I'm sly, and devious, and crafty. I'm not going to let Harry Potter be tainted. He needs affection. He needs warmth. He needs…

Oh Christ. That little fucking violin just started playing again.

The bloody birds will be along soon. For fuck's sake!

Bloody fucking gorgeous Harry.

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Chapter Three

SNAPE.

Damn the boy!

Why did this have to happen??! Why?? Have I not been punished enough??! First of all I actually had to put up with Harry Potter actually being bloody alive. When in any other circumstances and if he was anyone else he would have been as dead as a doornail. Then I had to put up with actually teaching the little twerp. And have him break school rules left, right and centre, be particularly rude to me, I might add, and actually get rewarded for it! How is this possibly fair at all?!

I somehow foolishly thought it couldn't get any worse. How wrong could one person be?

Oh, so very, very wrong.

I was sitting at the Staff table at the beginning of Potter's accursed Sixth Year at Hogwarts, (only two

more years to go- thank MERLIN…) and had just pasted onto my face my normal welcome-to-another-year-of-me-giving-you- hell scowl when there was a flurry of activity at the back of the hall and students began to enter, all whispering just about the same thing.

"Have you seen Potter?"

Potter. It's always about Potter, isn't it.

He walked into the Hall then, and we all got a good look at him.

It honestly didn't cross my mind that Potter might turn out… how he has done. I should have seen it coming, quite frankly. Lily was very pretty and James- loath as I am to admit it- had most of the girls in the school fawning after him. Everyone says that Potter looks exactly like his father. I don't. Oh, they have the same characteristics, but James's son is on an entirely different level. He is a very different person then either of them were.

He's not like anyone else, in fact.

The reactions of my fellow teachers were. completely pitiful, to say the least. Sprout went bright red on first spotting him. I wasn't completely surprised. Well, what do you expect from a Hufflepuff?

Minerva blinked several times whilst staring at him. She looked shocked more than anything. Dumbledore, of course, had his usual twinkle in his eye. Must he find everything so damn funny?!

Then Smeldon, the new DADA teacher leaned over to me.

"My my..." she said, "now just who is that?"

I mean, honestly. Here was a very attractive, dark-haired and smoky-voiced grown woman asking after a

16-year-old boy.

Again, completely unfair!

The chatter in the Staff room then reached an all-time low. I mean, I know we're not all genius's but we are intelligent people and before... Potter happened the conversations in-between lessons were at least mildly interesting. Not anymore, however.

First of all it was:

Teacher 1: Have you seen Potter this year?

Teacher 2: Yes.

Teacher 1: Yes, indeed. (followed by numerous meaningful glances, nodding of heads and raisings of eyebrows.)

Now it's moved on to:

Teacher 1: Did you see that article on Potter in Witch Weekly? Awful breach of privacy for the poor boy.

Teacher 2: Yes. (pause.) Rather a nice shot of him though, I thought.

Teacher 1: Yes. in fact, I might just keep the article for er… future reference.

Teacher 2: A good idea. Might follow your lead.

Teacher 3: Was there an article about Potter? I might just take a look. (calm tone of voice betrayed by the frantic grabbing of the magazine.)

I mean... honestly.

The damn boy has interrupted the entire school. Teachers and pupils alike, no matter what their sex or age, look at Potter with this bloody hunger that's simply just not right.

Sixth-year Gryffindors and Slytherins are the worst, of course. It's a wonder any of the stupid fools manage to brew anything that even remotely resembles a potion, let alone the right one. They're all too busy staring at Potter. Bloody wonderful Potter. Except me, of course. Did I mention that I'm not attracted to him? No, really. I'm stronger than that. I hate him. I don't want him to…

Oh dear.

Damn the boy!

SIRIUS.

It was quite a shock, I must admit.

I hadn't seen Harry in several months. Hell, I hadn't seen anyone in several months. I was on a job for Dumbledore. I'd exchanged a few letters with Harry, but it had been limited because of the project I'd been involved in.

So I arrived at Remus's house with absolutely no knowledge that my little godson had become a raging sex symbol practically overnight.

Of course I wanted to go and see Harry, but before I went Remus tried to explain it to me.

He sat me down on his sofa.

"Now, Padfoot," he said. "I must warn you that Harry's… changed somewhat."

Icy fear gripped my chest. "What's wrong with him?" I yelped.

"Nothing's wrong," answered Remus, a little half-smile on his lips. "Just that Harry's gone through quite a few physical changes."

I laughed jovially at this. "He's a teenager, Moony!" I said. "Of course he's going to change! What's wrong? Grown a bit? Few spots on his chin? A bit of facial hair?"

"Er..." said Remus.

"Don't worry, Remus," I continued, patting him on the shoulder in a manner that I now know must have been extremely patronising. "It's only Harry, after all."

Moony sighed. "Fine. But don't say I didn't warn you."

I went off, shaking my head.

Let me tell you now. I will never ever doubt anything Remus says again in my entire life.

Dumbledore set up a meeting for us. I was grinning expectantly until Harry burst into the room, and then I'm afraid my smile immediately turned into something of an extremely shocked grimace.

"Sirius!" Harry shouted, launching himself at me.

"Harry!" I managed in a strangled sort of tone. "You've got… tall," I finished lamely.

"Oh! Yeah." he blushed slightly, before brightening up. "So, where've you been?"

I was in awe of him. Still am.

And, quite frankly, it's very lucky that I thought of Harry completely platonically as the son I never had before he changed. Otherwise we'd be in a very awkward situation.

The newspaper articles are rather amusing, however.

DUMBLEDORE.

Fate makes fools of us all. And it's rather fun to watch.

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Chapter Four

RON.

Right. I see where everyone's coming from on the subject of Harry. Yes, he's very good-looking. But the entire world has gone completely overboard on the entire thing! They just won' t leave Harry alone. I used to be jealous of Harry. Now I am only thankful that I'm NOT him. It's ten times worse now than it was during the Triwizard Tournament.

I'm only happy that Hermione doesn't find him completely irresistible. After about a hundred fights and two slaps throughout the Fifth Year she finally convinced me that she only saw Harry as a friend. I admit I was slightly worried- alright, very worried when he turned up at the beginning of Sixth Year and 'Mione started squeaking over him. But to my utter relief, after she got used to him she went back to treating him like her surrogate brother.

But the rest of the school aren't like this at all. I think, out of all of them, the bloody Giggle Gang as they've come to be known as are by far the worst. You know who I'm talking about- Lavender, the Patil twins, and all their little friends. They've already been in our dormitory to try and steal Harry's underwear. Luckily Dean and Neville managed to foil their little plan, and we convinced Harry to put a complicated locking charm on his trunk.

But they went completely too far in their next little scheme.

The Gryffindor team had had Quidditch practice, and 45 minutes after it had ended Harry was the only one who hadn't turned up for dinner. I was just about to ask someone about it when there was a noise by the doors to the hall, one opened slightly and Harry put his face around the crack. All the Gryffindors started staring at him. He looked very flushed.

"Ron," he hissed, "RON! Please come here! NOW!"

From behind me at the Gryffindor table I could hear the distinct sound of several girls giggling like mad.

Well, how was I to know it was an emergency? I was right in the middle of my chocolate pudding!

"Harry," I said back, "can't you just come in to the hall?"

"NO!" he yelled, looking extremely angry. "Believe me when I say that I truly can't…"

By this time the Staff table had noticed the little disturbance and McGonagall was stalking down from her seat, looking quite pissed off.

"Potter!" she said when she got closer. "What ever are you doing? Come in here at once!"

Harry's eyes opened wide and he blushed even more. "I can't!" he squeaked.

McGonagall sighed exasperatedly and went towards the door. At this, Harry let out a gasp and slammed the door in her face. The entire school was watching with great interest by now. McGonagall tried to open it again, but Harry was obviously holding the other side so nobody could move it.

"HARRY POTTER!" McGonagall shrieked. "What ever is going on?!"

"Please, Professor, just send Ron out here!" continued Harry in an extremely panicked voice from behind the door. "Or at least tell me the Gryffindor password!"

"Not until you explain what is going on!"

"I can't!"

McGonagall rolled her eyes, took out her wand, muttered something and the door swung open.

The entire school gasped.

There Harry was, completely naked, with nothing to cover up his more... ahem, private bits than a helmet from a suit of armour.

McGonagall was almost speechless.

"Potter… what in Merlin's name..."

"It's not my fault, Professor!" Harry exclaimed. I wondered if it was possible for him to get any redder. "I was just taking a shower after Quidditch and when I came out someone had taken all my clothes AND all the towels! I didn't have my wand with me either! I had to run up to school with nothing on at ALL! And the Gryffindor password's been changed- I couldn't get IN!"

The girls behind me started giggling even more hysterically, and were joined by several others from various Houses. Seamus started singing the striptease song.

"Um. Professor?" asked Harry timidly, "would you mind? I'm a bit cold."

"Oh!" said McGonagall, going rather pink, "of course, Potter."

She muttered something and immediately Harry was covered in a black robe. There were several disappointed "awws!" from across the room.

"You'd better have dinner, Potter," continued McGonagall, looking very strict.

"Um," said Harry. "I think I'd rather go back to Gryffindor." You could tell that he was more embarrassed than he ever had been in his life before.

"Sit, Potter! Afterwards we'll go over this… disgusting joke in more detail, and punish those responsible."

"Um," said Harry again. He was now talking to his feet. "I'd rather forget that this nightmare ever happened, to be perfectly honest."

"Nonsense, Potter. Now go and sit down."

Harry sat down quietly next to me, completely avoiding everyone's eyes. I wondered if his face would ever turn to its normal colour.

"And Finnegan, stop singing that ridiculous song!" snapped McGonagall before walking back up to the Staff Table, where Dumbledore sat, looking like he was about to burst out laughing.

I mean, that was going completely too far. I know all those girls might want to see Harry with no clothes on, but didn't they care they had just embarrassed him in front of the entire school?

Harry was mortified for about a month afterwards. Especially since Seamus kept singing his little song whenever he saw Harry. But, as I tried to tell him in a subtle best-friend-like way, he didn't need to be embarrassed. There was nothing to be embarrassed about. No-one was laughing at him; not really. Instead, they had just been bloody staring at him and wishing that he would get rid of the helmet.

But Harry being Harry, just doesn't believe this at all.

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Chapter Five

DRACO.

God, but Blaise is one sneaky bastard. I'm considerably unsurprised by the fact that he's a Slytherin. Of all the underhand, sly little tricks to pull…

After Harry ahem... showed more of himself than he would have liked (and yes, the fucking violin was still playing. Stop asking that bloody question!) Blaise's little obsession got completely out of hand. I told you he would go on the offensive in the end. And he did.

Friday afternoons we were having Potions as usual, and to his delight and everyone else's disappointment, Harry got partnered up with Blaise. I was with that Patil girl.

Still, it could have been worse. Might have been with Granger.

Anyway, I had to sit through Potions watching Blaise deliberately lean on Harry whenever he could get away with it. Harry, of course, was completely oblivious to the entire thing, but everyone besides Snape had noticed; oh my goodness yes.

Granger was scowling at Blaise at every opportunity. It was the first time since meeting her that I felt in any sort of agreement with her. She sees the importance of keeping Harry innocent, as do I.

Anyway, Patil kept tensing up whenever Blaise 'accidentally' touched Harry's hand or casually brushed their legs together. The girl was seriously pissed off, I'm telling you. I would have found it extremely amusing in any other circumstances.

But I had underestimated Blaise. Because what he did next, I admit, was rather inspired, if incredibly dangerous. As Harry looked away for another ingredient, Blaise pulled something out of his pocket and hurriedly threw it into the cauldron. A second later-

BOOM.

The cauldron exploded, coating most of the room with a slimy, green gunk. There were shrieks from all the girls and Harry Potter stood there looking completely bewildered.

"What happened?" he asked no one in particular. "I really thought I was doing it right for once!"

Blaise merely shrugged and smirked.

Then…

The wrath of the Potions classroom was upon them.

Snape was bearing down on them. Although he hadn't been hit with the potion, his classroom was still covered with the gunk. Needless to say he was completely pissed off and of course knew exactly who to blame it on.

"POTTER!"

"I don't know what happened!" muttered Harry, looking so downcast and sweet I wanted to hug him right there. Argh! NO! I must remain a Malfoy! No violins! And certainly no bloody tweeting birds!

"Detention, Potter, and twenty points from Gryffindor!" snapped Snape, eyes narrowing dangerously. He seems the only teacher able to turn his lust for Harry into pure, unadulterated rage.

Harry didn't even try to argue, but his eyes flashed as he glared at Snape. He looks even more bloody gorgeous when he's up on his noble high horse, I can tell you. Snape apparently noticed this as well, because he turned away extremely quickly.

Now Blaise was looking slightly panicky. It didn't look like he was going to get detention with Harry- which was of course what he had been aiming for all along. He should have known that Snape wouldn't give detention to one of his own, not if he could help it. So he did a very stupid thing.

He scooped up some of the potion gunk and threw it at the back of Snape's head, where it landed with a messy splat.

Snape turned around very, very slowly. Both Blaise and Harry gulped.

Bloody hell. I didn't know he had it for Harry that bad.

Needless to say, he got detention.

"That slimy, twisted conniving Slytherin!" Patil muttered for the rest of the lesson. For once I agreed with her. Look at me, agreeing with two Gryffindors in the space of an hour. Must be Harry's influence.

So, Blaise had detention with Harry on Friday night, cleaning up the Potions classroom. Lord, but you should have seen him. He got spruced up as if it was a fucking date. Combed his hair. Put on aftershave, for crying out loud. And all the time with a superior smirk on his face.

Did you get the fact that I can't stand Blaise?!

"Just wait, boys," he said. "Just you wait."

Well. What was I supposed to do? Of course I had to follow him. I wasn't about to let my Har... I mean, Potter get mauled by him, was I?

I sat outside the room, listening through the wall using a useful little charm I'd read about. It was quite entertaining, if nerve-wracking. Harry was obviously annoyed that he had to spend his entire Friday night cleaning up a disgusting, slime-filled room. After about ten minutes, Blaise hesitantly began to engage him in conversation. You could tell Harry was surprised; Slytherins don't usually go out of their way to be pleasant to him. But of course, him being Harry he didn't suspect any ulterior motives. And although I hated to admit it, Blaise could certainly turn on the charm when he wanted to.

The slimy bastard!

After several hours all of my limbs were numb and I was half-asleep. Then I heard Harry say tiredly:

"Well, that's that. We've finished, finally. We can go."

It sounded like Harry was moving towards the door. I scrambled up quickly.

"Potter, wait!" cried out Blaise, sounding increasingly nervous. Ah-ha. I knew all that bravado was just an act.

"Do you…like boys?" Blaise blurted out.

"What?!" said Harry, sounding completely shocked. "What kind of question is that?"

"I mean… do you like me?" stuttered Blaise, sounding even more like an idiot.

"Um." answered Harry. He seemed to have concluded that Blaise was demented. "I'm not sure quite what you're implying…"

Blaise seemed to have sensed that this wasn't working, so he decided to employ a different method. What a big mistake.

"Come on, Harry," he said, obviously trying to sound cool. "I want you, you want me. How about it?"

I almost snorted. Did Blaise really expect this to work?! And I take back what I said about him. He's really just a complete idiot with a few more brain cells than usual.

"Look," said Harry, sounding incredulous. "I think you're a bit tired, or something… so I'm just going to leave, right now, and pretend I never ever heard you say that, alright?"

But Blaise had now realised that this was probably the only chance he would ever have of seeing Harry alone. There was a crash.

"Zabini!" Harry hollered. "What the hell-"

He was cut off. I tensed, ready to come flying in to the rescue, when there was a scuffle, and Harry's voice piped up again.

"Jesus! Get the hell off me!"

Blaise had now turned into his whiny-but-incredibly-turned-on mode. I suspected that he had tried to kiss Harry. If kiss was the right word.

"But Harry," he moaned, obviously not knowing quite what he was saying, "I really want you… you're gorgeous, I…"

Harry's voice broke in, sounding even more incredulous than before, "I think you've been breathing in too many fumes," he said. "I'm leaving. I really hope you sort your head out soon!"

There was a noise, and I had just enough time to duck into the shadows when Harry came out of the room. His hair was even more messy than usual, and his mouth was red and raw against all that porcelain skin. His eyes were glowing in the light. Christ. I just get achy even thinking what he looked like just then.

He also looked completely spooked. After running a hand through his hair, he started to walk off very quickly down the hallway.

Heh heh. Stupid Blaise, I thought, as I walked in the other direction to Slytherin. Always… OOF.

I had run into someone. I raised my wand and muttered, "Lumos." The other person did the same. We stared at each other.

It was that Patil girl.

"Malfoy!" she said, picking herself off up the floor, "what are you doing…"

"And what are you doing." I countered. Then we looked at each other and mutual understanding flashed between us. Evidently I'm not the only one who seemed to think Harry needed to be spied on.

The girl was laughing. "You, Malfoy?" she asked quietly. "Beloved enemies, eh? Who would have thought it… did you hear all that in there?"

"All what?" I replied smoothly. "I've been in library all evening. And you've been in the library as well. So how could we have possibly met here?"

She smirked. She's pretty quick on the uptake, that one. She nodded slightly, muttered "see you," and walked off.

I hurried away to Slytherin. I so wanted to see Blaise's disappointed face.

HERMIONE.

Ron and I were just relaxing by the fireplace when the portrait door opened and Harry came bustling into the common room, looking completely out of sorts. He immediately spotted us and came rushing over, plonking himself down in a chair.

"Alright, mate?" Ron asked cautiously. "Cleaned up all the slime, did you?" Harry nodded absently, his mind clearly on something else. After a few seconds he said in a low voice, "have either of you heard the Slytherins plotting anything against me? Like something… humiliating?"

"No," I said, intrigued at once. "Why, what happened in detention, Harry?"

"Well." began Harry, clearly very embarrassed. "It was fine until… the end of it."

"Why?" asked Ron. "And how can any detention be fine?"

"Well, it was normal," answered Harry. "But then, at the end. for no apparent reason, Zabini tried to stick his tongue down my throat!"

"WHAT??!" came a voice from behind us. We all jumped and looked around.

It was Seamus. Oh dear.

"BLAISE ZABINI TRIED TO SNOG YOU??!" he yelled.

"Shut up, Seamus!" hissed Harry. But it was already too late. The entire Gryffindor House had turned round in their seats to look at them, whispering quietly.

"So, did you snog him?" asked Seamus excitedly.

"No!" said Harry. "He jumped me. Plus the fact I don't like him that way."

"Hmm..." said Seamus, looking at Harry closely. "Was that because you didn't like him? Or boys in general?"

Everyone was now staring at Harry tensely. Seamus had just asked the question everyone had been dying to know the answer to for six months.

"No, I don't mind he was a boy," said Harry. "Not that I don't like girls. I mean… Seamus! Shut the hell up!"

Both the girls and boys in the room looked considerably happier to know that they were all in with some sort of chance.

"Anyway," said a reddened Harry, swiftly moving on the conversation, "do you think it's a joke? Why else would he kiss me?"

"RIGHT!" screamed another voice. "I've had bloody enough of this!"

It was Parvati. And she looked extremely annoyed. She rushed over to where Harry was sitting and sat opposite him.

"Harry," she said. "Hermione's been trying to tell you this for months. Ron's been trying to tell you this for months. Will you listen to me? And TRY to believe me?"

Harry looked at the new, non-giggling Parvati rather apprehensively, but nodded.

"The reason that Blaise Zabini kissed you," continued Parvati, carefully accentuating every word, "is because he fancies you, Harry."

There was a silence. Then Harry laughed. "Don't be silly, Parvati," he said, shaking his head.

Parvati was temporarily stunned as you are when you're close to Harry and he smiles. But she shook herself out of it and started shouting at him again. I was rather impressed; after six years Parvati finally seemed to be showing why she had been put into Gryffindor in the first place.

"Shut up, Harry!" she said rather crossly. "It's not just Blaise Zabini who fancies you, you know! EVERYONE does! You might not have noticed, but you are now the best-looking boy in the school. But it's really frightening, it's not down-to-earth beauty… it's like you're untouchable! Why do you think foreign girls want to come to this school? Why the big media frenzy? Why would someone steal all your clothes and try to nick your underwear? Everyone would leap at the opportunity to get into your pants! Just look

in the mirror sometime soon, Harry Potter!"

With that she stormed out of the Common Room, amid cheers and claps. Harry seemed flabbergasted, and stared round at us all.

"Is that… true?" he asked us nervously.

"YES!" shouted the entire common room.

Harry looked stunned.

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Chapter Six

HARRY.

I've become completely paranoid after what Parvati said to me.

I tried looking in the mirror like she told me to. I tried jumping round at it so I just caught a glimpse of myself. I tried looking at myself out of the corner of my eye, to see if it made any difference whatsoever.

I know I've gotten taller this year, but so have all the other boys. I've grown my hair a bit, but it still sticks up all over the place. I got rid of my glasses as well- perhaps that was what Parvati was going on about. I

suppose you can see my eyes a bit better. They do look quite bright against my hair.

But I'm really pale. Well, not really pale. My skin sort of… glows in a really weird way. I thought girls- and, if Parvati was telling the truth, boys- liked people with a tan. At least I haven't got any spots, that I can be thankful for. And I'm not muscley really either. I mean, I have got them, but that's just normal, isn't it? Or maybe it isn't. Come to think of it, I suppose not many boys my age have…

But I play Quidditch! It's only natural!

I think I look like a freak. Wait. Let me rephrase that. I look strange. I'm weird. I don't look like everyone else.

Parvati's got me really worried, especially since everyone else agrees with her. Is it really true that everyone… wants me? I really find this hard to believe.

But as I sat at the Gryffindor table for breakfast the next morning, I was much more aware of everyone. I glanced around the room surreptitiously. Oh. My. GOD.

Whenever I glanced at someone, they were… aware of it. They sat up straighter and flickered little glances of me. Some of them went pink.

And Parvati was right. Girls AND boys.

I was very, very disturbed. I turned to Hermione. She had her I-told-you-so look on her face.

"It's true," I whispered to her. She rolled her eyes.

"But… WHY?!" I continued.

Hermione snorted. "Just eat your breakfast, Harry," was all she said.

I picked up my fork and speared a piece of sausage on the end. As I was about to eat it, I sensed someone else's eye on me. I casually glanced up at the Staff Table to find Professor Smeldon staring at me. Professor Veronica Smeldon, DADA teacher. The extremely attractive, 30-something Professor Veronica Smeldon who half the boys fancied. I almost choked on my food.

"Hermione," I whispered desperately. "Is it just me, or is Professor Smeldon…"

Hermione didn't even look up. "Yes. She's been staring at you for about four months, Harry," she informed me.

When in God's name did all this happen?!

Well, after observing everyone's movements for the past week, I've come to the conclusion that Parvati was right. Everyone does want to get in my pants. Why though, I couldn't even begin to tell you.

DRACO.

Finnegan is… well, I haven't got any words to describe Finnegan at the moment.

Bastard!

After several pupil's families were killed by the Dark Lord, Cho Chang from Ravenclaw started up a little collection fund for those affected. But not just any collection fund, oh no. It was a raffle and there was a

secret prize. In fact, Cho described it as "the one thing everyone wants."

Of course I didn't buy a ticket. I have a reputation to uphold, you know.

Anyway, last night at dinner, Cho stood up and announced that the raffle was about to take place.

"There will be three winners!" she continued. "And each winner will receive... a kiss from Harry Potter!"

"WHAT?!" at these words, Harry had jumped up from the Gryffindor table. "I didn't know anything about this, Cho!"

Cho turned to him. "It's for charity, Harry. Dark Lord victims, you know? I expected that you would want to help. Forgive me for being mistaken. People will ask for their money back, and some people need it."

A dark shadow appeared in Harry's eyes.

The snotty cow! I'll kill her!

"Miss Chang," said McGonagall sharply. "I don't think..."

"NO!" burst out Harry suddenly. "Don't worry, Professor. I'll do it."

He slowly walked to the front of the hall. He wouldn't have refused, of course, and Chang knew it.

Now everyone who didn't buy a ticket was wishing they had done (including me) and everyone who had bought one was clutching it tight in their hot little fists.

Cho had put all the names in her hat. She dove in, picked up a piece of paper, and unfolded it.

"Winner number one-Laura Milton!" she called out.

A first-year Hufflepuff let out a tremendous squeak and rushed to the front. She was so short she only just about reached Harry's knees. Harry looked deeply embarrassed. Milton had gone bright red and her eyes were the size of dinner plates. Harry bent down, picked her up and quickly pecked her on the lips, before setting her down. She looked like she was about to faint, as she shakily weaved her way back to the envious Hufflepuff table.

"Winner number two!" Cho called out. "Professor Smeldon!"

Smeldon stood up, smirking slightly. Harry looked like he wanted the ground to open up and swallow him. At least he wasn't blushing, though. He looked so much better when he didn't.

Smeldon chuckled her sexy little laugh. "Since it's for charity, Potter." she said lazily, approaching him. McGonagall pursed her lips in high disapproval. Dumbledore, on the other hand, looked like he was having the time of his life. Smeldon reached for Harry and pulled him into a long, drawn-out kiss. No tongues though; for that I could be thankful. After what seemed like ten hours, Harry gently disengaged himself. Smeldon strolled back to her place, still smirking.

Cho pulled the last name out of the hat, glanced at it, and began to smile. "Winner number 3," here she paused for affect. "Seamus Finnegan."

There were several disappointed "awws!" across the room, but they were completely drowned out by the winner.

"YES!!" yelled Seamus, practically leaping up from his seat.

"Now, Seamus!" yelled Harry, looking apprehensively at him, his arms thrown out in front of himself in self-defence. "Now Seamus! Calm down!"

"You can't throw me off this time, Harry!" he yelled, as he raced towards him. Harry backed away as fast as he could. "It's for charity, so it is!"

"Now, Seamus! Calm down! Calm down! Seamus!"

But Harry's protests were all in vain. Finnegan launched himself at Harry like an over-enthusiastic puppy. He pulled Harry as close to him as he could, before capturing his lips in a big, sloppy wet kiss. You could certainly see that Finnegan had no qualms whatsoever about using tongues.

Harry made a distressed noise and tried to pull away, but Finnegan wasn't having any of it. He had Harry in a vice-like grip, and after Cho shouted, "it's for a good cause, Harry!" he shrugged his shoulders resignedly and just stood there.

But then Seamus decided to move his hands to Harry's more private areas and Harry began to struggle again, finally breaking free of Seamus, taking in great gulps of air. Seamus had an extremely dazed expression on his face; for once he seemed quite affected.

"JesusMaryandJoseph!" he yelled. "Harry, you're gorgeous!"

McGonagall couldn't contain herself any longer.

"That's quite enough of that!" she yelled. "Finnegan, Potter- back to your seats at once!"

Harry was pink again, and he went even redder when Seamus tried to playfully pinch his bum as they walked back to the Gryffindor table.

"On that note," said Dumbledore, eyes twinkling, "shall we have dessert?"

I'm going to kill Finnegan. Top of my list.

Apart from Blaise and Chang, of course.

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Chapter Seven

DRACO.

The birds and the violins were getting ridiculous. They just had to go. The only problem then was how to make them go.

So, whilst nobody was looking (and that was quite an achievement in itself- who wouldn't want to look at me? Except Potter, apparently. Dammit!) I snuck into- ashamed as I am to admit it- the Muggle Studies Section of the library.

Well, I was desperate!

I sat in a secluded corner and carefully read the books I had chosen. They had titles like: "Embracing Life" and "Understanding the Inner You." Yes, I was desperate enough to lower myself to this bloody level. The

books were basically completely fucking worthless- well, what do you expect- but I decided to try a few of the ideas.

It said in order to gain control over my life, which, let's face it, has turned into one great bloody mess because of bloody Potter, I had to come up with a- theme tune. One that represented what I really was. I had to play the song in my head whenever I found myself… slipping.

I mean, what a load of crap! No wonder the Dark Lord wants to kill the lot of them!

But coming up with a theme tune that represented me was pretty damn easy. Weird Sisters: I'm a Cold-hearted Bastard Who Needs Nobody. Heh heh. Yup, that's been me all my life. And don't start trying to tell me it doesn't represent me any more. Just piss off, why don't you! I don't need a bloody lecture, especially from you!

I also had to come up with a mantra, something to write down and look at when things got particularly bad. I came up with: 'My name is Draco Malfoy. I don't need someone to complete me. And the noises are all in my head.'

Pretty fucking good, eh? Harry's got nothing on me now.

Yup. That's right. NOTHING.

HERMIONE.

Harry's become quite depressed recently.

I'm not quite sure why, but Harry's chosen me to be his confidante on all things to do with relationships.

Ron may seem the more obvious person for that role, but, saying that, as much as I love Ron, he's not really the- er, type for little confidential chit-chats. He'd probably run a mile away screaming, quite frankly.

But Harry's confided in me. I know now that his sudden change in the looks department is something he hates, now that he's finally been convinced of it. You would think that looking like he does would be a complete godsend, open any door for you and get you anyone you wanted.

Although this is true, it's created so many more problems in Harry's mind that he wishes he could change back to the way he had been.

Blaise Zabini had completely failed in his attempt to seduce Harry. But the incident had been incredibly well-publicised throughout Hogwarts through the efforts of- who else- Seamus. So now several other people had decided that if Zabini plucked up enough courage, they certainly could. So far it's been about twelve people (that I know of, at least) mostly seventh years, and a few from sixth and fifth. They all flirted terribly with Harry. Let's just say that he could have lost his virginity status every single time. But he brushed them off, every one. I was rather surprised; he is a teenage boy after all.

But Harry doesn't want it to be like this, he's explained to me. "I don't want to sleep with someone because they like what's on the outside!" he's said on more than one occasion. "I want them to like me."

Harry needs- affection. That is really all he wants. And nobody seems to be able to realise this. He may be completely clueless when it comes to what goes on inside the bedroom, but he, extremely surprisingly for a 16- year-old- knows exactly what he wants outside it before he'll even venture in.

HARRY.

I'm not asking for big fireworks. I just want the other person to like me, want to know more about me. Not just take me at face value, only see the scar and whatever they find so attractive on the outside. I just wish I was normal again. Well, as normal as I could be with this scar, at least. Then I would only have

to worry if the person only wanted to be with me because I was the Boy-Who-Lived. Now I can't trust anyone anymore.

I'm not so naïve that I only want to be with someone if they love me. Alright, so I am naïve, I admit it, but not in this way, about the feelings. I just want a nice person, girl or boy, who looks at me and sees someone worth having, perhaps staying with long enough to know me a bit more. Not a one-night stand. Not anything that makes me feel cheap and used.

So why is this so hard to find?

DRACO.

I hate Muggles. I fucking hate them!

I mean, I was sort of coming round to the fact that MAYBE Muggles weren't completely useless. Perhaps they had some things right... like the idea of theme songs, for example. I thought, for one stupid moment, that that might have been a good idea.

Oh, how bloody wrong I was.

So. I was trying to dispel the bloody birds and violins. Trying to replace them with my theme tune. Repeat my mantra. Generally get back to being the bad-ass Malfoy heir I was before I fell in- erm, Potter changed.

So, I tried it. Harry was walking down the corridor as usual, looking all sweet- erm... I mean- oh hell. All right. So Potter's sweet. And gorgeous. And lovely. Have you got a problem with that?

After shaking my head a few times vigorously, trying to get the bloody inhabitants inside it OUT, I started on my theme tune. Damn, but it's fucking good. 'I'm a Cold-hearted Bastard Who Needs Nobody... dun duh dun duh dun... I don't need no-'

But then something terrible happened. Right in the middle of the bloody wicked guitar riff, this- other beat started going off in my head! Then this other guitar started too- and then the voice happened:

'You ever want something that you know you shouldn't have, But the more you know you shouldn't have it, the more you want it...'

Oh God, NO.

I had somehow, unwittingly tapped into bloody 'Ain't No Sunshine.' At full volume in my head.

It's a bloody Muggle song, for fuck's sake! Why?! Why ME??!

It would not leave. It just wouldn't. I tried desperately to conjure up 'I'm a Cold-hearted Bastard...' again, but it just didn't work. The other song's there most of the time now, and increases ten times in volume when a certain Gryffindor's around.

Dammit!

I can't function properly. I could sort of ignore the violins and birds before- treat them as background music or something- but 'Ain't No Sunshine' is impossible to switch off to. Whenever I hear it in my head, I just start tapping to the beat. It's gotten very bad. Even Blaise's bloody noticed.

"Draco!" he's yelled at me on numerous occasions. "Can you stop the infernal tapping!"

But I can't.

I know what you're thinking. That the song's going round in my head because it actually applies to my situation. Well, you're obviously completely wrong. Of course there's sunshine around when Potter's not there. Well, not much, since this IS Scotland, but it's not a fucking total eclipse or anything.

And I don't live in a bloody house, so how it could it not be a home without Harry there? Who do you think I am? I'm bloody rolling in it. I live in a mansion. I'm a fucking Malfoy, for Christ's sake!

Nope. No significance at ALL.

HARRY.

Malfoy's been acting very strangely over the last week or so.

It's almost as if he's… avoiding me. Whenever he sees me he goes even paler (if that's at all possible) and scuttles off in the opposite direction. It's not as if I miss his company or anything, but- it just feels strange.

I actually think he's got some sort of compulsive obsessive disorder, or something. He keeps- tapping, with his arm or his foot. He always looks like he's thinking very hard about something, as if getting annoyed with his own mind, if that makes any sense. And the other day, when he thought nobody was looking, he started muttering to himself and then banged his head against a wall continuously.

I wonder what's wrong with him?

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Chapter Eight

RON.

Just when I thought things couldn't get any more ridiculous, I'm proved wrong.

Harry got some very funny letters today. Not that he doesn't get a lot of letters anyway (usually from 40-year-old witches who are willing to leave their husbands) but when he got the first one, he spat his morning pumpkin juice ALL OVER it. Being the supportive and observant friend that I am, I obviously asked him what was up.

Harry turned horrified eyes to mine. "They... they want to make an... an official calendar of me!" he choked out. Me and 'Mione both stared at him.

"Not just that!" he continued. "This bloke is willing to pay me a million Galleons if I pose for photographs with..." here he lowered his voice considerably, "with no clothes on and in... seasonal outfits!"

This seemed to be too much for my girlfriend, however, and she burst into a set of furious giggles that were most un-Hermione-like. We both stared at her, as she went bright red.

"Sorry," she said after a minute, regaining her composure to some extent. "I was just trying to picture Harry in a Santa suit..."

"They probably wouldn't want me to wear the suit, 'Mione!" said Harry, making Hermione burst into giggles again. If this was how 'Mione reacted to the news, I shuddered to think what Lavender Brown would say.

Still, it was a million Galleons. Me being the good friend that I was, I had to point this out to Harry.

"Still, it is a million Galleons, Harry," I pointed out. He stared at me.

"Yes, Ron," he said, as if he was talking to a three-year-old, " a million Galleons to have my picture taken with nothing on at all except probably some well-placed leaves- especially in the autumn months! Then these pictured to be printed into thousands of calendars across the world. Do you see why I'm slightly reluctant to do it now, Ron?!"

Well, when he put it like that... "um, yeah, I suppose so, Harry." I paused, before coming back to the main point. "But, a million Galleons, Harry!"

Harry made a noise in the back of his throat before opening the second letter. It was written on expensive-looking, thick parchment and had an official-looking seal on the top.

As Harry read it, his mouth fell open and his eyes opened even wider.

"What is it, Harry?" asked Hermione, rather anxiously.

Harry choked, before replying, "this- this family want to open up official negotiations for me to marry their daughter!! They even sent a picture!" He held it up with shaking hands.

It was a picture of a toothy, leggy blonde, who kept waving, smiling and winking at us all. Hermione snorted, looking at it. "Obviously dyed," she said, pointing at the girl's hair. "You could do much better, Harry."

Harry looked at her incredulously. "This family just offered me an arranged marriage, and you're just sitting there like nothing's happened!" he exclaimed.

'Mione didn't bat an eyelash. "Many wizarding families arrange marriages," she said. "I read about it in 'Carrying on the Bloodline: Wizarding Copulation since 1600.' Lots of pure-blood families want to 'preserve their blood' as they put it. Load of old nonsense, if you ask me."

"Why isn't Ron getting an arranged marriage then?" asked Harry sulkily.

"Because he isn't very important," said Hermione.

Not important! Who does she think she is?

"Not important!" I yelled. "Who do you think you are?!"

'Mione just sighed and rolled her eyes. She didn't even apologise! "I mean your family isn't very prestigious, Ron," she said. "Not just you."

That made me feel a whole lot better.

"Malfoy's probably had loads of offers, for example," she continued. We all turned to look at him, and almost immediately he started tapping some strange rhythm.

I don't pretend to understand the prat.

'Mione took the letter from Harry. "What family is it?" She read for a minute and then her eyes went very wide. "The Van Weydons?! Goodness, Harry- they're one of the most important families in the

world!"

"As opposed to me, of course..." I mutter.

"Oh, do be quiet, Ron!" she snapped, as she read on. "Our daughter, Maria Van Weydon... aged 17 years... soon to complete her education at Beauxbatons Academy... dowry negotiable... hmm. Altogether, a very good offer, Harry. It's quite an honour, because, quite frankly, your family's not that prestigious either, you know. But it's better than Ron's."

Really knows how to flatter someone, my girlfriend, doesn't she?

VOLDEMORT.

That blasted boy has got one over on me once again.

I haven't got that much free time on my hands, as you can guess. It's not a part-time job you know, Trying To Take Over The World. There are lots of issues involved.

But that boy. I had to take considerable time out of my killing spree to re-write the Death Eater's Handbook just to include him!

You know the Handbook. Tells you all the do's and don'ts of being a Death Eater. First on the list is of course declaring me the all-Supreme Leader. Second is getting the Dark Mark.

Now there's a 365th rule. Thou shalt not lust over Harry Potter but instead kill him. Kill him!!

Quite a few Death Eaters seem to have a problem with this.

Such as Nott. Which is why I'm being forced to take even more time out of my busy schedule just to punish him. He's at my feet at the moment, trembling. I hold out the offending article.

"What is this, Nott?"

He doesn't answer. This is taking far too long, so I supply the answer instead.

"Is this not a picture of Harry Potter, cut out of a copy of Witch Weekly, Nott?"

He decides it best to answer this time.

"Y-yes, My Lord, but-"

"And it was found within your belongings, was it not?"

"Well er, technically, My Lord..."

"Have you read the Handbook recently, Nott? Seen Rule number 365, by any chance?"

"Well, yes, My Lord..."

"There you are, then. CRUCIO!"

That dratted boy has all the luck.

First of all, he manages not to die when I hit him with the Killing Curse as a baby. No. Instead, some little freak of nature means that I'm the one who's stuck being more dead than alive.

Then he manages to stop me from using the Philosopher's Stone that would have made me Unstoppable in my plan to Take Over The World.

And then he didn't even manage to become good-looking by the time I captured him during the Tri-Wizard Tournament. No. Instead he had to turn up looking like a half-starved tree frog. Not that I'm particularly happy with him getting 'It,' but couldn't have got all pretty before I captured him? Then he would have looked like a lovely sacrificial virgin tied to the headstone and everyone would have tried much harder to capture him instead of letting him escape. Hmph!

But the most annoying thing is...

I used to look like that.

I used to have It. I really did. I gave it all up through my magical... improvements in a bid to Take Over The World.

But, apparently, Harry Potter doesn't have to get rid of his looks. No. He gets to be the one everyone wants because I've been painted as the villain of the piece. The press have really got it in for me, I must say. But he gets to stay all pretty. And alive. STILL.

Dammit!

DRACO.

Someone tried to spike Potter's drink with a Love Potion today.

Why the hell didn't I think of that?!

It didn't go according to plan, however. Harry drank it without noticing, but luckily the girl who made it, a little Ravenclaw Fourth Year, had brewed it wrong and so instead of making Harry fall in love with her, it made him think that everyone hated him instead. So the truth came out, and the stupid little cow got suspended for two weeks. Heh heh heh.

Harry was finally allowed to go to the Hospital Wing when he burst into tears in the middle of Transfiguration and said that Weasley was being 'mean' to him by asking to borrow a quill.

Then, after dinner, there were rumours that he had managed to escape the Hospital Wing and was roaming around the school, sobbing his little heart out.

Not that I was worried, or anything. It would wear off soon.

And I certainly didn't feel sorry for him. Of course not.

I didn't feel the need to go and hug or comfort Harry, or anything. Nope. I'm my own man. I've got my own theme song AND mantra. And I'm not completely gone on Potter, if that's what you're thinking. I haven't resorted to drawing hearts all over my parchment or anything. Give me some credit. And no lightning bolts either; which would have been more appropriate. Well, alright, ONE lightning bolt, but- it was a mistake, I swear! The quill just sort of... SLIPPED! Stop looking at me like that!

And I really wasn't looking for Potter that night. I was just walking around at one o'clock in the morning,

minding my own business, when- there Potter was. Just sitting there in an empty classroom, looking terribly sad with tears running down his cheeks.

As I looked at him it occurred to me that Potter looked good even when he was crying. Now, this defies all laws known to man. Even I look terrible when I've been crying, and I'm fucking gorgeous. My nose goes all red and my face all blotchy. Not Potter, however. He looked like some beautiful... gargh. No!

'Ain't No Sunshine' had just started in my head yet AGAIN! In the name of all that is good and holy! WHY?!

As if he could hear the bloody music, (but it was probably just the rhythm I was unconsciously tapping) Harry turned and spotted me. He gave a sort of wobbly half-smile before the tears began leaking down his cheeks again and my stomach flipped over. Well, he IS gorgeous!

"Malfoy," he said sniffily, "what do you want? You're always so horrible to me!" Then he starts crying again.

For fuck's sake! Well, I couldn't just leave him like that!

I stepped closer. "Nothing," I managed, as calm as I could with bloody music in my head.

He laughed quite bitterly. "That's a first," he said. "No devious master plan today?"

And all I could think was: "Awwww!" Oh dear. What was my mantra again? I couldn't quite seem to remember, for some reason...

I didn't answer. What with the music and the entrancing way the moonlight bounced off his face I was in no position to, quite frankly.

"Why does everyone hate me?" he burst out, before going into furious sobs yet AGAIN. Stupid potion!

I rolled my eyes, and then patted him gingerly on the shoulder in what I hoped was a comforting manner. Well, I'd never comforted someone before! It was hard!

"There, there, Potter," I muttered. To my immense surprise (and private joy, of course) Harry launched himself into my arms and proceeded to sob soggily onto my shoulder.

"I just don't know what I did wrong..." he starts saying.

Well. I don't know what it was. Let's just put it down to Potter's gorgeousness, the music in my head that was stopping me from thinking correctly and the moonlight. Not to mention the fact that Harry was touching me without wanting to beat me up.

On a Thursday, at 1.39 am, I Draco Malfoy leant down towards Harry Potter and pecked him on the lips.

I mean, it wasn't even a proper kiss! It was the kind that I give my ugly great-aunts at Christmas! A peck for crying out loud!

We stared into each other's eyes for a few seconds afterwards, his wide and shocked. I suppose mine were more or less the same. Then I scrambled away.

He stared at me, obviously shocked out of thinking everyone had turned against him. He spluttered, "what- what the HELL was that?!"

With just 0.6 seconds to come up with a way of getting out of this (just picture the headlines: 'Malfoy Heir assaults drugged-up Boy-Who-Lived') I came up with the stupidest plan in the history of stupid plans.

"What was what?" I said.

He was spluttering even more now. I was about to melt into a pile of goo right then and there.

"You- you just KISSED me!"

"No I didn't!" I said.

" Malfoy. You. Just. DID!"

"No I didn't!" I yelled.

The great thing about Potter is that he's so trusting, that if you tell him something enough times he'll usually believe it. He started looking adorably confused. I started to relax.

But I also forgot that Harry Potter wasn't stupid. He shook himself suddenly. " Look, I know you did!"

Got me there. So, I started panicking.

"No I didn't! You can't prove anything! Leave me alone!"

With that I ran away, leaving Harry standing in the classroom looking quite baffled.

Oh dear. Not quite what I envisioned our first kiss to be like.

I'm sure you're all wondering why I didn't just say: "I kissed you because I like you, Harry. I have done for

a long time. Will you please go out with me?"

I'm a fucking Slytherin, that's bloody why! Why we might be devious and crafty, we're also...

Well, we're cowards. Why else would we feel the need to do things in an underhand way, if we weren't?

There, I've said it. I'm a coward. I'm too frightened to tell Potter that I lo- like him. I'm frightened of what he might say. I'm frightened in case he utterly rejects me, and even more so at the thought that he might decide to like me too.

I'm just frightened, all right?

But Harry's a bloody Gryffindor. He's so fucking brave, he won't be frightened.

Oh dear me.

What is he going to do?!

I need to leave the country straight away.

Where's my broomstick?

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Chapter Nine

HARRY.

I'm... rather confused.

I'm really quite positive that Draco Malfoy kissed me. ME! I mean...!! This is not something he DOES!

The problem is, I was under the influence of this miscast love potion at the time. Some Ravenclaw put it in my pumpkin juice (how, I'll never know- she's obviously very crafty...) and nobody noticed until I thought that everyone hated me. At first I thought it was just my imagination, because the first class was Potions and Snape does hate me- but then I began to think all my friends were whispering about me behind my back. It was awful!

So, perhaps because I thought all my friends had turned against me, I in turn thought that my enemy liked me... but then, come to think of it, wouldn't I have thought Snape had kissed me as well? Urgh. URGH! I really did not need that mental image. Oh God, it won't go away now!!

All I really remember of the night is crying on Malfoy's shoulder, then a sort-of-maybe kiss and then him adamantly denying that he had done it. Oh God- I actually cried on Malfoy's shoulder! He has enough ammunition to humiliate me for the next six months!

But did he kiss me, or am I just going mad?

Come to think of it, 'Mione was positive that he fancied me in Fifth Year. She said that he kept staring at me. Of course, I didn't believe her at the time... but she's been right about all these other people liking me for some reason, perhaps she was right about this as well. Still, even if she was, that was last year. Malfoy wouldn't still have feelings for me.

Would he?

It's just really strange to think about- Draco Malfoy liking me. ME! It's funny, but when I don't see him I always forget why I should hate him. When I DO see him, however, he usually does something to remind me. If he just left me alone, I'd be quite content to let him be. I wouldn't mind him really. In the summer, when I'm not at school and I do think of him, he's just like this presence that's always just there in my life.

It would be so, so strange if he wasn't there.

And I have to admit that he is good-looking. He's got that rebel-without- a-cause thing going on. Perhaps if he wasn't such an utter bastard, I might just like him.

But he's horrible. He really is. And I'm not sure he even kissed me. And what if he didn't, and I confronted him about it and made a complete fool out of myself?

I have been looking at him a bit more over the last week. He hasn't really been nasty to me in the course of it, which sort of makes me forget to hate him as is expected of me. And he has got quite a sexy walk, when he isn't tapping some rhythm out with his foot. I still don't know why he does this. Hmm.

I've decided to leave him alone, not to talk to him on the subject. And to stop thinking about it! It probably never happened and he's obviously got his mind on other things.

DRACO.

Right. I think I'm safe. Potter, apart from staring at me with a puzzled expression several times a day this

week, has made no move to speak to me about- The Incident.

I think it might be safe to start unpacking my Quick-Escape-From-The- Country bag. I'm glad. The robes in it were starting to look very rumpled.

And I can't have that, of course.

HARRY.

That night I was in the dormitory getting ready for bed when I did a very stupid thing.

I asked Seamus for advice.

"Seamus," I said, "how do you know if someone likes you?"

Immediately Seamus being... well, Seamus, decided to flirt with me yet again. He does this every day! I mean, he flirts with everyone (except Ron, who always tries to punch him if he tries it) but he flirts with me about a thousand times more than anybody else.

"I like you, Harry," he starts purring and tries to grab me. I mean, I like Seamus and everything, don't get me wrong. And he's quite good-looking as well. And he likes me. But he is well... he's Seamus. There's no getting away from the fact.

"Seamus, I'm being serious!" I say to him. That usually puts him off- he hates that word. "Get your bloody hand off my leg!"

He does so, thank goodness, and sits beside me on my bed, staring at me in a really freaky manner.

"I mean," I elaborate in one breath, "what if you think a person that you hadn't thought of in that way before likes you but you're not sure if the person is just joking around or actually means it and you don't want to ask in case you're completely wrong but you don't not want to ask just in case... Seamus? Are you listening? Seamus?"

Seamus is looking confused. I'm not surprised.

"So," he says, "you fancy someone, do you then Harry?"

"Erm," I say. I'm not sure. It's just weird to think about. I start thinking, whilst Seamus is still rambling on at me. I'm not really listening.

Then he says, "we could talk about this in more detail on the Hogsmeade weekend, eh, Harry?"

"Yeah, whatever, Seamus," I say, still not really listening. That's about to change.

"YES!" yells Seamus, leaping up, his thoughts of molesting me apparently forgotten.

"What? What?" I yell back, obviously slightly scared by his sudden outburst.

"You agreed to go out with me!" yells Seamus joyously back.

"What! No I did NOT!" I shout. "When in God's name did I agree to any such thing??!"

"Just now, Harry!"

I think a minute, before replying, "all I said was 'yeah' to seeing you in Hogsmeade! That does NOT constitute a date!"

"Aye, it does Harry! You said you'll go, so you'll have to now!"

"NO!"

"Yes! And you know it's the right thing to do to let your date kiss you afterwards!" said Seamus.

"Seamus, NO!"

"See you on Saturday, then Harry!" Seamus is still bouncing about. "I'm going to go tell everyone now!" he fled the room.

"Argh!" I say, head in hands. All the shouting has attracted Ron, Dean and Neville, who soon come bursting into the room.

"What's going on?!" yells Ron, brandishing his wand. He always thinks You- Know-Who is going to infiltrate the school and try to kill me.

"Seamus tricked me into agreeing to go out with him!" I yell back.

I'm really pissed off, but they just started laughing at me!

"You'll never escape him, Harry!" snorts Dean. "Now he'll think he has a real excuse to kiss you whenever

he sees you!"

"NO!" I said, head in hands.

"Sorry Harry- it's too late to say that now," returned Ron, smiling heartily. Some friend he is!

"I'm going to see Hermione," I snarled, getting up. I think I vaguely heard Ron say something like, "you can't go in there looking like that!" but I didn't pay him any attention.

I stalked up to the girl's dormitory. I really needed to speak to Hermione. Since none of my male friends- especially Seamus- seems to be able to give clear, unprejudiced advice (or even understand what I say, in Seamus's case) I am once again throwing myself on the mercies of the female sex.

This always seems to be happening! I really, really need a father figure who's not an escaped convict!

I knocked on the Sixth Year girl's door and received no answer. I waited outside for a bit, hopping on foot to foot (the castle floor is really cold- they really need to put some carpeting down) before I hesitantly pushed open the door. Lavender and Parvati were in there, staring at me. At least they had some clothes on, however. I mean, they hadn't just got out of the shower or anything- that's my main fear if I ever enter a girl- dominated area. Even if the clothes the girls did have on were rather low-cut. Then Lavender muttered something that I didn't catch and they both started giggling furiously. Well, what else is new?

PARVATI.

We were just getting ready for bed when the door swung open and there Harry was, framed in the doorway. Oh my goodness me. He only had a pair of boxers and a very figure hugging grey vest on. Then Lavender whispered, "is this my birthday present? Parv, you shouldn't have." Well, I couldn't help but

laugh! I just wished she was speaking the truth and was willing to share him...

HARRY.

These girls are always laughing at me for no apparent reason. Always! I just don't understand it! I could have sworn I hadn't done anything embarrassing in the ten seconds I've been standing here!

"Is Hermione here?" I said quickly. I swear that they looked disappointed.

Suddenly 'Mione appeared, wearing these really cool red and gold pyjamas, Gryffindor colours. She looked very surprised to see me. Well, I don't usually make a habit of visiting girl's rooms late at night. Or ever, actually.

"Harry!" she said. "Is something wrong?"

"I just needed to talk to you," I said. "In private," I added. I definitely didn't need two members of the Giggle Gang to hear any of this. 'Mione nodded and followed me out of the room.

"I like your pyjamas, by the way," I said to her as we were leaving the dorm. This seemed to start Lavender and Parvati off again. What is wrong with those two?! 'Mione rolled her eyes and slammed the door on their high-pitched fits of giggles, before following me downstairs to the Common Room.

Well, she didn't find it funny that Seamus had tricked me into going on a date with him, thank God! She looked quite pissed off, actually. Alarmingly, however, she couldn't think of a way to get me out of it either.

"If you refuse and hide in the dorm, then Seamus will probably just see it as an invitation to jump you,"

she said, frowning. "Or at the very least, drug you and drag you down to the Three Broomsticks. I suppose you'll just have to go, Harry, and make the best of it."

She's probably right.

I have to go on a date with Seamus.

Oh, dear GOD.

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Author's Notes:

When reading the part where Draco is outside the Gryffindor Common Room and until he enters the bathroom of The Three Broomsticks, you should start playing the Pink Panther theme tune in your head. It adds 10% more humour to the thing. Seriously!

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Chapter Ten

DRACO.

I expect you heard the news.

Harry... Harry's going to- going to... no, I just can't say it. Alright. I'll try. Harry is going to go on a date with that... that thing. The little... little fucking hyperactive slut who's always running around so happy, flirting and smiling at Harry as if it was natural or something!

I didn't believe it at first. That Harry would agree to go anywhere with that sandy-haired, immature little twerp is almost beyond my comprehension. He's not even good-looking! Well... perhaps he is. But I'm about a thousand times better than him! Why did Harry agree to it? WHY??!

Alright, honestly I know the answer. It's because Finnegan isn't mean to him.

But still...!!

It was all over the school by dawn. Several girls from the younger years were actually crying. Hufflepuffs, mostly, who have that naïve and sickeningly romantic idea that Date= Marriage and True Love for Evermore.

Ha!

I managed to get the truth out of a First Year Ravenclaw, (and no- I didn't actually carry out any of my threats- I don't want to get expelled, do I?) apparently Finnegan tricked Harry into agreeing to it, and then refused to let him back out. This sounds rather plausible, because firstly, Harry is so trusting it's no trouble to make him agree to anything, and secondly, Harry being Harry and the ever-noble Gryffindor that he is, would not even think of backing out of something he'd said he'd do.

Breakfast lightened my spirits considerably. Harry came in late, and stopped dead when everyone that went silent and stared at him. Then when he clocked Finnegan sitting at the table he got a desperate look in his eye and sat as far away from him as possible. Then, when Seamus moved closer to him and tried to not-so-subtle-ly grope him Harry tried to push him off every time and, when that didn't work, fled from the room.

Heh heh heh. Not so cocky now, eh Finnegan? Die you bastard! DIE!!!

I've already started on my very comprehensive list of 101 Ways to Kill Seamus Finnegan. However, the rate it's going, I'll probably have to change it to 1001 Ways. I've started out with the usual ones- such as burn him in a cauldron of boiling oil, and throw him into a pit of snakes before making him eat his own eyeballs. I'm starting to move on to the less tame ones now.

HERMIONE.

I was just sitting down to a nice relaxing session with 'Hogwarts: A History' when Ron appeared at my side.

"'Mione," he muttered, "we need help. Our dormitory- NOW."

I was about to remind him that I wasn't really allowed in his dormitory, but one look at his face told me not to. He looked distinctly stressed.

I followed him up to the room, and when I entered it I gasped.

Now, I know boys aren't renowned for their tidiness, but this was simply ridiculous. Clothes of every colour, size and description were strewn absolutely everywhere, from lying crumpled on the floor to hanging over the curtain rails. In the middle of this bomb sight sat Harry, looking very glum.

"What on earth..." I said.

"We're trying to pick something out for Harry to wear in Hogsmeade, where Harry obviously wants to put Seamus off him," explained Ron. His voice took on an hysterical quality as he went on, "but nothing

Harry tries on looks bad, 'Mione! NOTHING! Even my maroon jumper! How could this be?!"

"I really need your help, 'Mione," said Harry, looking quite desperate.

I sighed. My two boys were always getting into these sorts of situations, and I always had to help them!

"Right," I said, sitting gingerly on a clothes-covered bed. Ron sat beside me. "I assume you've narrowed down the choices. Let's start."

"Well," said Harry, holding up a grey T-shirt, "this is my oldest piece of clothing. I've had it for about ten years and it doesn't fit me. Here- let me just put it on..."

Then Harry took off the blue shirt he had on. Couldn't he have warned me?? I may be his surrogate sister, but still...! I let out a small whimper.

"'Mione?" said Ron incredulously, "did you just... squeak?!"

"No!" I yelped. Harry had the grey T-shirt on now- thank GOD.

I looked at it for a few seconds. Then Ron and I exchanged glances.

"Well, what do you reckon?" said Harry rather awkwardly.

"Um... it's rather tight Harry, isn't it?" I managed to get out.

Harry looked down at it. "Oh, yeah," he said. "Seamus would probably like that..."

He pulled it off again. I clapped a hand over my mouth to stop another squeak escaping. Ron was glaring at me. Well, it wasn't my fault! Ron was used to it- he saw Harry in a state of undress every day! Probably just getting out of the shower as well.... oh dear. I shouldn't really have thought that. I felt my face heat up as I pulled my hand away from my mouth and smiled weakly at Ron. I then tried to look anywhere but at Harry. Ron wasn't looking too pleased, to say the least.

Harry was now doing up the buttons on a black shirt. This meant I could see his chest for twice as long as usual. Oh dear Lord.

The shirt didn't have the desired effect of looking bad. Oh hell. Ron was right. Nothing looked bad on Harry. Most people have at least one colour that they shouldn't wear, that makes them look less than their best. But Harry... pale colours looked nice. Rich colours looked nice. Black made his skin stand out even more. And green definitely brought out the colour of his eyes.

"Harry," I said after a while, "for the first time ever, Ron is completely right-" ("Hey!" said Ron) "- nothing can look bad on you." When Harry began to protest, I added, "no really. Just wear what you want- it won't make a difference."

Harry shrugged and began to take off the white T-shirt he had on.

"For God's sake!" I shrieked. "Harry, can you please keep your clothes on?!"

I fled from the room.

DRACO.

It's... Saturday. And you know what that means. Harry Potter and Seamus Finnegan are going out. On a date.

What they don't know is that of course I shall be spying on them every step of the way.

Well, what did you expect? I didn't leave Harry to be mauled by the likes of Blaise Zabini and I certainly won't let that little slut get his claws into him!

Before I did this, of course, I had to sort out my Spying clothes. Just because it's an undercover operation doesn't mean that the fashion side of things is allowed to get into disarray. Just who exactly do you think I am?

I'd gone to the library the day before and got out this Muggle book by this bloke called Chandler or something. Now, his private eye wore this sort of coat and some kind of weird hat. I decided to follow suit. I transfigured some of my clothes into these said items, but of course made them black, and not that dreadful brown colour like in the pictures. Some people have no sense of style. Honestly.

At precisely 10.04 am I was outside the Gryffindor Common Room, as a bouncy Seamus Finnegan and a much more reluctant Harry Potter came out of the Portrait Hole. They proceeded down the hallway. I was just about to follow them when a shifty-looking Weasel and Granger stepped out of the Common Room as well, staring at the backs of Harry and Finnegan. They had obviously had the same idea as me. Damn. I just love to be original. Seems I can't be today.

After they had walked down the hallway as well, I proceeded to follow them.

HERMIONE.

It was at about one in the afternoon when we finally spotted him.

Ron and I were just strolling through Hogsmeade, trying to look like we were doing nothing but actually following Harry and Seamus at a discreet distance as Harry had begged us to. Harry looked like he wasn't having too terrible a time, however. He laughed at a few things Seamus said.

As we passed Honeyduke's, Ron looked behind him with a puzzled expression.

"'Mione," he said, "is it just me, or is someone following us?"

I looked around quickly, to see a piece of black material whip round a corner.

We proceeded to walk on, but I was now more than aware of the person behind us. We stopped, feigning interest in a shop display, and I was able to see who it was in the shiny glass of the window.

"Ron," I hissed, "is that... Malfoy?!"

"Blimey, I think so," Ron whispered back, "but what is he wearing?!"

Ron was completely right. As Malfoy hid behind walls and ducked behind useful bits of architecture on the street, obviously thinking he was being very discreet, I saw his clothes. It seemed he was wearing a black trench cloak and... a trilby.

They rather suited him, in a way. And at least he wasn't tapping for once.

"Just ignore him," I said. My eyes strayed over to Seamus and Harry, who were about to enter The Three Broomsticks. "Quick! They're getting away!" I hissed. We ran after them.

DRACO.

When I entered the pub, Harry and Finnegan were sitting at a table in the corner, both clutching Butterbeers. Weasley and Granger were sitting quite close to them, obviously trying not to be noticed. Ha! They were doing a terrible job. They should learn from a pro, like me.

HERMIONE.

Malfoy sat in a darkened corner of the room, not too far from us. I then noticed he had donned sunglasses and was looking over the top of his copy of the Daily Prophet at us, before quickly ducking his head again.

Ron was getting completely freaked out. He kept snatching glances at Malfoy with an incredulous expression on his face. "What the hell is he doing?" he kept whispering.

I shook my head. Then it hit me. It was obvious. Malfoy's tapping, the twitches, the muttering to himself, the following us around, could only mean one thing.

Draco Malfoy was having a nervous breakdown. At 16.

I didn't have time to expand on this thought when Seamus suddenly got up and approached our table.

"Ah, don't look so guilty," he said to us, "I've known you were there all day. You might as well come and

join us."

We sheepishly picked up out tankards and followed Seamus over to Harry.

DRACO.

Finnegan was touching Harry.

He was fucking touching him!!

Oh, I knew his ploy to invite Weasley and Granger over to his table was just as cover. Now he thought he had an excuse to lean up against Harry. I was willing to kill Seamus with only Way No. 223. Now he's really earned Way No. 361.

Suddenly Harry gave a little yelp and jumped three feet into the air.

That little bastard was touching him up under the table! Right I'll kill him, AND he'd earned Way No. 442 now. No holds barred...

Suddenly Harry jumps up from the table and races for the toilet.

Now, usually I don't go into public conveniences. The thought of hundreds of people using the same conveniences makes me shudder, actually. All those thousands of bacteria absolutely everywhere... urgh!

But... Harry was in there. Alone.

As long as I didn't touch anything, I'd be alright.

HARRY.

Oh God. I just had to get out of there.

Seamus kept groping me. In a public place! With my two best friends across the table! That boy has absolutely no shame.

Anyway, I was just washing my hands in the sink and trying to linger as long as possible in there to get away from Seamus when the door suddenly banged open and a figure was framed in the doorway.

I jumped about ten feet in the air, obviously thinking it was Seamus. It was just like him to come barging in here and try to get me into one of the stalls. But it wasn't. It was Malfoy. Wearing this black coat and hat that looked rather... nice on him, and an angry expression on his face. God, he really makes me nervous sometimes. After that... Kissing Incident, I don't know how to act around him. He glanced at me and then went over to the sink, and began coolly washing his hands.

DRACO.

I was still very, very angry at the whole Finnegan-touching-Harry-at-the- table thing. Too angry, in fact, to not start berating Harry about it.

"So, here with that tart Finnegan, Potter?" I sneered. "How sweet. When's the wedding, may I ask?"

He's scowling. "Shut up, Malfoy," he snaps. "And Seamus isn't a tart. Well...perhaps he is...but only slightly! And at least he's a nice person!"

This was too much. "NICE PERSON??!" I exploded. "He's hyperactive, with no idea how to act in a public place, and to top it off, no fashion sense!! You should be ashamed of yourself!"

Harry stared at me with a puzzled expression. "Why is your eye twitching like that?" he asked curiously.

I clapped a hand over my eye and scowled at him. Now, although Harry is very naïve and pretty clueless most of the time, he's not stupid. Suddenly a light dawned in his eyes.

"Ohhh," he breathed. "You're jealous, aren't you?"

"What?! No I'm NOT!" I splutter.

"You really, really are, Malfoy."

"No I am NOT!"

"This conversation sounds familiar, doesn't it? Stop denying it! You kissed me, and you denied it. Now you're jealous, and you're denying it. You really have issues, Malfoy," Harry finished with a flourish.

I stared at him. I was so pissed off before, that 'Ain't No Sunshine' hadn't started playing. Now it did. And there was Harry, looking positively gorgeous in a dingy old bathroom in the back of a pub.

"Shut up, Potter," I muttered. I started walking up to him slowly, gradually backing him up against the wall. I noticed with satisfaction that we were almost exactly the same height.

Harry got an apprehensive, flustered and yes, gorgeous expression on his face as he felt his back hit the wall. "Malfoy, what are you doing?" he spluttered.

"I said, shut UP, Potter," I muttered. Harry made a sort of startled 'meep' noise as I pressed my body against his, staring into his face. I slowly brought a hand up and pushed his hair out of his eyes before bringing my hand down and stroking his lips and cheek with my thumb. I felt a surge of triumph as his breathing hitched slightly, and then sped up. If it's one thing I know, it's seduction techniques. Come on. I'm a Malfoy, for fuck's sake! At least the name is good for something!

I brought my face closer to his, one hand in his hair. Our lips were almost touching, our breaths melding together. Harry's eyes flickered shut; he was obviously expecting a kiss. I paused, looking at him...

Before stepping away.

Harry looked stunned as he opened his eyes and stared at me. He looked even more shocked when I muttered, "I'm sorry," and fled the room.

I couldn't go through with it. I just couldn't. Not because I didn't want to- I never wanted to so much before- but because it does mean so much to me. God, I can't believe I'm saying this. I can't believe I said sorry to Harry! Malfoys never apologise to anyone! EVER!

The truth is, it meant so much to me that I wanted it.... God, this is embarrassing- I wanted it to be right. Not a word very common to the Malfoy dictionary, is it? I wanted it to be special. I didn't want to kiss Harry properly for the first time in a dingy, grotty toilet. It would cheapen him somehow. And Harry deserves the best.

But am I the one to give it to him?

Oh my GOD.

I'm developing morals.

And now I'm feeling... guilty. I'm experiencing feelings of actual GUILT!

Could things get any worse?!

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Chapter Eleven

RON.

Right. When I'm all grown up I'm going to write the much-needed book, 'What the HELL is Wrong with Seamus Finnegan?' Unfortunately there doesn't seem to be any answer to the question. The only thing that I've come up with is that Seamus... is, well, Seamus. That's all anyone can say, quite frankly.

Now, I'm not against couples showing their affection for each other in public. Little pecks, holding hands, you know the sort of thing. I think it's quite sweet, actually- in its proper place.

But now Seamus was showing his- erm, affection (real definition, his insatiable lust) for Harry in public. This was definitely NOT sweet. There were two very blatant reasons for this. They were, of course, a:

Seamus was basically humping Harry's leg, and b: they weren't a couple. They didn't resemble a couple in any way, shape or form. Harry had definitely not given permission for said humping to take place!

And they were really starting to put me off my butterbeer!

When it all got too much, Harry just got up and legged it for the bathroom. Not that I blame him, actually. Anyway, as soon as he had disappeared, 'Mione turned to Seamus with narrowed eyes. Knowing my girlfriend pretty well (well, as much as you can know any girl- they're all still quite a big mystery to me, not to mention completely mental) I quietly leant back before she erupted. Seamus, who didn't know Hermione as well as me, just stared at her good-naturedly.

It was like all those old Westerns 'Mione had forced me to watch over the last summer holidays. Y'know, dead silence, tumbleweeds blowing in the wind. I was almost waiting for 'Mione to growl, "this town ain't big enough for the both of us." Luckily she didn't. I really don't think it would have had quite the same affect in an English accent.

Instead she said, "Seamus Finnegan! I've had it with you! You just leave Harry alone, or you'll really get what's coming to you..."

Alright, possibly not the greatest threat ever, but 'Mione was relatively new to the whole thing!

"Ah, he's fair game, Hermione!" said Seamus. He then nudged her elbow and joked, "I know you want to keep him for yourself during his teenage years, but there's more than enough to go round!"

I was seriously contemplating jumping up and shouting to the pub, "Run! RUN for your LIVES! Vacate the building! GO!!"

Before I could herd anyone to safety, 'Mione exploded. I cowered.

"Enough to go ROUND!" she shrieked. "ENOUGH to go ROUND?! Who do you think I am, Seamus

Finnegan? And just who exactly do you think Harry is?! He's my friend. I'm trying to protect him! He's got enough trouble as it is without people like YOU harassing him!"

"Now, Hermione, I was only joking..."

"Everything's so hilarious to you, isn't it Seamus? Harry needs our support! He's going through a difficult time at the moment! He needs a FAMILY UNIT!"

She's read that phrase in a book somewhere. I'll stake my life on it.

"Ah now, 'Mione," said Seamus, looking rather confused. "So what if I want to sleep with Harry? It's not like he's never done it before!"

Both Hermione and I gaped at him. He didn't think that...

"Well, of course Harry hasn't done it before!" said 'Mione after a minute. "Everyone knows that! Why else do you think I'm so protective over him?!"

Now it was Seamus's turn to gape. "You're not about to tell me that Harry's a... a virgin?"

"It's nothing to be ashamed of!" said Hermione hotly.

Seamus seemed quite bewildered. "But... but just look at him!" he spluttered.

You could just about see Seamus's brain at work. Harry = absolutely the most gorgeous person ever. Harry also = a teenage boy.

"How is that even possible?" Seamus was completely mystified.

"It's very simple, Seamus!" answered Hermione, in textbook mode. "It's possible because Harry hasn't had sex with anyone, hence his virgin status..."

Seamus looked like he was thinking hard. "No wonder he didn't laugh at the last... fourteen of my jokes!" he burst out.

"Exactly," said Hermione, who appeared to be much more calm now. "Do you see now? Harry needs to be kept away from people who're only after one thing... people, well, like you, Seamus."

"Ah, that's not true," said Seamus, surprising both of us. "I do like Harry, y'know."

"You... do?" I said.

"Yeah," answered Seamus, looking quite uncomfortable. "Harry's a top bloke... anyone'd be lucky to have him... if I ever got together with him, well... I wouldn't be looking for anyone else."

"You'd... actually NEVER cheat on Harry?!" I squeaked. 'Mione looked equally stunned. Seamus Finnegan always had numerous partners on the go. He never let himself get tied down, or look for anything other than a bit of fun. This was why he had got rather a reputation for being a bit of a slut, and why 'Mione didn't particularly want him near Harry. But for Seamus to want to go out exclusively to Harry... that was unheard of!

What would happen next?! Malfoy proclaiming his undying love for him?

That's quite a good joke, actually!

"Oh," said Hermione, looking rather subdued and unsure of herself. "Well. That's a different matter

then."

"Aye, I didn't know that Harry was a virgin," said Seamus earnestly.

Seamus being earnest?!

"And I won't be so flirty with him in future," he added seriously.

Seamus being... SERIOUS?!

And he was true to his word.

When Harry came back from the bathroom (looking really flushed, for some reason) Seamus didn't try anything on with him. Well, hardly, anyway. Seamus can't do away with all his flirtatiousness, of course.

He is Seamus, after all.

HARRY.

What does Malfoy want?!

I keep thinking his whole jealousy/denial thing is just a joke to make me look completely stupid. Then I remember that apparently everyone does want me, for some reason. So I can also sort of understand why Draco Malfoy might... want to kiss me.

But if that's true, then why doesn't he do it? The first time he denied it had happened at all, and this time he didn't even get that far. And then he said sorry. SORRY! Malfoy never ever says sorry, especially to me! And it even sounded as if he meant it!

The first time it happened I was just shocked and confused. But this time... did you see what he was wearing? It was... well, it was really, really... um, sexy, to put it mildly. And the hat sort of gave him a dangerous feel and... well. YOU know. The problem of my suddenly-changing attitude to Malfoy was annoying me to such an extent that I didn't even notice that Seamus had stopped trying to grope me on the way home from the pub.

I suppose I've always sort of known in the back of my mind what Malfoy looked like, but you know that I don't really take much notice of these things. But by being in the same year and house as Lavender and Parvati, you do hear things. I know everyone wants to shag Malfoy as well, apparently.

Now I can sort of see why. Alright. I can really see why.

But I'm still confused about his viewpoint on all this. Which is why I'm now seeking advice from 'Mione.

"Herm," I said, "how do you know if someone likes you? Because there's this... person, and this person keeps acting as if he might like me, but I'm not sure, and well..."

Hermione's immediately interested. She even puts down her book!

"I take it we're not talking about Seamus," she says eagerly. "What has this person done, then?"

"Well... most of the time, he just fights with me..."

"Aha," said Hermione wisely. "The love impulse in man frequently reveals itself in terms of conflict, you

know."

"Eh?"

"He likes fighting with you because it turns him on, Harry."

"Hermione!" I'm shocked. The words just seem... wrong coming from her.

"Well, it's true. It's all in my psychoanalysis book."

"Um. Okay. But that's not all... you know when I was under that love potion? Well, he... erm, kissed me and then pretended it never happened..."

'Mione's very excited now. "Oh! Well, it sounds like he didn't want to take advantage of you. How SWEET!"

Malfoy? NOT take advantage of a situation? I didn't even think that was possible...

"But 'Mione... this person definitely WOULD take advantage! And then he started arguing with me again about going out with Seamus!"

'Mione clapped her hands in a most un-Hermione-like manner.

"Harry! He was jealous! He was worried! He likes you! He genuinely likes you!"

"He... does?" I said, flabbergasted. I mean, I know I accused Malfoy of being jealous in the toilets, but I was only trying to piss him off! I didn't really believe it!

"Of course! Ooh, who is it? Is it someone in our year? Our house? Who is it, Harry?"

Who had replaced Hermione with... well, a girl? Alright, I do realise that Herm has always been a girl, but now... well, you get the picture. I managed not to let on who I was talking about. If she ever found out it was Malfoy... well, let's not even think about that, shall we?

Anyway, we ended our conversation with her advising me to ask him out.

"What's the worst that can happen?" she asked. "You've kept telling me that you've been holding out for someone who actually likes you inside, and now it seems as if you've found him. Love's the only game you lose by refusing to take part, Harry."

Ah, the wise old words of Guru Hermione.

So. I'll just ask him. I mean, what's the worst that could happen? Apart from him turning me over to Voldemort and me dying a horrible, painful death. But that's not too likely.

Is it?

DRACO.

About a week after the Almost-Kissing-In-The-Grimy-Toilet episode, Harry came up to me after Potions class. He looked really unsure of himself and rather embarrassed.

He's so sweet!

"Malfoy," he said, "um... could I speak to you alone?"

I tried to sneer at him, but it just wasn't working. That was another bloody side effect of having warm, fuzzy feelings for Harry Potter. My patented Malfoy sneer, handed down from generation to generation of the Malfoy clan, just would NOT appear whenever I was actually talking to Harry.

It was almost as if... I wanted to smile genuinely at him.

Then I spotted Weasley over Harry's shoulder. Perfect. I concentrated on him (not that anyone would care to- but it was an emergency) and soon enough I felt the familiar pattern of muscles sliding into place.

"Really Potter, is that necessary?" I drawled. "I spend enough time with you than I care to already, thanks."

And the Winner for the Award of Biggest Lie of the Century goes to...

Harry's looking downcast. I valiantly fought the urge to say sorry to him. What has he done to me? Wanting to say sorry, thinking another human being was sweet, developing morals, bloody songs in my head!

Speaking of which... oh bugger.

Bloody damn 'Ain't No Sunshine' straight to hell! For fuck's SAKE!

I've begun the tapping. I concentrate on keeping it discrete as possible.

Harry looks like he's debating with himself. He almost turns away, and then stares at me again. Granger and Weasley are both looking at him in an extremely confused manner, as Crabbe and Goyle are looking at me. Well, as confused an expression as they can with only two facial expressions between them.

Harry's staring me straight in the eye. I can't take too much of it.

"Fine," I hiss, gripping his arm and pulling him down the corridor. I turn right and left, through a tapestry-covered door so that nobody will follow us, and into an empty classroom. I stand opposite him, resisting the urge to smile genuinely at him again.

Harry's looking increasingly nervous. After staring at me in silence for a few seconds, he begins to say something very fast.

"Here's the thing, Malfoy," he says. "I was talking to Hermione about what's been going on these past couple of weeks- not mentioning any names of course- and she seems to think that... well... thatyougenuinelylikemeandwerejealousofSeamusandthatyoumightwantto... you know. So, um... well?"

He's blushing even harder now. Bless him!

After staring at him admiringly for a few seconds, the actual meaning of Harry's words creep in through my song-riddled brain, and I do a double- take.

"Are you... asking me OUT, Potter?" I say, hardly daring to believe it.

He answers with an, "erk?" and stares at the floor. He's so cute. Well, he is!

"Are you?" I ask again.

"Well," he says quietly, "that depends on you. If you actually like me, or not."

His words are far from clear, but I understand. I know what he's saying. He wants someone to care for him, and not just see him as a piece of meat. It's what I've been saying all along.

But am I the one to give it to him? Harry needs affection not only emotionally, but physically as well. He needs comfort. And I'm a Slytherin.

Not to mention the fact that if my father ever found out, he'd put even MORE effort into trying to find ways to kill him than he already does. And what if I have to join the Dark Lord, and we have to fight each other, and...

"Harry," I falter. "You don't want me. I'm- I'm a Slytherin, and my father... and You-Know-Who... you can't be hurt. You're needed."

I mean this in two ways, of course. It's not only the Wizarding World who needs him, but... I do t-...

Gargh. I'm not saying that. I'm not THAT soppy, alright?!

Harry stares at me for a bit, before his face bursts into a huge, bright grin. I can't help but return it with a genuine smile, (my face isn't used to working that way, and it hurts) and I almost sigh. He's so PRETTY!

"You DO like me!" he says, almost as if he doesn't believe it, as if it was almost worth something. He comes closer.

"I'm not expecting anything," he says earnestly. "I'm not expecting you to love me, or anything like that... just, not dislike me. Will you... would you kiss me again, please?"

Well, who am I to argue? Well, alright, I usually AM one to argue, but with Harry...

Nah. Not when he's come up with such a good idea!

There's a slight problem with his conditions, however. You know, about not expecting me to love him.

Not that I'm admitting to anything, you realise...

And I'm a bit busy at the moment!

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Chapter Twelve

DRACO.

I woke up the morning after Harry and I had um… had our little talk, and immediately knew that something was terribly, terribly wrong.

My- my insides felt weird. Everything looked different. There was something wrong with my FACE! It was… it was RELAXED!!

Then, all at once, I realised what was up.

I was… well and truly happy.

Now, I've certainly read about this occurrence. It had just never happened to me before. I felt like I wanted to… to get up and dance around the dorms, singing 'Wake up It's a Beautiful Morning.' And laugh. And… frolic. Oh, and snog Harry, of course.

I also wanted to giggle. It suddenly occurred to me that I actually liked being happy.

Bloody HELL!

Now, you would think that my fellow housemates would have liked the new me, wouldn't you? Perhaps they might have been pleased that I was cheerful?

Apparently not.

"Woah!" shouted Blaise when he saw me, drawing back sharply as if I had some life-threatening and extremely contagious disease. "What the fuck happened to your face?!"

I didn't deign to answer him.

When I went down to the common room to go to breakfast and said a jovial "good morning!" to four pale-faced first-years, they all shrieked and ran away.

I mean, for Christ's sake! Am I not allowed to be nice once in a while?

“Draco!” Millicent shouted at me at lunchtime, “stop acting like this! You’re scaring the goddam children!”

“What did I do now?” I grumbled. Honestly, Bulstrode was always saying I was scaring the stupid first years. I never scare them! I admit, of course, that I terrify them out of their tiny, useless little minds. And that’s just the ones from my house… heh heh heh. It’s so fun. No-one but me can see that terrifying them is a very skilled art form.

“Reynolds was in my dorm, too frightened to leave! He said- he said-” here Millicent gets a look of utter disgust on her face- “that you were being… civil to him. That- that’s not true, is it Draco?”

I was just about to answer her when Harry entered the room. Ooh! I hadn’t seen him for over two hours! He caught my eye briefly and I felt… utterly happy once again. Sigh!

Then Millicent said in an extremely freaked-out tone of voice, “Draco… what’s happened to your face?! You’re not… actually smiling… no, grinning, are you?”

Apparently I’m not allowed to do anything!

“So what if I am?” I murmured back. I never murmur, either. I have two tones of voice. Cold-and-Utterly-in-Control voice, and Sneeringly-Sarcastic voice. This was neither.

Millicent pushed her chair back from me, a look of pure, unadulterated fear on her face. “Stop it!” she whimpered. “You- you’re being weird!”

I mean, honestly. Sometimes I really feel like using all the carefully-stoppered poisons I’ve made for all my classmates.

Not today, however. Because… I was so HAPPY!!

But then something happened.

That dorm mate of Harry's… Thomas, was it?- had tapped Harry on the shoulder, and was now talking to him. Harry… was bending his head towards Thomas's, listening carefully and nodding his head.

Now, I thought I was pretty pissed off and out of control when I wasn't with Harry. Now that I was… it was a hundred, million times worse. Thomas's hand was on Harry's arm. MY Harry's arm!! Only I'M allowed to bloody touch him!!

Get. The. Fuck. Off. Him. NOW!!

I found myself wanting to launch myself at the pair, uttering a full battle cry. And I had been saving it for a much better occasion!

Luckily I restrained myself by savagely attacking the table with my knife instead. The others around me relaxed. This was more like the Draco Malfoy they all knew and… well, knew.

HARRY.

When I came into the Great Hall at lunch and saw Draco, I almost did a double-take.

He was actually… actually smiling. Woah!

No, it wasn't a *smile,* precisely. More of a grin.

Now, I thought that Draco had that Dark-and-Smouldering-Heathcliff-look down to a tee. From the perfectly arched eyebrow to the long, sweeping dark cloaks. Very sexy.

But now he had a bright and extremely goofy grin on his face. It even reached his eyes! You could see that all the other Slytherins were getting completely freaked out by this. Bulstrode was cautiously pushing her chair away from him as if he was a dangerous animal, which she was too scared to take her eyes off of.

He looked… so sweet!

Now, I know that the word 'sweet' is definitely not too common when talking about Draco Malfoy. It's pretty much down at the bottom of the list there along with 'kind to animals and children.' But you should have seen him! Aww!

I was just about to contemplate why Draco was smiling in such a manner when Dean tapped me on the shoulder.

"Harry," he said, "I really need to ask you a huge favour."

I looked at him expectantly.

"Well, you know how I've taken Magical Art and Painting this year?" he asked.

I nodded.

"Well… we've got onto the er… model part of the course," Dean continued.

Uh oh. I felt an impending sense of doom.

“And I need to make a quite extensive series of paintings and sketches of a human subject… and I was wondering… could you do it?”

“What?!” I spluttered. “Why me?!” Dean gave me a pointed look. “Oh… right,” I muttered sheepishly.

“Oh, go on Harry!” Dean pleaded. “I’m not trying to come on to you, honestly. You’d just be so good to draw. I really want to do well!”

Sigh. I just don’t know how I get into these things. Really I don’t!

DRACO.

I met Harry that evening after dinner.

I was actually nervous. I changed my outfit about a hundred times. I spent at least ten more minutes than usual doing my hair. So it took a full hour this time.

I felt bloody breathless! It was completely and utterly ridiculous. How could I feel this… giddy about something that doesn’t involve illegal curses and fluffy little bunny rabbits? It didn’t make any SENSE!

And I was actually early. I’ve never been early for anything. I extend my father the courtesy of being on time for him, but nobody else. Because I’m always in control.

Not this time, however. Though he might not know it, Harry held all the cards. Not to mention me. And in more ways than one, thank goodness.

I was just glancing at my watch and realising that Harry was now exactly thirty-three seconds late, when there was a scuffling sound and there was Harry, framed in the doorway and looking as gorgeous as ever.

Sigh!

He looked about as nervous as I was, as well as blushing in the shyest manner possible.

“Hi,” he said quietly, with half a grin on his face.

It was so… awkward. But also so awkwardly sweet and perfect. It was sort of freaking me out, actually. All my other lovers (well, I can’t really call Harry that yet… so I suppose- my boyfriend?! Oh God- am I in a relationship?! I- I do believe that I am. Argh!!) and I would never, ever meet up and then stand there just smiling at each other. We would instead be ripping our clothes off. This, however, was utterly and completely different.

And, if I was soppy at all, I would say… much, MUCH better.

Luckily I’m not soppy, and therefore I never said that. I never even thought it. Nope. Not at all.

I approached Harry slowly and tentatively wrapped my arms around him, and he leaned comfortably into me.

It was very nice after that. Alright- bloody fantastic. There, you bloody happy now?

The only bad point of the entire evening was when I asked Harry if he could meet me tomorrow.

He frowned. “I can’t,” he said. “I’ve promised to do something.”

“What??” I asked before I could stop myself. I must have looked like such a fool. But at least I’m a gorgeous fool; that’s all I can say.

Harry blushes, looks down and scrapes the floor with his shoe. Again, I found this sickeningly sweet, and not at all worthy of a withering glare as I would have performed if anybody else had done it. It was also very Harry, and I added it to my list of the best Harryish moments ever.

“Well- I sort of told Dean I would sit for him- he’s doing that Magical Art class this year.” Harry looked highly embarrassed.

I was seriously pissed off. Wild images flew through my mind of a naked Harry draped over a couch whilst Thomas, wearing a beret, drew at an easel and looked at him lecherously whilst waggling his eyebrows up and down.

“Just exactly what kind of pictures does Thomas want to do?” I growled.

Harry stared at me for a minute, perplexed. “Well, I’m not really sure-” then he broke off, staring at me.

“Oh, Draco- you’re not jealous or anything, are you?” he asked.

“Jealous?” I spat. “Jealous?! Why would I be?! Don’t be so ridiculous!”

“Erm- well, your eye’s twitching again. Like last time. That was my first clue.”

“Well, I-”

“Also, your hands are balled up in fists, and you’re scowling. It sort of gave it away…”

WHY does Harry just have notice the things that I don’t want him to know?!

“Shut up, Potter,” I snap. Now, this would normally completely piss Harry off. But this time he just grins and leans into me.

“It’s sweet,” he says smilingly.

Oh god. Harry Potter thinks that I, Draco Malfoy, am sweet. And to top it off I, Draco Malfoy, don’t even mind that he thinks this.

What the fuck is going on?!

Well, that question is quite an easy one to answer. It’s just that I don’t want to. Alright. Just for you, I’ll give it a go.

I am in--

Right. I’ll give it another go. I am in l--

In lo--

Gargh! It’s not working! I just can’t say it. I can’t! Not to you, and certainly not to HIM!

So let me put it another way.

There ain't no sunshine when he's gone. Or rather, there isn't any sunshine whilst he's not there.

Because I, at least, can use proper grammar, thank-you very much. I may be a lot of things, but I'm certainly not common.

I am a Malfoy, after all.

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Chapter Thirteen

DRACO.

I've discovered twice as many plots planning to seduce Harry/ get him absolutely naked since I've been going out with him. Perhaps it's because I spend so much more time with him than I did before. Or maybe that now I've got him, I'm making doubly sure that nobody else nabs him off of me.

Whatever the reason, it doesn't really matter. Because Harry doesn't notice it. He just doesn't see it! It's completely and utterly the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen in my entire life. The other day he had ten girls following him down the corridor and he asked them if they'd gotten lost.

Honestly.

So, of course, I've taken up the role of his Chief Protector. Well, one of them, at least. Loath though I am to admit it, Granger unknowingly shares in this title with me. It's not in a Malfoy to actually share a Position (or anything at all, for that matter) with someone else, but after mulling it over I've decided that I won't kill her. At least not yet.

I uncovered another Plot this morning. I'd noticed all these Third and Fourth-Year Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws sneaking around with furtive looks on their faces, and trying (unsuccessfully) to hide lumpy packages behind their backs.

It definitely warranted further investigation.

I followed one of the silly little chits. A Hufflepuff, of course. Just who else would not even know the meaning of the word stealthy?

And she led me directly to the Quidditch locker rooms.

Listening in the doorway, I heard various immature little 14-year-olds saying breathlessly:

"No! Not that big! He's sure to notice it then!"

"Here, put a concealing charm on it… where's Vi? I'm sure she'd now how…"

"She's sorting out all the chairs and benches, remember?"

"Have you duplicated more of the tickets yet?"

My god! Just what were these… harpies planning to do to MY Harry?! I decided it was time to make my presence known. I stepped smoothly into sight with all the dramatic presence (and posture) a Malfoy must always have when entering any room. They all froze, and a few shrieked with alarm.

“Just what exactly do you think you are doing?” I said in icy tones.

They all stared at me, horror-struck. Then one of them accidentally let go of a piece of parchment she was holding and it skimmed across the floor.

I looked down, and read:

“See the Boy-Who-Lived in ALL his Glory! 1 Galleon!”

People only had to pay ONE Galleon? Did they think my Harry was only worth ONE GALLEON?!

I looked around, and, despite being completely pissed off, I was rather impressed.

The girls had actually made an entire wall of the changing room completely invisible. They could see out, but nobody could see in. AND they had chosen the wall directly across from the showers.

Unfortunately, my right to kill them on the spot was no longer valid. Can you imagine, Prefects aren’t even allowed to cripple misbehaving students anymore? Not even slightly?! No. It was banned in 1664.

Father said that was when Hogwarts started going completely to the dogs.

I quite agree. All I could give them was a month’s detention each! And these supposed ‘punishments’ usually contained cleaning! I mean, what happened to using them as target practise? Or as testers for

experimental charms? Or the shackles, at least…?

But I digress. I simply gave them detention with Professor Snape (heh heh heh) and just about managed to stop myself going on a killing spree when I remembered that Harry probably wouldn't like that at all.

Well, of course after all their hard work, I couldn't just let it all go to waste. And Harry has Quidditch practice in ten minutes.

And I had a front-row seat…

HARRY.

Seamus came to discuss our 'situation' with me today.

I must admit that I've sort of been avoiding him since the Hogsmeade trip. Well, alright. If I have to be honest, every time I see him I sort of jump up in the air, give off a little "yip" noise and run off in the opposite direction.

Well, he did try to grope me. Publicly, I might add!!

The strange thing is, Seamus just isn't acting like… well, like Seamus at all. It's really starting to freak me out now. He doesn't try to feel me up. He doesn't make loud and public comments about how I look every day.

And, the strangest thing is: he doesn't flirt with anyone else either.

I know!! It's completely unheard of! Seamus's flirting is… it's simply a school institution. He always flirts. He always has done. And until recently, it's been quite certain that he always will.

He flirts with the Seventh Years, who roll their eyes at him but are secretly rather amused. He flirts with the First Years, making them all blush madly, not sure what to do with themselves. He flirts with the Staff. He even flirts with Snape, even though he's received hundreds of detentions over it. It's just the way he is.

But this week, he hasn't done any of the above. Instead he's been really, really quiet and watched me continuously. It's starting to scare everyone.

And it's really starting to scare me. I can't help but wonder what outlet he's going to use to get rid of all his sexual tension.

So when he came softly up to me (he didn't even bounce! Seamus always bounces!) I really didn't know what to expect.

"Harry," he said, leaning over the back of the chair and whispering in my ear, "could I have a bit of a word with you?"

Of course, I jumped ten feet into the air and nearly smashed the top of my head into his face. At least I didn't squeak, however.

"Er… what about?" I managed to get out.

He looked me up and down pointedly, before smirking in that bright way of his, "you, of course!"

Uh-oh.

We sat down in a secluded corner of the Common Room. I was slightly assured by this- at least I wasn't completely alone with him. Because you never know about Seamus.

But when I looked at him, I saw that (for once) he seemed to have no plans for attacking me. In actual fact, he looked rather nervous.

Seamus? Nervous?

Nah!

"So, Harry," said Seamus in a voice that definitely was not its usual perky self, "have you given any more thought to what happened on the Hogsmeade weekend?"

"Do you mean… the groping?" I asked after a minute, confused.

"Er, no, Harry. I'm talking about the actual date itself," Seamus said, looking slightly disconcerted.

"Oh. Oh!" I flushed bright red. How embarrassing! Of course it would be about the date! Even Seamus wouldn't just sit me down to talk about the groping. I'm such an idiot!

"Erm…" I said eloquently.

"If you hadn't had time to think about it…" Seamus continued.

I just came out with it. "The thing is, Seamus… I'msortofseeingsomeoneelse," I said in a rush.

Seamus didn't say anything.

"I'm really sorry!" I continued hurriedly. "I should have told you! I've been an idiot, I shouldn't have messed you about, I should have-"

"Harry. HARRY!" he interrupted me, "don't worry yourself about it. It wasn't like we were going out properly or anything like that. It's alright. So, who are you seeing?"

"It's sort of a secret," I muttered.

"Aye, alright Harry, I won't pry," said Seamus, edging ever closer. "But just keep in mind, if you ever need a shoulder to cry on… or just a bit of fun, remember you wouldn't be using me, I'd rather like getting used by you, actually, so if ever you feel the need to…"

"SEAMUS! Get your hand off my leg!!"

It seems as if Seamus hasn't changed quite as much as I thought he had. In fact, he hasn't changed at all. Well, he is Seamus.

DRACO.

Harry had his first session with that bastard Thomas today.

I don't care what Harry tells me. This isn't about the damn art! That Thomas… despite the fact that I've never talked to him, I just know he's a bloody pervert!

And if he thinks that he's going to get his hands (they're probably all dirty too- covered in all that disgusting oily paint; how common) on Harry then he's got another thing coming…

HARRY.

I had my first session with Dean today.

I was really nervous. I mean, obviously I'm not a professional model or anything, so I was sure I was going to mess it all up. Plus I was really worried that I might have to strip. Even though Dean had basically seen everything anyway, being in the same dormitory as me. But now, he would actually be really looking at me.

Gagh!

In fact, it wasn't that bad at all. Actually, it was quite fun. Dean knew that I was obviously a bit nervous. He told me all these funny stories about his art class, and about how pissed-off and jealous everyone else was that he was drawing me. Obviously these little anecdotes weren't true, but they put me at ease.

I was also quite happy that he only wanted to draw my head and face- albeit in about a hundred different poses- and after two-and-a-half hours, he said we were through.

The most interesting part of the evening was when I left the classroom, however…

DRACO.

I was just stealthily hiding in a darkened corner when Harry came out of the classroom. Immediately he got a lovely, rather puzzled expression on his face. Then he came right up to me.

“Draco- what are you doing?” he asked me.

Gack! I thought that Harry was clueless about this sort of thing! How did he penetrate through my brilliant hiding technique? It’s not fair!

“Erm,” I said. There didn’t really seem very much else to say, quite frankly.

“Were you spying on me?” Harry asked.

Now, there were two ways I could go with this. I could either own up and admit it, and therefore also admit I was jealous, or I could take on a mantle of aloof indifference. So of course, I chose option number 2. Well, I am a Malfoy, after all.

“Of course not, Potter,” I said. “I was just out walking, and I can’t help it if my walk just happened by coincidence you understand- to end up, well… here.”

Harry was getting a twinkle in his eye.

“And before you jump to any conclusions,” I continued hurriedly, “I don’t care at all that you were alone for nearly three hours with another boy, probably naked, whilst…”

Harry burst out laughing. “God- your eye is twitching again! Is there something wrong with it? I think you should go to Madame Pomfrey. And to ease your mind Draco- no, I wasn’t naked, and NO, just like I said,

Dean didn’t try anything on at all. He was drawing me for his ART PROJECT. Feel better now?”

Hmph. Stupid Potter.

But he laughed! And I was near him when he did it! Sigh.

I suppose I could just about forgive the fact that he was actually laughing at me. Just this once.

It doesn’t mean that I’m going soft, or anything like that.

Dear God. That thought will haunt me at nights. Well, that and a certain other person, of course.

Sigh!

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Chapter Fourteen

DRACO.

I’m jealous all the bloody time.

I know! It's ridiculous! With all my other lovers, I didn't particularly care. I mean, obviously I didn't want them to cheat on me, but it was more to do with honour than actual, real feelings.

And, quite frankly, who would ever want to cheat on this?

But… you have seen Harry, haven't you? You do know what he looks like, right?

Harry has never, ever shown one ounce of proof that he would ever even think of cheating on me, but it just doesn't matter. I should be used to the fact by now that people flirt with Harry, and that he's too clueless to even realise that they're doing it.

But every time I see it happening, something goes off inside my head. As in, the love songs are switched off. The birds stop their singing. Instead of wanting to skip along in a flowery meadow, I want to kill. KILL!!!

For some reason, Harry seems to find this- sweet. He thinks it's funny when I growl, and laughs hilariously when my eye twitches. And I don't even *care* that he does so. What's happened to me??

But lately, I've been thinking about other things. Other questions. Other questions of a futurey, where-do-we-go-from-here sort of nature.

For example. Harry and I have been going out for about three weeks. Well, two weeks, five days, three hours and- but… it's not like I'm counting, or anything!

So, three weeks. And- embarrassed as I am to put my seduction techniques in such a poor light, we have not done… It.

Never, ever have I waited this long for someone to be… ready. If they don't put out, I really don't want to know. I don't have the bloody time for sappy flowers and candlelit dinners! Who do you think I am, a Gryffindor?! And, usually, when they do give in, whether happily or reluctantly, I usually get bored with

them very soon afterwards anyway.

But with Harry…

Shamed as I am to admit it, I just want to be with him as much as possible, regardless of the sex factor. Please, somebody pass me the sick bag- god, just listening to myself makes me nauseous.

But… I want it to be right for Harry.

Which brings me on to question number two.

Am I the person to make it right for him?

I'm a Slytherin. I'm an enemy. My father's a bloody Death Eater. We're in the middle of a war, and every day I meet up with Harry Potter to hold hands, snog a bit and have soppy little chats! And I like it!

But- when we get to the bedroom stage… what if I'm too rough with him? What if he doesn't like it and… oh, hell.

I know that Harry doesn't love me. Oh, he likes me, for some reason- I've yet to fathom why- but that's all there is. I should let him go, let him find some bloody Gryffindor who would actually be-shudder- really nice to him.

But every time I think of him with someone else, my eye begins to twitch. And I want to kill. KILL!!!

So, I can't do it. But how long will it be before he lets me go?

HARRY.

Don't get me wrong, I like Professor Smeldon, and everything. She's always nice and a good teacher too. But, well… she's also- a little odd. I know I'm not really up-to-date on the latest witchy fashions, but I swear that I've never seen anyone else wear robes as short as she does. Like right now, she's sitting on her desk with her legs crossed, and the hem's gone even higher. She's also got these really high-heeled strappy shoes on. I'm not sure they'd be the ideal choice for the classroom- aren't they meant to be really uncomfortable? Then, somehow, her robes bunch up even more and I see that she's wearing stockings. And suspenders. Oh- whoops. Look away, Harry- look away NOW.

"Harry," she says. "Harry, Harry, Harry."

I'm strongly reminded of Lockhart

"Yes, Professor?" I ask, slightly nervous. "Is there something wrong?"

She smirks. "Oh no, Harry- there's nothing wrong… with you."

Erk? She's giving me an intense sort of stare now- whatever is she doing?

"It's this essay," she says, handing it to me. Ah. Well, it was written the day after the whole Draco-kissing-me-and-denying-it thing, so obviously it's not my best.

She's got her hand on my arm now. I notice she's got blood-red, very long and manicured nails. Hmmm. This all seems rather… odd.

"Harry," she says, still smiling in that really weird way. "I know that you're a- good boy. And you're very

good in DADA. This is not the kind of thing I expect from you, now is it? You've been a bit- naughty, haven't you, Harry?"

"Erm- I suppose so," I mumble. I'm not sure I quite agree with her choice of words, but I understand what she means. This wasn't a very good grade.

She cocks her head to one side. "Now, I know you've got- stamina, Harry- I just think it needs to be applied- here. I don't want to have to- punish you, Harry."

She hands me the essay. I take it. She… doesn't let go. She leans forward. I lean back.

Is it just me, or is there something… strange going on here?

"Well- thanks, Professor," I say, finally wresting the essay from her grasp, and hurriedly backing towards the door. "I'm really sorry about this- and I'll make sure that my stamina- I mean! My… work is better next time. Right. See you, then. Bye."

She's still smirking as I get out of there.

DRACO.

I was just walking down the corridor (not looking for Harry, of course) when several of Harry's housemates came ambling along.

"Are you saying Professor Smeldon made Harry stay behind after class? The lucky bastard!"

“I think she’s the lucky one! Did you see that look on her face? Like she was going to…”

GARGH! NOOOO!!!

Kill! KILL!!!

I raced for the classroom.

But by the time I’d reached it, Harry was already gone. And so had Professor Smeldon.

HARRY.

Draco didn’t meet me that night. I waited for over an hour, but he never showed up. I don’t know why, but the whole thing made me feel sick. Had I done something wrong? He was always there, and he was always there before me- what had happened? I had to see him.

DRACO.

I came out of the shower to find Harry sitting on my bed, cross-legged and reading through my DADA homework.

“Gargh!” I yelled.

Harry didn’t look up as he said, “I don’t think question three’s quite right, Draco, if you just…”

Then he looked up, clocked me and turned rather pink. Well, I did only have a towel on, so I’m not completely surprised by the reaction.

After a minute he realised he was staring, blushed even further and muttered a soft “sorry,” as he looked away. It was at that point that the bloody birds and violins decided to make a comeback just as my insides turned to mush.

“Harry… what are you doing here?” I asked, trying to sound cool, aloof, unattached, and utterly unbothered.

“Well, you didn’t turn up tonight, so I…”

Whilst Harry was trying to explain himself, he was trying to do so without looking too obviously at my chest; in fact, trying to do so and not to look at my chest at all. It was absolutely ridiculous. I mean, we’ve been going out for ages and he gets shy about something little like that.

Bless him!

As he was talking, I realised with increasing horror that, for once in my life, my room was… messy. There were things all over the floor. And all my papers were strewn all over a desk, and- they weren’t in any kind of order at all.

And, to top it all off, my textbooks weren’t all at perfect right angles on my desk! I tried to surreptitiously edge myself so that I was blocking at least some of these horrors, before lying assuredly to Harry that I’d just been busy, and that no, that I hadn’t not turned up to meet him because I was in a jealous rage. Harry was still looking at my feet, so I took pity on him and put my dressing gown on. But, quite

unfortunately, something happened when I did this.

Now you may not know this, but Harry Potter is extraordinarily nosy. It's absolutely no wonder to me that he always manages to foil a new evil plot every year. In the split second I looked away from him, he managed to nose his way through my workbooks and fish out the one bit of paper I really didn't want him to see.

When I turned round again, he was reading it with a look of extreme puzzlement on his face.

"What's this? 'My name is Draco Malfoy. I don't need someone to complete me. And the noises are all in my head.'"

"Gargh!" I said again, made a grab for it and missed, and managed to send myself sprawling across the bed. Harry held the offending bit of paper (yes, ladies and gentlemen, I just had to write my mantra down, didn't I?) out of my reach.

"Give me that," I got out through gritted teeth.

"But what is it? Come on, tell me," answered Harry, still holding it away from me.

God! Could this be any more embarrassing??! I could feel my entire face burning up.

"It's my mantra," I snapped finally.

"Your man-? But why do you need one? And what noises?"

I lay down on the bed and covered my head with a pillow.

“The… thesongsandstuff,” I mumbled after a while.

“The songs?” Harry said in bafflement. “And- and stuff?”

There was a pause. Then Harry said after a minute, realisation dawning in his voice: “hang on… was this from when you kept twitching and tapping beats? And banging your head against the wall?”

“NO!” I howled, surging up and taking the pillow off my face.

“Yes it was!” said Harry triumphantly.

“It wasn’t!” I yelled. “It was all your fault anyway! You made me tap!”

Harry’s mouth was now hanging open. “You mean… you heard songs and stuff because- because I was there?” he said slowly.

“Oh God,” I muttered, the last nail in my coffin of deep humiliation having just been firmly banged in. I covered my face with my hands.

But then my embarrassment was gone, because Harry Potter pulled my hands away, whispered “that’s so sweet,” and started kissing me extremely thoroughly. After a while he pulled away and we studied each other rather solemnly.

“Draco… do you want to- to…” here Harry turned even more red, but managed to keep looking me straight in the eye.

I think I managed one very sappy and Gryffindorish “are you sure” before performing a complicated

locking charm on the door. I definitely didn't want anybody interrupting this.

As we sank back down on the bed, I saw with surprise that my hands were shaking. I realised I was nervous. Completely and utterly terrified.

Bloody hell.

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Chapter Fifteen

DRACO.

I woke Harry up the next morning with a beautifully-prepared breakfast that I had made myself. In a crystal vase on the tray there was a single rose, still fresh with the morning dew. The red of its petals and the green of its stem represented the perfect merging of our two houses.

Harry opened his eyes- so green, so perfectly, emerald-green!- and when he saw me, his lips curled up into a beautiful grin. He looked like a debauched angel.

"Good morning, my darling," I said, setting down the tray and moving in for a languorous kiss, which Harry readily accepted. After I pulled away, Harry's eyes drifted towards the tray.

"Oh, Draco!" he said, eyes filling with tears. "You- you brought me breakfast in bed! Nobody's ever been

this kind to me before!”

“Well, they should have been,” I said, gazing into his forest-green eyes. “You’re perfect, body and soul… you deserve nothing but the best, and I intend to give it to you!”

“Draco, I have something to tell you…”

“Yes, dear one?”

“Draco, I- I love you…”

I gasped, and my eyes filled with tears too. “Harry- do you mean it? Because- because I’m desperately, hopelessly in love with you. I wish to be with you forever. You are ingrained on my very soul!”

“Oh, Draco- I shall never part from you! Let us make a true-love pact, and let our souls be entwined as one!”

“There is nothing I would want more on earth, my love.”

“But Draco…” here Harry looked slightly worried, but still as gorgeous as ever, “what about your cruel and wicked father?”

“I shall never go over to the Dark Side! I will go against everything- nay, my very nature, and completely change my entire personality just for you, dear one! I will apologise to Hermione and Ronald for my terrible behaviour over the past six years, and just pray that they will be able to forgive me!”

Harry gasped rapturously and fell into my arms, just as several dozen little fluffy bunny rabbits came inexplicably to our bedside, noses twitching in an incredibly sweet way…

YAAAARRRGGGHHH!!

I sat up in bed, my heart thub-thumping at about a hundred times a second. Dear Lord, what a horrible, terrible nightmare! Flowers! Love pacts! Debauched angels! Little fluffy bunny rabbits!! Christ, where had such an awful fucking dream come from?! It sounded like the worst trashy romance novel I had ever heard of!

I gave an involuntary shudder before freezing again, realising that there really was something terribly, terribly wrong.

There was somebody in my bed. Snuggling me.

I slowly turned my head to the left, and was greeted by the sight of Harry Potter.

Harry Potter. Really in my bed. Naked, in my bed. Naked in my bed with his hair all mussed up and snuffling quietly into one of my specially-made pillows. And then it all came flooding back.

Harry! Turning up in my room! The mantra! The kissing! The… the other stuff that followed!!!

I felt all squadgy and happy yet again, and this didn't even change when I noticed that Harry was dribbling on my pillow. My specially-made pillow, remember.

He just looked so sweet!

Then another problem struck me.

What was I supposed to do?

I had never woken up with somebody before. Every single one of my previous experiences had been slightly rushed in deserted classrooms, or with people I certainly didn't want to snuggle up to (not that I wanted to snuggle up to Harry, or anything… ahem) but this was Harry. It had been his first time! What was the proper etiquette for this type of situation? Would I be expected to act all disgustingly soppy when he woke up, and… and admit my feelings?! I simply could not do that.

It was then I realised that we were in the Slytherin dorms. It was about 11pm, the door was locked, and my fellow dorm-mates knew better than to mess with one of my spells, but still. Anybody could just walk in!

What had I been thinking?!

The fact of the matter was that I hadn't been. I'd been so caught up in the sappiness of Harry coming to seem me and then the whole lauching-himself-at-me thing that I had left half my brain somewhere along the way. It was scary.

And how could Harry still look so sweet when he was still dribbling on my special pillow?!

Very, very quietly, I slid out of Harry's loose embrace, and felt around for my clothes. I put them on and stood up, looking down at Harry.

I couldn't stay there, even if it was my room. When Harry woke up… he would ask for assurances, I just knew he would… and what was I supposed to bloody say? That I'd never felt this way about anyone before in my life? Malfoys just don't admit to things like that, you know, even if they're true…

He'd- he'd understand why I didn't stay. Why I couldn't.

I slipped out of the room, quietly locking it behind me.

The next time I saw Harry, my stomach dropped to my shoes, and not in a good way.

It was the following day, at about eleven, as it happened. I hadn't returned to the dorms until about five in the morning, just to make sure that Harry wasn't still there- and to my enormous relief, he hadn't been. I had missed breakfast as well, because- I'm a Slytherin. I don't bode well with confrontation when I don't have anything to say in my defence.

But Harry had managed to corner me at last. He looked absolutely livid. His eyes were blazing and sparking furiously.

"Harry," I said uneasily. "Er- how are you today?"

"I can't believe that you just left me there," Harry said in a fierce angry whisper, coming very close to me and grabbing the front of my robes with one hand. "I woke up and you were just- just gone. And you knew I'd never done… I had to sneak out of there all by myself, it was just lucky I had my cloak with me! How could you do that? How could you?"

I couldn't think of a thing to say. Probably because I didn't have a leg to stand on. If it was anybody else but Harry… I could have made up something, put a spin on things. But- it was Harry.

"I can't believe you'd be so cruel," Harry continued, choked-up emotion in his voice. "I thought you were different. I though you actually cared about me! When all the time you were just like the others- you were just after one thing. Tell me I'm wrong- go on!"

I stared at Harry in slack-jawed shock. What could I say? It was either tell him the truth- and lose any power I had left, any control I had over the situation- or lose him completely.

“Er-” I began. My mouth wouldn’t work.

“I thought so,” said Harry, stepping away from me. His eyes looked very wet. “You bloody bastard. Just… just leave me alone.”

He turned on his heel, and then he was gone.

It- it wouldn’t have worked out, anyway. Harry Potter, Golden Boy, with a Sarcastic Future Death Eater? We’re … just too different. It’s- it’s really better this way.

I don’t need him. He made me do stupid things, anyway. He made me lose control. It was wrong to feel like that.

Even if it made me happy.

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Chapter Sixteen

HERMIONE.

I was just reading a suitably thick book in the Common Room when Ron came rushing up to me, looking very worried.

“’Mione!” he said. “We need your help- Harry’s really upset! He’s crying! We need a girl up there!”

I didn’t even bother to put the book down properly so the spine wouldn’t be damaged. I just threw it down and raced for the boy’s dorms.

Most of Harry’s dorm-mates were sort of standing in the doorway, looking horrified and frightened in the way boys do when they don’t know what the hell to do in a situation. Seamus, however, was sitting on Harry’s rumpled bed, patting Harry’s back. Harry was lying on his stomach with his head in the pillows and was sobbing his little heart out.

“Harry!” I gasped, coming into the room. “What’s- what’s wrong?!”

“He was looking really down the whole day,” Dean whispered to me. “And then we came back up here, Ron asked him what was wrong, and he just- he just started crying…”

I turned to glare at Ron.

“Well, I didn’t know he was going to start to- you know!” said Ron, turning a bit red. Then he called over to Harry in a rather wavering voice, “hey, Harry- y’all right, mate?”

BOYS. Honestly.

I went over to Harry and sat gingerly on the corner of the bed. “Harry,” I whispered, “do you want to talk about it?”

Harry was quiet for a minute, hiccoughed slightly and then said in a muffled tone, “make them all go away, first.”

Dean, Neville and Ron, although worried, looked incredibly grateful that they had been relieved of

comforting duty. They filed down the staircase, shutting the door behind them.

Seamus, however, wouldn't budge. We started giving each other Death Glares.

"It's alright, 'Mione," said Harry after a minute, sitting up on the bed and taking a deep breath. "He can stay if he likes."

"Harry," I said again. "Please tell me- us- what is it? Is it your scar again?"

Harry sniffed. "Nothing like that- it's just- that, well… I've been seeing someone. For a few weeks."

"What?" I said. "You've certainly kept that quiet!"

"Yeah. But- anyway, last night we- you know…" here Harry turned an absolutely brilliant shade of pink.

"Yeah?" Seamus prompted, looking incredibly interested. I sent him another Death Glare.

"And- and- god, this is so embarrassing- when I woke up, he'd gone. He'd just left! And I really thought he liked me! But now I know that he'd just been trying to seduce me the entire time! I feel- so stupid. I just wanted it- to be special. And now I just feel used."

Both Seamus and I were no longer sending Death Glares at each other, but instead at this anonymous boy who had even dared to mess about with our Harry.

"Bastard," we hissed at exactly the same moment.

Harry was looking at us worriedly. Well, it did look as if we were both about to go off on a killing spree.

“Sorry,” he whispered. “You must think I’m a complete idiot…”

“Of course not, Harry!” I said forcefully, while Seamus nodded in agreement. “It’s not your fault.”

“And Harry,” added Seamus, “at least- at least you’re not a virgin anymore!”

I was just about to kill Seamus for his utterly unhinged and insensitive comment. But Harry suddenly looked incredibly surprised, stared at Seamus for a moment, and then let out a startled laugh.

“I suppose that’s true,” he said. “Thanks, Seamus…” then the laugh dissolved back into a sob. But he did look slightly better.

My goodness. Seamus had actually helped.

But there was only one course of action I could even consider. Find this mystery son of a bitch and kill him. KILL him!!!

DRACO.

Harry won’t look at me. He won’t speak to me. He won’t- he won’t do anything.

It’s been several weeks since he broke up with me. Harry’s looking pale and all the Slytherins are slightly relieved as I’ve gone back to acting my usual and frightening self.

I can't believe I thought he'd understand. I can't believe I left without leaving anything. I've realised now that I knew he wouldn't understand. I did it on purpose, however unconsciously. Because I knew how hard it would be. Because I am, deep-down, a coward. No matter how much of a front I put up.

It's the Magical Art and Painting show tomorrow. Everyone's put up their work on display. I went past the classroom, pretending I wasn't interested, just so I could have a glance of Harry. Harry, who's looking happy and smiling in the pictures, and not looking at me in that cold, angry and hurt way he has done every time I've seen him for the last several weeks.

Goyle, who is also taking the class, told me that everyone was extraordinarily jealous that Thomas managed to bag Harry Potter for his model. Apparently just about everyone in the class wanted to paint him, (who wouldn't?) but Thomas got in there first.

I'm glad, in a way. Because I must admit- though if you tell anyone else this I'll deny it all before hanging you for all eternity by your toes- for a mudblood, Thomas paints very well. Alright- he's the best artist in the whole bloody class. There's Harry everywhere on his display- his face, just an eye, profile; all of him. The largest one is of Harry bare-chested, looking slightly embarrassed. I wonder how long it took Thomas to persuade Harry to sit for that picture.

I only went to have a brief look, honestly. Just because I wasn't going to go the show tomorrow, because then I would be in close proximity to Harry, and it's bad enough as it is, quite frankly- and I wouldn't be able to see it otherwise… it was only going to be a little glance.

But then I looked at them, and Harry looked- so lovely… and I thought, nobody's here, nobody will notice if I take a few of the sketches… it won't matter.

Just as I had snuck three of them into my bag, there was a voice behind me.

"What are you doing, Malfoy?"

Fuck! Fucking Granger!

HERMIONE.

Harry wouldn't tell me who is his ex-secret-boyfriend was.

And I had to know, because of course I had to kill him.

I don't know why Harry was so secretive about it. I mean, it couldn't be that bad, could it? All I knew was that this boy wasn't in our House, and was most probably in our year or above. Oh, and he was a complete and utter bastard. But that goes without saying.

I think Seamus knows. I think he knew all along and never said a thing about it. Harry told him ages ago that he was seeing someone, so Seamus has had weeks longer than I have had to suss out who mystery lover boy was. But Seamus is just not telling.

At first I started sending Death Glares at any boy who looked at Harry, hoping to catch one of them looking guilty, or smug, or- something. But the unfortunate truth of the matter is, about a hundred boys look at Harry every day, and my Death Glare was losing some of its power because it had to be applied so many times. And several people were becoming quite afraid of me.

So, I abandoned that plan and waited for another clue to present itself. And now it has.

I had left my DADA book in the library. I was just going to get it when, on impulse, I decided to visit the Arts classroom on the way there to have a sneaky peek at all the displays before it was completely crowded when it officially opened.

And who should I find in there when I arrive? Draco bloody Malfoy. Standing in front of Dean's display.

Looking… wistful. And it all clicked.

This was Harry's secret boyfriend! Draco Malfoy!! No wonder Harry was so embarrassed!! And hadn't Malfoy stopped really taunting us months ago?? And these last few weeks- when I thought about it, Harry had gone out of his way to avoid Malfoy wherever possible. It all made sense! Except, of course, for the whole thing of it being Draco Malfoy. I mean, I could certainly see where Harry was coming from from an aesthetic point of view. But- in case you didn't get it, it was MALFOY!!

He must have used a spell.

The… utter BASTARD!!

DRACO.

I'll let you in on a little secret. Granger packs an incredibly mean punch. Oh, she may look all sweetness and light on the outside, but don't let that deceive you. She actually punched me three years ago! She's vicious! She floored me! She properly bruised me! And the first time she did it wasn't even for a very good reason! It was over some stupid bird-thing. An ugly bird. But Harry's very pretty. And human. And happens to be her best friend. Which is why I'm slightly concerned with the fact that she's looking like she's about to explode. And it also explains why I'm backing as far away from her as is humanly possible.

Her eyes are narrowing. Oh dear.

"I'm going to kill you, Malfoy!" I think she actually means it.

"Granger!" I shout, and my voice suddenly comes out at a very high pitch indeed. I swing my bag at her to try and fend her off. It's not working.

WACK!

“OW!”

“How could you do that to Harry? Just leave him there??”

Another WACK!

“Ack!! Goddam, Granger!”

WACK!

“Jesus, Granger! Are you trying to kill me??”

“YES!” she shrieked, taking yet another swing at me. Well, that made me feel a whole lot better.

Since I was using my bag as a weapon, Granger, always good on tactics, tries to get rid of it. She stopped hitting me for a minute (and for this I was eternally grateful) and grabbed my bag. I, obviously, not wanting to lose my only guard against a psychotic mad-woman, held onto the strap. We grappled with it for several seconds until it was tipped over and all of its contents spilled onto the floor. Including the sketches I had borrowed- well, alright, stolen from Thomas’s display.

Dammit!!

I made a dive for them, but Granger was too quick for me. She aimed a hard kick at my ankle and snatched them from my hands. I’m telling you, if this is what the so-called prissy Light Side’s offering, I

have absolutely no plans to join the Death Eaters now. Even if they do have the cooler uniforms.

Granger's staring at the sketches.

"You came in here just to steal these…" she mutters.

Then suddenly her eyes open wide and she jerks her head up to meet my eyes.

"Oh my god," she says, and you could just about see the little wheels in her brain turning. "You're completely and utterly in love with Harry, aren't you. That's why you followed us on Harry's date with Seamus. That's why you've been walking around in an incredibly strange way a couple of weeks ago, with that frightening look on your face. You were happy. And I'll bet you chucked it all away because you have some sort of commitment phobia, or some weird hang-ups about sex."

Fucking Granger! Must she always be right?? I really can't think of an answer, so instead I just look down at my carefully polished shoes.

"Malfoy, you sad little bastard," she continues, shaking her head.

"I don't need your pity," I sneer.

"You don't have my pity," she snapped back. "You're an evil little ferret who needs to be put out of its misery, if you ask me."

See??! VICIOUS!

"I bet you have a little shrine to him," she went on. "And these pictures were going to be the finishing touch. I'll bet it's got candles and everything."

That really isn't such a bad idea. Pity bloody Granger had to come up with it, though. Now I can't implement it.

And she's left marks. All over me! I bet she's quite frisky in the bedroom. I wonder if Weasley quite knows what he's let himself in for. I come to the conclusion that I don't particularly care. In case you don't quite realise, I'm in bloody PAIN!!

"Now you'll never get near him again," Granger went on. "Now he's got a new boyfriend. Someone who can actually be nice to him."

NEW BOYFR—???

It's got to be…

Seamus fucking Finnegan.

GAARRGGH!! KILL!! KILL!!!

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Chapter Seventeen

HARRY.

“HARRY!”

I looked up from my parchment just in time to see Hermione knock open the door to my dorm. I jumped when the door forcibly banged into the wall. Then I looked at Hermione apprehensively. Her cheeks were pink and her hair was even frizzier than usual, which usually happened when she had a lot of pent-up emotion buried inside of her. And since she had called out my name, I was guessing that it had something to do with me.

Uh-oh.

Hermione just stormed up to me, and said in a shrill voice, “Malfoy, Harry! How could it be Malfoy?!”

Gah! There was nothing I could really say to this, so instead I just gaped at her.

“What- what do you mean, ‘Mione?” I attempted after a minute.

“Don’t look at me like that, Harry James Potter! I know perfectly well that it was Malfoy you were seeing before. Which leads back to my first question… how could it be MALFOY??!”

“How did you find out?” I mumbled. I’m hopeless at denying things when I know they’re true.

“I just saw Malfoy at the Magical Arts and Painting classroom,” said Hermione. “And I put two and two together, and… oh, Harry! Why him?”

“I don’t know!” I said furiously. “I mean… I thought that he liked me. Really did, Hermione. And then it just… it just went on from there.”

“But Harry,” said Hermione, a rather bewildered look on her face. “This is Draco Malfoy.”

“Yes,” I said hesitantly.

“He’s an utter bastard.”

“Well… yes. I suppose you could say that.”

“He’s evil. He calls me a mudblood. He’s rude and horrible to everyone. He tried to get you expelled. He tried to get Hagrid sacked!”

“Um…”

“He’s almost killed you several times when he’s been cheating at Quidditch!”

“Er…”

“To my mind, he had no redeeming features whatsoever.”

I tried to think of some of Draco’s better qualities. Somehow, I couldn’t seem to come up with any. “He’s- well, he’s quite funny,” I managed at last, very lamely.

“Has he ever apologised for any of these things, Harry? Anything I’ve missed?”

“Well- not exactly. Alright! No.”

“Then,” said Hermione, going red in the face, “what the hell were you doing going out with him, let alone sleeping with him??!”

“I don’t know!” I burst out. “It- it just happened, alright?? For some stupid reason I got it into my head that he genuinely liked me, and then… you just can’t make me feel any worse than I already do, Hermione. I lost my bloody virginity to him and he never spoke to me again. How do you think that makes me feel?”

Hermione had a subdued look on her face. “Sorry Harry,” she said. There was silence for a minute, and then she suddenly giggled. “You should have seen Malfoy, Harry! I hit him. And kicked him in the shins.”

“What?!” I squawked.

“Well, he’d been horrible to you, Harry! And then I told him about you and Seamus.”

Heh. I was rather pleased about this, actually. “What did he say about that?” I asked.

“He just looked really upset,” said Hermione.

“Really upset?” I repeated. “Why on earth would he be upset? He doesn’t even like me.”

“Oh, but he d-” here Hermione broke off abruptly.

“What?” I said.

“Never mind, Harry,” Hermione said. She patted my arm. “You just stay with Seamus, alright?”

What ever was going on?

HERMIONE.

You should have seen Malfoy's face when I told him about Seamus and Harry.

He actually looked upset. UPSET! Draco Malfoy! His face crumpled and everything! And, however disturbing it may be, he must really… love Harry. Shudder.

But obviously he's all wrong for him. Although I don't quite approve of Seamus, I must say that he's a vast improvement on Harry's last choice. In fact, Draco Malfoy makes Seamus Finnegan look like a bloody knight in shining armour.

Seamus is- well, he's Seamus. Yes, he's obsessed with sex, and gossips constantly, as well as having a brain that seems to work completely differently to anyone else's, but he's also- rather fun. He makes Harry laugh. Which is what Harry's been needing to do for several years, quite frankly.

I'm not sure exactly when the whole thing turned into something more-than-friends, but I wasn't overly surprised. Everyone knew that Seamus had been angling after Harry for months, and they had become much closer since Seamus had stopped trying to stick his tongue down Harry's throat every time he saw him.

And at least I knew that Seamus genuinely liked Harry, and wasn't going to use him just for his looks. I knew that Harry was a little unsure about diving straight into another relationship, but Seamus managed to convince him. I just don't want him to get hurt again.

And Malfoy, although absolutely besotted, is also an evil little ferret, who would obviously rip Harry's

heart into little shreds.

I have to keep Harry away from him.

HARRY.

I've been kidnapped. Dragged forcibly away into a darkened corner.

I've been kidnapped by a very angry-looking boy whose usually perfectly-arranged prissy hair is now sticking up all over the place. And he's bloody hissing at me! AND accidentally spitting!

I don't want to talk to Malfoy. I don't want to be bloody anywhere near him. I mean- for some reason, I actually liked him! And not just because I thought that he liked me! I really thought all his panic attacks and numerous signs of a mental breakdown were- were really sweet! I hadn't thought he'd changed, exactly- I just thought he was funny!

Until I realised that it had all been a complete act in order to get me into bed. He hadn't cared at all. And I was just so angry with myself for falling for it. How thick can you get?

Why should I listen to Malfoy? I know Seamus likes me. I know it. It's very- safe. And it's… pleasant. He's nice to me. He doesn't get jealous when I talk to someone else, he doesn't follow me about like I need protection or anything, he makes me laugh. I mean, honestly, I don't exactly see us lasting the distance, but- so what? It's, like I said, nice. Seamus is so much better than Malfoy, really. Everyone knows that.

Bloody ferret!

DRACO.

Well. Harry's not looking too pleased with me, to say the least. In fact, if I have to be perfectly honest about it, he's looking pretty pissed off. His eyes are flashing furiously and his mouth is set into a thin line. But he still looks great. It's a sort of "Damaged Hero" look, if you will. Not that I've noticed, or anything. Oh no. I'm far too angry for that!

"Are you going out with bloody Finnegan, Potter?" I hiss. "Have you really sunk that low?"

"Shut the fuck up, Malfoy!" Harry yells. Youch. I forgot what happens when he really loses his temper. "It's none of your bloody business who I go out with! You used up that privilege when I broke up with you."

Well, alright. He had a slight point there.

"Have you slept with him?!" I yelled back.

Harry gapes at me, blushing slightly. "It's none of your business," he growled. "But… yeah, as it happens."

You can just see him adding in his head, "and how do you like that?!"

At these words, I saw complete red, and sunk my fingers into his arm. "You're not allowed to!" I screamed.

"Why??!"

“I’m the one who had bloody voices in his head, Potter!” I yell. “I had to endure listening to Muggle songs because of you! And getting self-help books out of the library! And then when we got together, I wanted to skip! And the birds! There were birds! And now- now there’s nothing anymore! My head is bloody EMPTY!”

Harry’s looking at me as if I’ve just sprouted horns. But there’s no danger of that; not for a few more years, at least.

“I think,” said Harry slowly, “you are absolutely mad. I’m off.”

“Wait!” I yell at his retreating back. “Didn’t you just listen to what I said?? Didn’t you understand? I- mlph you, Harry!”

Harry stopped. Then he slowly turned around.

“You- what me?” he asked.

“I— mlph you,” I said.

Harry was now looking adorably confused. “Malfoy, I can’t hear you if you cover mouth up with your hands on the second word,” he said.

“Oh, for God’s sake, Potter!” I yell. “I want to get back together with you. I’m sorry, alright?”

“You’re sorry?!” said Harry incredulously. “Then why did you just bloody leave after we slept together??”

Aha! I knew the answer to that one! At last, Granger had come in handy for once. I looked at the floor. I

could feel my ears turning pink.

“I have some weird hang-ups about sex,” I mumble.

“I don’t think that’s good enough, Draco,” he said quietly. “I’m- not sure. You say you’re sorry. But- I’m with Seamus now. And- I’ll have to think about it, alright?”

With that, he turned around and walked away. Well, that went well. I mlph you, Harry? I’m such an IDIOT!

HERMIONE.

I was just finishing up my Arithmancy homework when Harry came in through the portrait hole, looking incredibly confused.

“Harry,” I said when he neared, “you alright?”

Harry sat down next to me. “I just had a run-in with Malfoy,” he said quietly.

I quickly put my parchment down. “What did he say?” I asked.

Harry shook his head. “I’m- not quite sure. He was going on about birds not being there and self-help books. Then he said he wanted to get back together with me. And then- he said that he mlphed me.”

“He what you?” I asked.

Harry smiled slightly. “I’m not sure,” he said. “He sort of- covered his mouth with his hands on that word. But I think it might have been- like? He likes me?” Here Harry smiled even more, rather mischievously. He looked completely different than he had done over the past few weeks, even when he had been giggling with Seamus. “And he said he had weird hang-ups about sex,” Harry continued. He laughed then, half-sheepishly, half-affectionately. “He’s such an idiot. But Hermione-” here Harry turned hopeful, trusting eyes on me. “D’you- do you think he likes me? Really?”

Oh good god. Harry actually really, really likes Draco Malfoy. For some inexplicable reason. It was the strangest thing I had ever seen. And here he was, looking at me so trustfully like a lost little puppy and I- I just could not lie.

“Yes Harry, he does,” I said. Then I looked away from him and began. “When I saw him in the Arts classroom he was stealing pictures of you from the display, Harry and he’s been following you round for months and spied on you when you went out on that date with Seamus but it doesn’t matter Harry, now does it, because you’re with Seamus now and he’s nice to you and you’re going to tell Malfoy where to get off.” I said all this in one breath before facing Harry again. “Right Harry? Harry…?” I trailed off.

Harry was looking at me, gobsmacked. “Hermione,” he gaped. “Is this true?!”

“Maybe,” I mumbled. Damn!

Harry was obviously stunned. “Then all this time he was just- he…” then Harry suddenly jumped up. I grabbed hold of his arm.

“Harry,” I said desperately. “You’re not going to do anything stupid, are you? Malfoy’s an idiot, he’s probably dark, he- he- think about Seamus!”

Harry gently removed his arm from my grip. “I am thinking about Seamus, Hermione,” he said. “Now, if you’ll excuse me- I’ve got some things to think about.” With that, he walked up the stairs to his dorm room.

“Well,” said an all-too-familiar voice behind me, “now that was certainly interesting.”

“GARGH!” I yelled, jumping up into the air. I looked over the back of my chair. “Seamus! What are you doing? And- how long have you been standing there?”

“Ah, don’t look so guilty Hermione,” he said. “I was there all the time. You know me and my eavesdropping. It’s what I love best. Well, apart from-”

“YES, thank-you Seamus,” I hastily interrupted. “I understand exactly what you mean.”

“And it’s pretty obvious, I can tell you right now, that he’s going to choose Malfoy,” continued Seamus.

“What? How do you know?” I said nervously.

“Just do. It’s clear and plain on his face,” said Seamus.

“But- don’t you care?” I said. “I thought you were in love with him!”

Seamus smiled slightly. “Ah, you’re so over-dramatic, Hermione,” he said. “Not everything is so simple, y’know. I’m not in love with Harry. Yeah, I like him, and I think I could be in love one day, but at the moment…”

“Go after him! Tell him!” I said forcefully. “Why don’t you tell him? You’d be so much better for him than that- idiot- Seamus, please.”

“If he wanted me, he would have said so,” Seamus said forcefully. “And don’t look like that at me,

Hermione. You don't get to choose who you fall in love with- and your friends certainly don't."

"Harry's not- in love with him!"

"Aye, but he could be as well. I knew that all along, Hermione. I know you didn't notice, but… well. And it wasn't Harry's fault, so don't look like that. I told him over and over that I'd take him any way I could get him. And Harry did try with me, you know he did. I always sort of hoped he'd come out of it- but I knew the truth really."

After a pause, he added, "and you know that Malfoy really- loves him. Unlikely as that sounds."

I shuddered slightly. "I know," I answered. "I think that that's perhaps the most disturbing thing of all…"

"Yeah," said Seamus, a rather subdued expression on his face which I knew matched my own.

We fell into silence.

After a minute Seamus said, "still, the both of them together- now, that's pretty interesting……"

"SEAMUS!"

"Alright, alright! Now if you'll excuse me, I think I'm about to get dumped. Best to get it over with, I reckon."

With that, Seamus made his was up the stairs.

DRACO.

I had blown it. Completely, and utterly fucked it up. When I should have been being nice to him, I was talking about bloody books! And Muggles! What was wrong with me??

And now he had bloody Finnegan. Incessantly cheerful Finnegan, who deserved to be roasted slowly over an open fire. But I had promised mother that I wouldn't do that anymore. Even if the recipient really deserved it.

Dammit!

And, anyway- it was my fault. If I hadn't of left- if I'd been nice from the start. And now- I actually missed the birds. I had gotten used to them, I suppose. And- yes, I mlphed him. I really did. It had never happened to me before. And now I'd never get him back.

I was still wallowing in my own self-misery when the door slowly creaked open and Harry Potter appeared in the doorway, taking off his invisibility cloak.

"Harry," I said, surging up from my seat. "Harry- are you… what did you-"

"I don't know why," said Harry, smiling slightly. "You're such a PRAT. Emotionally stunted, idiotic, paranoid…" here the smile faded and a dark light invaded his eyes. "And you- really hurt me, you know. Seamus wouldn't do that to me."

"I know," I whispered back, heart sinking. It was all over, then. But suddenly Harry came closer, smiling into my eyes. He put his arms slowly around me, hesitantly holding me to him. I held my breath.

"But, well, Seamus is Seamus," he said. "And you… you are yourself."

THE END

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