

“Harry, that person you were snogging,” he started, and Harry reflexively put up a privacy ward. “Was it Malfoy?”

Harry felt the blood drain from his face. “What?” He forced out a laugh. “What makes you say that?”

“Well, you said you were friends with him. And in all of Hermione’s interrogating, you’ve never said you were seeing a girl.”

“Yeah, but *Malfoy!*”

“I thought it was Cassius at first,” Neville continued. “Especially when he said he was seeing someone. But he was still in the hall dancing with Fleur when you were gone, so it couldn’t be. And, well, there’s always been something between you and Malfoy. I figured if it was anyone else, you would’ve told me by now.” Neville paused, then grinned a little. “Also you did look a bit like you wanted to eat him alive when you saw him in his dress robes. But I don’t think anyone else noticed,” he added quickly. “I just... I know you, Harry. And if it is Malfoy, it’s okay. I reckon you’re right that he’s not as bad as people think he is.”

Harry sighed, running a hand through his hair. “You can’t tell *anyone* Neville,” he said seriously. “He could be in serious danger if it gets out. His dad...” He trailed off, and Neville nodded, eyes knowing.

“Your secret’s safe with me.” Then Neville smirked. “You just might want to look at his arse a bit less when you’re in public.”

Harry laughed, dropping his privacy ward and continuing up the stairs. “That’s just asking for too much of me, Nev,” he insisted, yawning. Neville snorted, pushing open the door to the dorm and tiptoeing inside. All the lights were out, and the curtains were drawn on the three other beds.

“Night, Harry,” Neville whispered with a smile.

“Night, Nev.” Harry barely managed to change into pyjamas and brush his teeth before he was falling into bed, a quiet sigh of relief escaping him. He was so glad he didn’t have anywhere to be in the morning; he was going to sleep until at least noon.

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Severus let out a long sigh as he stepped out of the floo at Seren Du. It was nearly one in the morning, but the blasted ball was *finally* over. “Mister Severus, sir,” Ceri greeted quietly. “Is you be needing anything?”

“Water, please.” Two quiet pops later, and the elf was passing him a large glass of water. Severus drank thirstily, head pounding. “Thank you, Ceri. That will be all.” The elf nodded and disappeared, and Severus toed out of his boots and started up the staircase, thinking longingly of bed. He’d seen far more of his students’ skin that night than he *ever* wanted to see again, Igor had started panicking about the Dark Mark in a place where the children could