Harry sat at the bar watching the entrance without seeming to. It had taken him longer than expected to get the information he wanted on Daphne Greengrass, but he'd managed to discover a great deal more along the way. He was sure she was the Jester, and he had come across some circumstantial proof, but there were several pieces that didn't fit into the puzzle yet. He saw her walking toward the door and smiled. This sexy creature was more like the woman that he had met that first night at the party and had discovered in his investigations. Over their last few meetings, however, she had dressed as if she was the museum mouse she pretended to be, and he wondered why she had given up the persona tonight.

He stayed where he was as she entered the restaurant bar and noted the other men around him turn in her direction with a hopeful glance. He felt her approach by watching their reactions and slowly turned on the stool to gaze in her direction. Her hair was loose in its updo, which suited her far better than the tight bun she had been wearing when he saw her. The dress clung to her in all the right places, revealing flashes of golden tanned skin and legs that seemed to go on forever. She was beautiful, there was no doubt of that, and he knew that every other man in the bar was looking at him as she approached and took the seat beside him.

"You look lovely, tonight," he said with a small smile. "Do you have plans for later tonight?" Their dinners had never gone very far past dessert, and they had always left separately, she had given him no reason to believe she would want anything more.

"Not yet," she said, momentarily stung by his dismissal that she might have dressed up for him. "I guess that depends entirely on you." She said with a smile, her meaning quite clear in the way she touched his arm gently.

"Is that so?" he said with a tilt of his head. "You gave me the impression you didn't like to mix business with pleasure."

"Is that what this is? We've had five dinners so far to discuss the idea of curating your collection, but it doesn't seem like we are any closer to coming to some agreement about the proposition. You gave me the impression that these dinner's had an ulterior motive. I apologise if I misread your intentions." She said coyly as if embarrassed by her attempt to come onto him.

“Let’s get a table and discuss my intentions, shall we?” Harry stood and guided her from the bar to the restaurant with a hand on the bare skin in the small of her back. The Maître ‘D seated them, handing Harry the wine list and placing menus on the table for them.

“Maybe we could discuss the wine list,” Daphne said, quickly seeing him about to return it to the man, assuming her response would be the same as other nights when she had declined any form of alcohol.

“Of course, choose whatever you like,” he smiled. Then to the waiter, he said, “If you could give us a few minutes?”

Harry considered Daphne across the table as he picked up his menu. The change in her tonight was not quite as startling as the dress made it seem. She was still the same confident woman she was when looking like a prudish museum curator. She had always said that she chose not to drink during business meetings, so he guessed that asking about the wine made it clear that she did not see this dinner as a business meeting. What had changed, he wondered, between their last dinner and tonight to make her thinking about that altering the purpose of their dinner?

“We discussed your collection and the need for it to be curated properly several times now, yet nothing has led me to believe you will offer me the job in reality. So, unless you are going to make me an offer that could tempt me to leave my job at the museum, I am going to believe you continue to ask me out to dinner because you enjoy my company, and I say yes for the same reason.” She looked him squarely in the eye as she spoke. “It was a little silly of me ever to believe that you would let a junior museum staff member anywhere near your personal collection of artefacts, let alone curate it.” She lowered her eyes to study the menu a blush filling her face.

“Sounds like you’ve given this some thought,” he nodded, neither confirming nor denying what she had said.

“Well, it was a very exciting proposition, and I got Carried away on with the idea, but I’ve come to my senses now, and if this is going to be our last date we may as well have fun,” she said. “We can’t keep pretending these dinners are business meetings. I think I’ll have the eye fillet, so is red wine okay with you?” Daphne asked, putting down the wine menu.

“That’s fine. I believe I will join you,” Harry said, closing his menu having barely glanced at it. “And the wine?”

“I think the Nott’s Pinot Noir,” she said passing him the list. “I’m not overly fussy, though if you’d prefer to choose.”

“Not at all,” he smiled. “I’m quite enjoying seeing this different side to you. Much like the girl I first met in midnight blue.”

When the waiter came to take their order, Harry sat back and indicated Daphne as the person who would be ordering for them. She was flirty and sweet with the waiter, and, although she asked more questions that he thought was usual, the waiter seemed to enjoy the interaction with her. When the wine arrived, some minutes later, he allowed her to taste it before pouring for them both. Harry had always been the dominant person in all of his relationships, by choice, and he found the whole situation quite amusing.

“Do you want to share what is so amusing?” Daphne asked, put off by his soft chuckle as the waiter left them.

“You are,” he chuckled again. “You are quite the surprise tonight, Greengrass.”

“Not used to a girl who can speak her mind?” she challenged him. He lived in a misogynistic world, just like all of fellow wizard, where women would never be accepted as equals. “Given your reputation, I am sure women fall at your feet on a daily basis. Yet, here I am on a sixth business meeting that will go nowhere. Tell me, Harry, what is it you want from me?”

“How’d you do it?” he asked bluntly, taken aback by her question but not showing it. “That dress you were wearing wouldn’t have hidden the valet ticket you hid in your hair, let alone a pistol. How did you get it out of the mansion?”

“What?” she choked on the mouthful of wine she had sipped. “The police said the thief must have been known to Mr. Rackham. I’m hardly in his social circle. I doubt he even knows I exist outside of the museum, or even in it, for that matter.” She shook her head.

“Daphne Greengrass, daughter of Robyn Ward, granddaughter of Edith Greengrass and great granddaughter of Greengrass. Florence was the only child of Stede Greengrass, a direct descendant and namesake of the the

infamous companion of Herpo the Foul," he said casually as if admitting that he had investigated her background was inconsequential. "Florence, Edith and Robyn all have quite remarkable reputations of their own, as do you." She looked back at him totally unfazed by his disclosure as if she had expected this investigation.

"Then you know that I m aware that Neville Longbottom was robbed by the Jester, like many of his associates," she said casually. "You can't seriously believe I am the Fool?" she laughed merrily. "Oh, that's precious! You realise I would have been fifteen when the Fool first showed up." She let out another peal of laughter. "If you had done your research properly, you'd know I only do legitimate work finding lost items for aurors, and it pays so badly that I have to have a regular job as well."

"No business talk tonight?" he asked.

Harry raised his eyebrows at her candour. He hadn't been sure what to expect when he confronted her with what he knew, but this calm admission wasn't it. He hadn't expected her to make a scene in the restaurant, but perhaps flat out denial, or, at least, accusations about his own nefarious line of work. He realised at that moment that she was just as well-informed as he was and this may well be the reason for the change in her demeanour tonight. The silence stretched between them, and the waiter arrived with their meals.

"You didn't think I would be surprised that you would do a background check on anyone you were considering letting near your personal collection?" she asked once the waiter had gone. "You can look into my life as much as you like, but despite my mother and grandmother's careers and contacts, my business is totally legitimate," she said, looking him in the eyes.

"Your parents didn't want you going into the family business?" he asked.

"I don't think Dad ever knew," she smiled. "He's was a good guy, but I don't even know how they ever stayed together long enough to conceive me. They were polar opposites." It was a lie, of course; her mother had chosen her father carefully and had referred to him often as the sperm donor. He was tall, athletic and intelligent, all the things she needed for the sire of her child.

“Shift work,” Harry said as if that answered her question. “It’s easy to stay together when you don’t spend a lot of time together, and I imagine your father’s shift work gave your mother the freedom she wanted to live her life.”

“I suppose you’re right, I guess I never really thought about it that way,” she nodded. “More wine?” she picked up the bottle and poured more into her glass.

“Sure, why not?” he asked rhetorically. Daphne had taken him by surprise tonight. It was as if she had expected his accusations and had decided that his invitations to dinner had merely been a ruse to find out if she was the Fool. Despite her quip about her age, he was still suspicious, but her coolness and seeming knowledge about the Jester’s activities intrigued him. It wasn’t a well-known fact that his organisation had been targeted over the last decade.

“So, that’s it? You list off my family’s links to the criminal underworld and ask me point blank how I did it? No interrogation, no barrage of questions trying to trip me up? No threats?” she asked, once again looking him in the eye. “I must say it’s a little underwhelming, to say the least, so what now?”

“I’m enjoying the frankness of the conversation,” he chuckled. “It’s refreshing to tell you the truth. You seem well informed, you’ve looked into my background as well, I take it?”

“I don’t have the resources you have, obviously, and, since going legit, most of Robyn and Edith’s friend’s give me a wide birth,” she shrugged. “I know enough to realise you’ve been toying with me, dangling the bait of your collection in front of me with no intention of letting me or anyone near your Treasure Island.”

“That’s fair,” he admitted. “So this is the last supper?” Harry asked, feeling a little disappointed that he was finally seeing the real Daphne and she was saying goodbye to him, not that he blamed her.

“It’s the last pretend business dinner,” she laughed. “If you want to see me after this, then that’s up to you, but you’d need to be honest about why,” she leant across the table and lowered her voice. “You have a reputation Mr. Potter, from what I have heard it’s well deserved, but I’d like to judge that for myself.” She smiled as his eyebrows went up involuntarily.

“Disposing of the museum mouse persona so easily?” he questioned. “Perhaps that is what I liked and why I continued to ask you out.”

“If I thought for one moment you were interested in my professional skills the mouse would still be here being all business and no fun. You’re not, though. So, the way I see it, I can find out just how well-deserved your reputation is for myself, or I can go out later and catch up with some friends. As I said when I arrived, whether I go out after dinner is entirely up to you,” she took another bite of her meal and chewed slowly.

Daphne knew she was playing a risky game, and it took all her concentration to breathe as she gave him the choice of how this evening ended. She had no way of knowing how he would react to the new version of her, and she needed him to accept her proposal. At any other time, with any other man, she would shrug and walk away, but this was the plan, and if she messed it up, if she’d miscalculated him, they would be back at square one.

“It’s true, I have quite enjoyed the mouse persona that is Daphne Greengrass, but I have to admit the sex kitten routine is equally intriguing, Greengrass” he said thoughtfully differentiating between the two personas with her name. “I expect the real Daphne Anne Greengrass is somewhere between the two.” He spoke as if to himself. This woman was sexy, and he had felt the physical attraction like a magnet since the first night he had met her. Even as the professional museum mouse she had an attractiveness that appealed to him. He sensed something beneath it all that told him there was much more to this woman than what she projected, and he still considered that she was more than likely the thief that had been targeting his associates.

“I don’t know, I’ll have to ask my brother if he thinks I have multiple personalities just waiting in the wings,” she laughed. “As far as I am aware, there is work and play, the mouse and the kitten, as you so eloquently put it.”

“Dessert?” he tilted his head as the waiter appeared to take their plates away.

“Not the kind they serve here,” she grinned.

“More wine?” he picked up the bottle.

“No, two is my limit when I’m driving,” she tilted her head and looked at him. “So this is it then?” she asked, trying not to let her anxiety creep into her voice.

“For tonight,” he said, not wanting to sever their connection entirely. “You’ve surprised me on a number of levels, and, while I find you most alluring, Miss Greengrass the change in you tonight has left me confused, to say the least,” he admitted honestly.

“Well then, Mr. Potter, I believe I will be going. Thank you for a lovely dinner, as always. Perhaps we will see each other at the museum,” she smiled and stood from the table. Harry stood with her, throwing some bills on the table to cover the check. “Oh, there’s no need to walk me out. We both knew this evening was doomed before it began, one way or the other.”

“One way or the other?” he echoed her words.

“I was either your Jester, in which case I would be called to face the Phoenixes, or not. Alternately, you have been leading me on, just to pump me for information and have decided I am not the Jester, and I would have every right to be hurt and think badly of you for treating me with such disregard. I gave you option number three, which has its own inherent risks and which you are not brave enough to face head on, as I correctly suspected,” she leant forward and kissed his cheek. “Everything about this dinner was doomed from the start, Harry.”

She turned from him then and walked away, carefully placing her feet in a heel to toe pattern so that her hips swayed in the tight material of her dress. She felt his eyes on her as she left the restaurant and walked out into the carpark, but she never once turned around. She wouldn’t give him the satisfaction. She kept the persona perfectly intact until she had driven for five minutes in the direction of Diego’s and pulled up at a red light. Swearing loudly, she thumped her hands on the steering wheel and dialled her home number, leaving a message for Malfoy.

"Moving on to plan B, don't worry or freak out if I'm gone for a day or two. I'll call in sick for work tomorrow!" she snapped and ended the call. She was gambling that Harry will catch a spell on her communication mirror and would use it to follow her, but he had gone old school and cast a tracker spell on the small purse she had taken. She'd been disappointed by that because the enchantment Malfoy used would have given them Harry location.

If she'd been honest with herself, she knew they would have to go to plan B. She was anxious, however, that the risks were infinitely higher once she brought another person into the equation. To say that Nott was unpredictable was an understatement, and she regretted having such a heavy dinner beforehand knowing the workout she would get tonight.