

After a beat, Harry snorted. “I suppose people can’t hate me much more than they already do.” Those who thought he was going Dark wouldn’t care if Draco was his friend or his boyfriend, they’d see it as validation all the same. And it would probably piss Dumbledore off, which was a good enough reason to do anything as far as Harry was concerned. “You’re really sure you’re ready for that?” he checked anxiously. Being Harry’s boyfriend — his first ever confirmed romantic partner — would be a huge deal in the eyes of the public. Even though the *Prophet* was a bunch of Death Eater propaganda these days, there would still probably be gossip in *Witch Weekly* once the news got out.

“I’ll have to face it sooner or later, won’t I?” came Draco’s easy response. He was much calmer about all this than Harry had expected — how long had he been thinking about this, without Harry even knowing?

The Slytherin’s hand covered his on the tabletop, their fingers tangling together. “Think of it this way; we can go to the party, scandalise all of Slughorn’s little worshippers, then bugger off home for Yule and let the gossip hounds wear themselves out before we come back in January.” He smirked. “And then we can scandalise them all over again by snogging in the library where anyone can see us.”

Harry laughed. “You’re sure, then,” he said again, making Draco huff.

“If you ask me one more time, I’ll hex you,” he declared in annoyance. “I’ve always known this day was coming. Allow me the opportunity to gloat about snagging the hottest guy in school, alright?”

Harry’s cheeks burned, but he couldn’t hold back his smile, leaning in for a chaste kiss. “You’re on, then,” he agreed happily. Maybe having Draco at the party might make it halfway bearable.

A throat cleared pointedly, and Harry snapped his gaze away from Draco, belatedly realising that the entire group was still there — and had been for the duration of that whole conversation.

“Are you quite finished?” Susan asked, eyebrows raised. “Because if you’re going to start feeling each other up under the table *again*, you can leave.”

“We never— that wasn’t—“ Harry spluttered helplessly, and several of his friends laughed, the traitors. They hadn’t been *feeling each other up*, they had just been sitting together, and it wasn’t his fault Draco had decided to put a hand on Harry’s thigh while he studied. “All of you are the worst friends,” he declared, glaring at them. Neville snickered.

“Too bad we’re the only ones you’ve got,” he replied, entirely unsympathetic.

Harry scowled, but it didn’t last long — not when he looked back at Draco and thought about going to the party with him, *properly* with him, being able to hold his hand and kiss him in public and finally stop holding himself back.

For once, he was actually looking forward to one of Slughorn’s get-togethers.