

Chapter 34

As it often does at Hogwarts, life moved on. Harry's sexuality was hot gossip for a week or so, but the Easter holidays began and half the school went home, and the next big topic of conversation overshadowed it, and Harry went back to his usual level of being stared at between classes. There were still a couple of persistent boys trying to flirt with him, but Harry was getting pretty good at ignoring them.

Rita Skeeter tried to fight back with an article about Harry trying to seduce Cedric away from Cho, but it was so laughably pathetic it didn't even register. The woman had lost her edge, and while Harry had no doubt she'd snoop around for some other angle to work, he'd beat her in this particular round. He just wished he was closer to figuring out how she got her information.

Luckily, Draco made a lot more headway on that than he did.

"Between you and the Weasley twins, I'm getting far too used to being manhandled into passageways," Harry remarked when Draco dragged him behind a tapestry. The blond gave him an odd look.

"Why are the Weasley twins manhandling you into passageways?" He shook his head, getting back on track. "Never mind. I have information for you about Skeeter."

Harry sobered up immediately. "What's she done now?"

Draco smirked triumphantly. "Seems your godfather isn't the only unregistered animagus we know," he drawled. It took a minute for Harry to connect the dots.

"No. Really? What's her form?"

"A beetle," Draco told him. "I found out from Crabbe and Goyle; it's how she got quotes from them for the whole Hagrid article. Pansy always met her down in Hogsmeade, but I suppose she thought the boys were too thick to tell anyone about her animagus form. Tiny little thing like that, she could get into all kinds of places."

No one would pay attention to a beetle on a wall — or in their hair. He remembered Viktor brushing the bug from Hermione's hair after the second task. That must have been how she got the information about the pair of them! "That's sort-of brilliant," he admitted. "But definitely illegal, right?"

"Maybe not Azkaban-level illegal, with her contacts," Draco said, "but if it gets out she'll never be trusted to write another article for any reputable publication. She'll be ruined."

"Oh, what a shame," Harry said sarcastically, grinning. He leaned forward to kiss Draco quickly. "I need to go write to my lawyer. You're the best!" Before he could run away, Draco grabbed him by the shirt collar and yanked him in for a proper kiss.