

Swoon Baby, Starry Night

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Swoon Baby, Starry Night

by [horsegirlbyday_\(Charmuse\)](#)

Summary



It was just Hermione's luck that chance upgrade to first would land her next to her prep school bully. Draco Malfoy was not only her hated ex-classmate, he was the very recognizable mouthpiece of the indefensible Riddle administration. Hermione, being part of the presidential campaign of young upstart challenger, Harry Potter, makes it even more surreal. The insults fly. Hilarity and naughtiness ensues.

Many thanks to @goodnightfraublucher for her beautiful art. Used with permission.

This is my first fic, so be kind! Writing a fic was inspired by Sen, after reading Manacled. This has nods to and roots in Before Sunrise, Valley Girl, Vanilla Sky, Romeo and Juliet, Spuffy and some of my own experiences. Also a love letter to Colorado and my SO.

I researched the political/security/debate parts of this in-depth...I did my best.

There is Spotify playlist for the it found here:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/04QJgAzK4HBKvX8abWtQyQ?si=fc643218182b4e67>

No editor or beta, raw doggin it.

Chapter 1: Accidental Upgrade

Chapter Summary

Hermione gets reseated after a mix up for first class and ends up next her old prep school nemesis.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ugh, flying coach is the fucking worst.

Hermione knew she was being bougie. Air travel sucked all around, but coach was the equivalent of taking a greyhound bus cross country. She rarely even flew first class, her status almost never allowed an upgrade, but she had grown used to the charters paid for by Harry's campaign. Because she had gone to Atlanta to visit her family, she was slumming it on United out to Denver to link up with the rest of the team who were on the ground already. To make matters worse, she was in the middle seat at the back of the plane. The aisle seat was empty, though she didn't expect that to last.

Early October in Georgia was still summertime muggy. She wore a breezy yellow wrap dress and sandals to account for the weather, forgoing her usual business casual battle armor. Her thick, rampantly curly hair had been tamed and straightened at the salon. She pulled it into a bouncy ponytail for travel. She had even gotten her nails done. She could change into something more appropriate when she got to her hotel downtown. She wasn't looking forward to Denver, the air was thin, the weather was goofy, and everyone was high but still managed to have road rage. Besides, she was worried about the debate. Harry had been caught out by Tom Riddle a number of times during their first head-to-head, Tom being a professional antagonizer, and Harry being Harry. Hotheaded, idealistic and easy to bait, Harry had not managed to tamp down his reactionary tendencies yet. No matter how much his team drilled talking points and reactions into him, begging him to stay on message and calm, his opponent knew exactly how to manipulate him. Tom, older and more seasoned by miles, had a way of derailing Harry's usual thoughtfulness, making him appear rash and emotional.

She reread through her most recent notes in her phone for today's rehearsal, hoping this would be the one to lock in a more measured response from their candidate. Even with Riddle's reprehensible policies and overtly fascist grandstanding, the race was alarmingly close. Add to that, the administration's support of aggressive redistricting and voting machine tampering under the guise of voting integrity, all bets were off for a concise outcome. The notion that a young, good-looking firebrand with progressive politics packing an impressive war chest would make it much easier to put Tom on his heels, turned out to be a massive fallacy. Tom's campaign knew every dirty trick in the book and had invented a few. Harry was barely old enough to qualify for the race, as just a junior Senator for Maryland.

Capitalizing on Tom's deep resume of political experience comparative to Harry's greenness was the Riddle campaign's favorite strategy.

Lost in thought, she didn't notice the flight attendant stopped at her row, speaking to her. She had a clearly irritated dark haired man and his wife (she assumed) wearing an rose pink abaya and hijab in tow.

She pulled out her earbud, silencing Taylor Swift.

"...this is completely unacceptable." He barked as Hermione looked up to see what the kerfuffle was.

"Ma'am," she said again, apparently to Hermione. The flight attendant's name badge said 'Stacy'.

"Yes?" She returned, looking about, assuming it might not be her. The kid to the right of her was already asleep on the window, his grey hoodie pulled over his head.

"Are you willing to change seats with this gentleman so he may sit with his wife?"

She thought about asking to where, realizing it probably didn't matter, she was already in the one of the worst seats on the plane. "I guess so, if its helpful." she shrugged, starting to gather her things.

"We have first class seats." The man complained, indignant. "Again, this is not acceptable.

Stacy turned around to face him, flicking her hair over he shoulder. He was a good foot taller than her, a petite black women with box braids and navy dress, a red, white and blue scarf tied around her neck.

Stacy was unfazed.

"Sir, I understand your dismay, but first class is full. We do apologize for the inconvenience, but your wife was not booked into first class. You are welcome to take your seat and she can sit here in the one assigned to her or vice versa.

"This is not dismay, this is *anger*, and she cannot sit alone, unaccompanied." He stated. "I paid for these seats I can produce receipts, I have boarding passes."

"The boarding pass and seat you have for your wife is for coach, so again, these are your choices." The flight attendant drew breath. "You can sit separately, you can take this seat that this woman has agreed to trade with you for so you can stay with your wife, or you can disembark and rebook."

The man's face screwed up in to a tense frown, his reply staccato. "Who can I call about this? I don't understand how this is happening."

Even not seeing her face, she could tell Stacy was over it. "As I said, sir." Emphasis on the sir. Long and drawn out; *Sirrrrrr*. "You can disembark and work this out with ticketing. This is not something I, or anyone on this plane, can control currently. We asked the passengers in

first class to give up their seat and all declined. Your choices now are to sit in coach with your wife or head back into the terminal.”

The man’s wife standing behind him looked like she wanted to sink into the floor, Hermione was embarrassed for her by proxy. She sat forward, in a transitional crouch, waiting for a decision on whether she was moving or not. The woman spoke to her husband in low tones in a foreign language, Hermione though middle eastern, but did not want to assume. He furrowed his brow and answered back tersely, staring at the flight attendant, fuming.

“Sir, I need a decision from you.” Stacy prodded.

Hermione figured they were two or three minutes away from Air Marshal City if he didn’t comply.

He seemed realized it as well, he let out an exasperated sigh and nodded. “Fine,” he snarled. “I still expect our first class amenities.”

“We will make sure you are taken care of, sir,” Stacy sagged slightly with relief. “We apologize for the inconvenience.”

“You should, and your terrible attitude is also noted. I will be having a conversation with your supervisors.” He narrowed his eyes at her. She said nothing else to him and turned back to face Hermione.

“Ma’am, please gather your personal items and bags and come with me,” she asked curtly. Hermione stood up, slinging her messenger bag over her shoulder, stepping into the aisle. She grabbed her colorful carryon out of overhead storage.

“Ready.” She said brightly, sounding overly chipper. It was something she did when attempting to be helpful in a tense situation, as if her overboard cheeriness would defuse things. She wasn’t sure what she was overcompensating for, but this brand of conflict was not her favorite.

Probably shouldn't have gone into politics then, huh?

Stacy stepped back to let the man and his wife put their bags up and filter into the empty seats. She lead Hermione forward through the body of the plane. They passed by the coach-first class divider wall and stopped at the last row on the left.

“Sir, your new seat mate his here.” When the man turned his silver blond head into profile, she knew immediately who he was, almost hissing aloud.

Draco Fucking Malfoy.

The first class issue actually happened to me on a plane years ago. I got a free trip to first class. No Draco, however.

Chapter 2: Meeting Mr. Malfoy

Chapter Summary

Hermione and Draco get reacquainted by quarreling over just about everything

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Draco smiled wanly at Stacy and stood up, all six for three or four of him, tucking in his black button down into his slacks in the back. He was rangy but well built. His clothes were tailored impeccably, not a speck, stain or wrinkle on them. He moved into the aisle, letting Hermione pass to the window seat, pushing up his round wireframe glasses, paying her no mind. She scurried by, keeping her head down so he wouldn't recognize her, though she assumed he wouldn't anyway. He folded himself back into his seat, rebuckling his seatbelt. Stacy put her bag up while Hermione shoved her things away under the seat, keeping her phone handy. Draco gave her a perfunctory nod, pulled his paperwork out, going back to reading.

Thank you, baby Jesus.

How long had it been since she'd seen him in person? Since school? Was he at the 10 year reunion? She couldn't remember, feeling like that was something she would definitely recall. DC was a small town, but they ran in very different circles. Of course, she had seen him on TV, wanking for Tom Riddle on every conservative outlet and major network that would have him for the last 5 years. She wasn't even sure of his title, special communications advisor to the president or something like that. It sounded made up to her. In reality, he was the Riddle campaign's most recognizable face aside from their actual press secretary and the president himself. He was fantastically good at his job, one of their best weapons. He was both tremendously persuasive and insidiously clever, manipulating facts and language to sway any argument his way. He came off as more credible than wingnut press' attack dogs, framing the same talking points in more reasonable, palatable language. The sullen anger that had marked his personality at St. Barnabas had been polished out, publicly at least, leaving only a studied and self-assured spokesperson. Draco's former petulant facade was now informed by a scholarly ease married to charismatic smile.

God, he was insufferable.

The whole Potter campaign staff hated him for sport. They threw things at the TV when he spewed his propaganda all over the political news circuit. Ron liked to shoot him with a Nerf dart gun, trying to stick the ammo to Malfoy's forehead. Despite his overly smooth persona, he was also exceedingly handsome a New England patrician sort of way. This was widely acknowledged by most of the other women and knew in her field and those that she kept in

touch with from school. He certainly matured well beyond anyone from Barney's expectations. Neville, who had come out in college, was desperately in lust with him. He stated that Draco was a silver fox gay icon along with Cooper Anderson. Hermione had no idea if he was queer or not, and it didn't matter to her, except that it would be highly ironic, considering who he worked for.

As for now, she really wished she could stop the impulse to steal sideways glances at him.

Also, she had the urge to text everyone she ever met in her life.

'Draco Fucking Malfoy is sitting next to me on the plane', she told the casual group chat for the campaign.

I chorus of *"no way"* and *'OMG'* streamed down the screen in reply.

"Is he nice?"

'Pump him for info'

'Poison his drink'

'Is he as hot in person as he is on TV?'

'Why is flying commercial?'

"He must be coming to Denver, Tom is already here."

'Gah, I'm so jealous!'

The last one was Neville.

They chattered back and fourth for a few minutes, but the resounding opinion was to try and weasel some intelligence out of him they could leverage. Hermione declared she was not going to say anything to him unless he spoke to her first, though she was so distracted by him she could hardly concentrate. She fidgeted repeatedly in her seat, one of her tells for being enormously nervous. She reached down to absentmindedly scratch her leg, drawing Malfoy's attention.

"Your Latin is wrong." he informed her, gesturing at the tattoo on her calf.

"Huh?" she looked down, following his eye line. "Oh - No, it's not."

"Clearly, it is, unless I am missing something."

"You *are* missing something. For sure." She brought her gaze up to his, meeting his eyes.

"Please educate me then, Miss....?" he trailed off.

She ignored his prompt for a name. "It's sort of an inside joke from a book. The Handmaid's Tale. The latin is wrong on purpose." she explained, ignoring his prompt for a name.

“Ahhhh, I see,” he threw his head back with wonder, smiling “One of those.”

“Oh? One of those? Now, it’s your turn to educate me, Mr.?” she shot back.

“Malfoy. Draco Malfoy.” He stuck his hand out to her, his gaze boring in, like she was the only person in the world. She shook it. His grip was firm, his hand cool with long fingers and a perfect manicure. He sported several silver rings including a signet ring he wore school. How she had wanted to cram it up his nose at the time. She appreciated he didn't deliver a limp, finger-grabbing shake some men tended to give her.

“I see. Please explain your ‘one of those’ remark to me, if you dare.” She arched an eyebrow at him.

He was already searching her face with a glimmer of recognition. “Wait - are we acquainted?” His expression changed into one of confusion. He squinted at her, then drew back. “I have heard that know-it-all tone before. What is your name?”

“Hermione Granger.”

“Granger?” he startled, like he’d been slapped (ironically). “Noooo. You are way too lovely to be Granger.”

“Excuse me?” She retorted with a tilt of her head and the hairy eyeball.

There was another beat. He looked at her intensely again, the his face broke open. “Oh, but you are her, aren’t you? How marvelous. You *have* grown up.” He was all astonishment.

“I could say the same for you.” She was annoyed with him now. “Or at least, your body grew into your giant head.”

“HA! I deserve that, I suppose. Just like old times.” Draco laughed. He aimed that publicity trained smile at her, following with an unruly look up and down. Propping an elbow on the armrest between them, he put his chin in is hand, catching his lower lip in his teeth. She felt her stomach flip. “Please, pardon my incivility. Tell me all about Hermione the past decade and a half.”

Thank god, a flight attendant interrupted them.

“Sparkling water or wine?” she asked.

“Wine, please.” Hermione said a little too eagerly.

“I’ll have what she’s having.” Draco fucking *winked* at her before turning to the blond woman with the tray of drinks, handing one to her and taking one for himself. Fleetinglly, she wondered where Stacy had gone. Maybe she could save her from Malfoy.

Hermione took two great gulps of Prosecco, steeling herself for a possible lengthy chess match with him. She was currently equally thrilled and repelled by the prospect. She felt her phone vibrating away in her hand from the chat continuing to light up. A few stragglers

streamed past their seats on their way coach. Draco fastidiously put away his paperwork and turned his attention back to her, taking a sip of his wine.

“Where were we?”

“You were going to explain ‘one of those’ to me.”

“Actually, I think I asked for your life story since St. Barnabus, but have it your way.”

He was so eloquent she wanted to scream. His mannerisms and his diction was perfect. He moved fluidly, with a born elegance. He knew exactly how to say things to sound as attractive as possible. Well spoken didn’t begin to cover what he was doing with the English language. As a student of language, was a huge turn on for her.

Shiiiiit.

However, she remained silent, scowling.

“Very well. The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood,” he recited, looking up. “A rather good book for required reading, if I say so myself. It also spawned a successful TV show, which I have never seen. As, I understand it, it has become something of a bellwether according to liberal feminists.” He was leaning towards her on the armrest again.

“While you are correct, Mr, Malfoy, I know all that, hence the tattoo. What I specifically asking is what your ‘one of those’ comment means in relation to said novel.” She crossed her legs and angled toward him but sat back in her seat, moving her top half away from him.

“One of those, yes, well,” giving it some thought. “How best to explain the stereotypes tossed around? Militant girls with armpit hair and combat boots who hate the ‘patriarchy’ and traditional roles for women. Those who march and carry on about abortion and civil rights. Women with a lot of cats, blue hair, and no children.” He held his glass up as a sarcastic toast and took a large swallow.

Hermione was dumbstruck.

“How’d I do?” He asked smarmily.

“Are you being serious right now?” She replied, wondering if it was best just to end the conversation now or insult him right back. Her tongue was blooming with comical epithets for his side of the political spectrum. She took the high road. “That is remarkably offensive and ill-informed.”

“Is it? Yes, I suppose it is.” He was clearly intrigued by her. “As I said, cliches.”

“If you must know, the Latin on my calf, from the book, is purposefully wrong, if you remember the novel. An inside joke. A mock latin phrase from the Commander’s schoolboy days roughly meaning ‘Don’t let the bastards grind you down.’ The main character finds the phrase carved into a closet in the room she is held captive in, clearly left by a Handmaid before her. Later she is told the story of the phrase by the Commander himself, when he starts seeing her privately, even though it is strictly forbidden. Clearly, he had done the same with

the previous Handmaids. The irony and hypocrisy of the oppressor propagating such a statement to his captives, while blatantly ignoring the oppressive rules he helped set for everyone else, is astonishing, to say the least.” She lectured.

He stared at her with wrapt if not amused attention.

“As you say, it had become a rallying cry for perseverance and resistance in the face of authoritarianism.” She smirked at him. “I got mine after your boss was elected for his first term. The book was not meant to be an instruction manual, by the way. You might let him know.”

“So you do know who I am!” He accused playfully.

“Is that what you are going to take from this?” She scowled at him.

“No, of course not, but it’s fascinating.” He teased.

“What is?” She wasn’t sure if as he wanted the answer.

“That you are still such an activist with your basic feminist tattoo. You look like a million dollars, though. Do you work for the ACLU? Do you have children or cats? What has happened?” he stressed, clearly trying to get a rise out of her. “I must know.”

“Are you purposefully being awful? You haven’t changed a bit. Still the same enthusiastic bully and bigot.” She snarled at him.

“I’m joking, clearly. I did not say I felt that way, but surely you know how your type is viewed.”

“My type. What type is that?”

“Radical Feminists. Feminazis, as some of my less delicate colleagues say. Not a flattering caricature.”

“Not anymore attractive than being a labeled fascist pig. An actual Nazi, if you will.”

“The N word. Ouch, Miss Granger, you wound me.” he brought his hand to his chest.

She rolled her eyes so hard it hurt. “Really? Spare me your faux remorse. I’m only giving as good as I get.”

“You are Miss, yes? Not Missus?” he enquired.

“Does it matter?”

“I supposes not, but I am endlessly curious about you.” His steel grey eyes blazed at her.

She stared back at him, debating telling him to fuck off out the emergency exit at 30k feet. Alas, they were still on the ground.

“I am divorced.” She took the last swallow of her Prosecco.

“Pity - I am separated myself.” He offered.

“Are you, now? I have heard that before. I still spy a wedding band.” She tipped her head at his left hand.

“For the children, divorce is inevitable, but we are attempting to ease them into it.” He threw back the last of his own drink.

She looked at him skeptically. She supposed it didn’t matter if he was fibbing or not about his status. There was no chance any sort of relationship with him, children and wife or not.

Phew.

Chapter End Notes

Trying to keep the political points valid without tying it down too much to specifics

Chapter 3: Who Do You Think You Are?

Chapter Summary

Draco and Hermione catch up a lot, flirt little and get a bit faded.

The a muffled voice on the intercom started blabbering on about preflight details as the flight attendants walked the aisle checking everyone's seatbelts, tray tables and seat backs for compliance. Hermione handed her empty to the attendant and straightened back up in her seat, unsure if she wanted to continue engaging Malfoy. His charisma was undeniable, but he literally was the devil, or at minimum, the devils megaphone. She wasn't going to think about how cute he was.

Not one bit.

She did decide to at least apologize to him, feeling slightly guilty about being mean. "I'm sorry about your divorce."

"It's alright, turns out it makes women angry when you cheat on them repeatedly, apparently. Especially when they are your wife." He shrugged. "What about you? Did someone stray? I can't imagine it was you."

Hermione gaped at him, his openness. "Nothing like that, grew apart, wanted different things, Blah blah blah," she felt blasé as she was saying it, making the yapping sign with her hand.

"That sounds like a cop out. What was really going on?"

"Honestly," she looked over at him. "Ron bored the shit out of me."

"Ron??" His eyes widened in shock. "Don't tell me you married Weaselbee? Oh, Granger. Even in your most epic lesbian protest queen phase, you could have done better than him. I assumed that blew over before college."

"It wasn't so bad. He was just dull and I realized I settled. He didn't really get me." ignoring the insult, she tapped her temple. "The split was mostly amicable, which is good since we still work together."

"Do you have a business together or something? I thought he was in politics somehow, with Potter." Malfoy's face turned suspicious.

Announcements began again. The plane pulled out and taxied to the runway. Hermione wished she had another drink. Like a mindreader, Draco pulled out a small silver flask covered in black snakeskin from his bag, taking a quick swig then offering it to her, ducking low, under the seat backs.

“What is it?” she whispered.

“It’s really good whiskey.” He winked conspiratorially

“It smells like bandaids.” She sniffed the flask and wrinkled her nose

“Bottoms up, Granger.” he urged.

She gave in and took a swallow. “Bluuuuaggghhhhhh.” She stuck her tongue out in disgust as the whiskey burned down her throat to her stomach. “That’s awful.”

“You are adorable.” He chuckled. “You get used to it. An acquired taste, as they say.”

“If you says so.” She shook her head rapidly, still reacting to the whiskey. “Like you, I guess, you are a bad influence.”

“Yes. I am definitely an acquired taste. Now tell me about you and Weasley.”

She realized, while she knew his employer, and he had *no* idea about hers. “I guess I should fess up, I work for Potter, like Ron.”

“For fucks sake,” Malfoy sat back hard, slumping. “Seriously? That’s why you are going to Denver. For the debate. Yes, I feel like I knew that about Ron in the recesses of my mind. Campaign Manager, right? I had no idea you worked for Potter or married Weaselbee”

“That’s what you get for not coming to the reunions. And you should really stop calling him that.” she smacked her lips together. “But yes, speechwriter slash advisor. It’s ok if you’d rather not talk more, professional concerns and all...”

“Nonsense. I am having more fun then I’ve had in years.” He waved dismissively. “I suggest we not elaborate further on our respective campaign details, though.”

“Fair enough,” she slid her still buzzing phone into the seat pocket. “Can I have another drink?”

“But of course.” He slipped her the flask again, his fingers brushing hers as she took it from him. She half smiled at him, taking a covert swig, handing it back. Letting their fingers contact again, she felt a tiny current up her spine. Draco looked positively wolfish as he snuck his own drink.

“What are you doing tonight? Have dinner with me.”

Oh no.

“I can’t. I have rehearsal and strategy sessions tonight. It will be late.” She leaned into the seat back, on her shoulder, drawing her knees up under her dress, facing Draco. He mirrored her angle.

“Ah, well, I am not vital, though am usually around for at least part of it. My father will wants me to make an appearance. Tom doesn’t like to rehearse too intently and I am just one

of their talking heads. My contribution will come before and after.”

“You are *the* talking head, Malfoy. Are you kidding? How many times have you been on Real Time or Meet the Press? And it’s like you live on Fox and Friends’ couch.”

“I suppose.” he said softly, focusing all his considerable attention on her again. “Leave early, make something up. Fake a migraine. Have dinner with me.”

“Out of the question,” she spoke in her best ‘end of fucking discussion’ tone.

“Still so obstinate.” he sighed. “I’ll wear you down by the end of this flight. Promise.”

“You can give it your best shot,” she teased, plucking the flask from him again. She had no intention of going anywhere with his philandering ass. However, the bantering with him was irresistible. Cheap thrills, her mother would call it.

“Brazen woman.” he mocked her as she snuck another drink. “You should slow down or I won’t have to take you to dinner to get what I want.”

Hermione went scarlet. “As if, Malfoy.” she flashed her eyes at him. “You have no shot. Less than zero. You never did.” She didn’t know if she believed herself or not but she wanted him to feel all of her disdain.

“I didn’t want one until now, I will have you know.” He leered at her suggestively.

She shrugged noncommittally, handing back the flask.

“So you’re telling me there’s a chance?” He straightened his expression to one of cool interest. “Now tell me about you, after school.” he implored.

“What do you want to know? It’s not very exciting. Much like at Barny, I was buried in books, took too many classes.”

“I want to know whatever you want to tell me.” He leaned in closer. “Give me all your secrets.” There was that smile again, the one that might wreck her resolve. He removed his glasses and laid them in his lap, rubbing the heels of his hand in his eyes, then blinking rapidly. He was even more handsome sans his lenses. She attempted to focus past him, rather than stare at the angular planes of his face, his smooth skin, the rakish locks of platinum hair that fell over his forehead.

“Well, after we graduated, I got my undergrad at Vanderbilt. Harry went to Harvard and Law school after, of course, and you know from Barny, he already had political ambitions. Ron went to UNC to be closer to me. I double majored in history and political science. As soon as I was out I interned on Capitol Hill for Senator Blythe, worked as a staffer and moved into speechwriting for her. Got my Masters at GW, foreign policy. Ron always worked with Harry, from the beginning... to get him into the state house in Maryland then congress. We got married during his rise, and I came to work on the presidential campaign. Ron and I split for good last year, but we both stayed on for Harry.”

“How disappointingly clinical. That’s as much about those two dingalings as you.” Malfoy chided. “Surely as a speechwriter you can tell a better story than that?”

“What can I say. Maybe *I* am the boring one.” she shrugged. “What about you?”

“You, boring? Hardly.” He cocked an eyebrow at her. “I always thought you’d be a scientist or a doctor, Granger, even an academic....not shilling for Potter’s unfailing need to make the world a better place.”

“I am flattered you gave it any thought and all...and there is nothing wrong with idealism,” she was in earnest, while Malfoy scoffed at her.

“Naive” he clicked his tongue “welllll...I went to Duke. I had unformed, youthful dreams of making my own way, I wasn’t interested in politics or law school. I am still not, if I am being honest. But my father is devoted to Tom Riddle and I am devoted to my parents, so I followed him into politics on the condition I did not have to do intensely cerebral operative garbage. He felt I could be a good spokesperson for the party, specifically Tom, so I majored in journalism and broadcasting, I went to charm school and learned all the tricks of the trade. Tom had me train with some of the GOPs most talented veterans. Turns out I’m an excellent snake oil salesman.” He beamed comically.

“Duke, that’s figures. What did you really want to be, if you had your druthers?”

He wagged his finger. “No, no, your turn.”

She drew in a long breath, then exhaled. “Ok, shoot.”

“It’s just questions, not a firing squad, Granger.” He poked her upper arm. She looked at his finger as he withdrew, feigning horror, mouth hanging open. “You touched me first.” he defended.

“Did I? I am not so sure.” She twitched her lips into a puzzled purse.

“Kids?” He asked

“No.”

“Pets at least?” he frowned.

“Cats, as you so astutely called.”

“I am nothing if not insightful...or maybe you are just predictable? Hmmm, tell me, what other tattoos do you have,” he took another pull of whiskey, waggling his eyebrows. “and where?”

“My, my, now were are getting somewhere.” she pulled out her phone. “That’s three questions, by the way.”

“Four, actually.”

The plane sped up out of taxi and shot down the runway to take off and they both sat back, silent momentarily.

"I love this part." Hermione grinned at Draco. "I have since I was little. Only part of air travel I can still stand."

"Enjoy a cheap thrill, do you?"

"Maybe just a little," she spoke over the roar of the engines and the rattling of the cabin. Definite butterflies going, she was unsure if it was from take off or from him.

Girl, uh oh.

As the plane ascended and quieted, she contemplated her next move. Forging on with their conversation, she navigated to her tattoo images she had saved, handing the phone to Malfoy. He thumbed through the various images of her ink in progress and completed.

"Is this one on your *ASS*, Granger?" Draco grinned at the phone, an artistic image of a spidery constellation the Greek sign for Virgo inked onto skin.

"I cannot confirm or deny." Hermione said primly.

"Virgo?"

"Yes, you?"

"Gemini"

"Yikes"

"Yikes?"

"Yes, Yikes."

"Virgin, yes?" He raised an eyebrow.

"PPFFT, not that's any of your beeswax." Hermione took up his full meaning.

"Let's get back to 'yikes'. Don't tell me you take stock in all that new age poppycock."

"Not really." she shrugged. "Just another omen. Also, poppycock? Are you from the 1920s?"

"Riddlism." He made face, looking back her the phone, appraising the next image with a smirk.

"We call him T-Rid."

Draco almost spit out his scotch. She handed him a cocktail napkin.

"It sounds like bug spray. What do you call me?"

"You don't want to know. There are so many."

"Ah," raising his brow. He turned his attention back to her phone. He looked delighted as he showed her a different picture of a tiny stretching black cat design, extremely low on her hip, a strip of fabric showing above it. The script under it spelled '*pet me*'. "Who knew you were a bad girl? You are full of surprises."

"I went a little wild after college." she confessed.

"Granger, you're supposed to go wild *in* college. Didn't you get the memo?" he chided her.

"I was predictably drowning in my studies, as I said. Now, being a baby staffer on Capitol Hill, that was a whole sordid story."

"What I wouldn't give to have seen that." He made a wicked face.

"I think I turned into a woo-girl for a while. I had to change how I looked and interacted to fit in, went to ton of mixers and parties. Barfly. Clubfly? It was a very heady time for me. I had more friends than I knew what to do with and tons of invitations. It was a whole new world for me. Bad in the best way. No one outside realizes what an endless party Cap Hill is."

"Oh, I'm familiar." Draco rolled his eyes. "Woo girls have been an important part of my downfall. How did we never meet again? I was such a prowling cad."

"Was?" Hermione asked archly.

"I am at least more discreet and discerning now." He replied.

"Does that mean cam girls? OnlyFans?" she laughed. "Craigslist?"

"I'll never tell." He licked his lips slowly.

"Probably just as well."

"I just know what I want now." he eyeballed her suggestively. "The indiscriminate bedding of post Dartmouth sorority girls is not stimulating to me anymore," shrugging his moral failings off. "What can I say? I need a challenge," he said very pointedly.

"Subtle, Malfoy." She gave him a sarcastic thumbs up. "How does that even work as recognizable as you are? Women must positively fling themselves at you. Everyone must."

"You are not wrong. *Everyone*." he sighed sarcastically. "My cross to bear."

"Poor baby." she crooned, realizing her sunglasses were still on top of her head like a headband, starting to give her a headache. She folded them up and put them away.

"It gets old, it does," he defended. "I know it sounds like crap, but it's not. Until recently, I was not faithful or careful about it. It was all just too easy. My soon to be ex got fed up and currently is putting me through the wringer, which hurts the kids and it's hard to look at it the

same way, at least for now. It don't know why, it's too late to save anything at this point. Mostly on the advice of my lawyers."

"I appreciate your candor. It's kinda hard to feel bad for you. Though, I don't really remember you being a lothario in school, just an asshole."

"Lothario, what an excellent word, Ms. Granger. Two points to Gryffindor."

When the flight leveled out. Stacy had reappeared, taking orders and confirming meal choices. Malfoy ordered the best Scotch the airline could manage, Glen-something, she heard him request. Hermione asked for a white wine, which was likely box chardonnay. He passed on the inflight meal, she asked for the cheese plate.

"Airline food." he shivered.

"Why *are* you flying commercial anyway? Don't you fly with POTUS?" she pulled out her tray table.

"Rarely actually, normally it's Dad's jet. There was huge hassle getting it in and out of Hilton Head that way, so I just took a regular flight."

He grew quieter, seemingly introspective. She wondered if he was talked out. Deciding not to offer anything else, she fiddled with getting on inflight wifi until her drink came. When she looked at the chat there were over 1000 replies from the last time she looked. They were on a tangent about the mile high club at this point, which made Hermione blush while wondering if that was even possible anymore with modern security measures.

Why are you even entertaining that question?

"Cheers." Draco offered up his new drink for a toast. "To old friends."

"If you say so." She touched her glass to his, taking a slurping sip while looking directly at him, which made Draco almost spit his Scotch out.

"Granger!" he choked out. "Manners."

"I am a delicate fucking flower, Mr. Malfoy."

"Indeed, you are." He took another giant swig of his scotch, his eyes never leaving her face.

"So is it my turn? Why were you in Hilton Head?"

"I honestly have no idea, my brain is still stuck back at your ass tattoo."

"You have a one track mind, sir," she crossed her arms

"I hardly think I can be blamed. You in that very flattering dress, showing me pictures of your bum. This is your fault."

“Typical conservative, blame the victim for your lack of restraint. And you wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t told you it was my ass, it was a close up. You’re just perverted.”

He laughed out loud, throwing his head back, drawing looks from surrounding passengers. “I can’t figure you out. You seem to encourage me, then you insult me....and your mouth, I don’t think I ever heard you curse in school. You’re like a sailor. When did that happen? Next you will belch at me.”

“Hilton. Head. You are evading me.” She poked his shoulder.

He turned his head to her. “Vacation, with the kids. The wife was there. It was depressing in a ‘united front for the children’ sort of way.” He looked up at the ceiling and something occurred to him to change the subject. “Oooh, I almost forgot, I also have I have a tattoo, want to see it?”

“Do I???” she sat up straight, excited.

He unbuttoned his sleeve on his arm closest to her and rolled it up revealing a very expensive Tag Heuer watch and above it, a Chinese style black python tattoo on the inside of his forearm. It was intricate and very well done, twisting in an incomplete infinity sign. The reds in the scales were quite faded. Unthinking, she ran her fingers over it. She briefly congratulated on her fresh mani-pedi and shaving before she left.

“That’s really beautiful.” she breathed. “Does it have a meaning?”

“Secret society in college, the Brotherhood of the Serpent.”

“Of course, one of those.” She sniggered slyly, taking her hand back. Looking up at him, his gaze was laser focused on her. She felt flush pinned under his intensity. He shoved his sleeve back down, buttoning it. She noted he had nice wrists where they joined his hands. Masculine but sensitive with slender fingers. That was her thing for unobvious attractive traits in men.

“My turn now. Where do you live, DMV area, I assume?”

“Georgetown.” she nodded. “In a broom closet. You?”

“Lovely house in Chevy Chase that I am banished from. I have an apartment at The Watergate.”

“Can either of us be anymore cliché?” Hermione giggled. “For fucks sake, Malfoy, The *Watergate*?”

“Dad has owned it forever, I just moved in when the marriage went south. And I don’t want to hear it from you. Georgetown? Do you live over a coffeeshop?”

“Bookstore.”

He face palmed, chuckling. “Next your going to tell me you do yoga and macrame.”

“Pilates, thank you. No macrame or knitting or tatting or any of that. Horses.” She flexed a bicep and he reached out to squeeze it.

“Impressive.” he whistled. She blushed again. “You do horses?”

The flight attendant appeared with her cheese plate and gave them both a withering look.

“Jesus.” Hermione shoved Draco.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” he laughed, defending himself weakly.

Set down, it had three meager cheese wedges, a few cold cuts and some olives on wilted lettuce. There were packages of crackers and dried apricots. She popped a piece of what looked like munster in her mouth and offered a waxy piece of gouda to Malfoy.

“Want some?” she mumbled with her mouth full, chomping noisily, purposefully. He looked at her incredulously. Starting to turn up his nose, he thought better of it, leaning in and opening his mouth, eyes dancing. He was daring her to feed him. She looked at him with glee, broke off a piece, shoving the cheese past his lips into his mouth. He chewed, swallowing slowly, luxuriously. He stomach did another half-gaynor.

You are in trouble.

“How do you make eating shitty cheese look so effortlessly hot? It’s not fair.” she glugged her wine.

He shrugged, straightening up, seeming self-conscious out of nowhere. Color rose in his cheeks.

“Oh come on, I can’t have embarrassed you? You have to know?”

“You are alarmingly straight forward.” He glanced at her only for a moment.

“And, you are being what? Low key?” His own style of open pursuit of her made her just as self-conscious.

“Your right, scotch is making me amorous. Apologies.” He shook his empty glass at the staff. “Do you want another?”

“Absolutely. I am going to be shit-housed for rehearsal tonight, though...and it will be your fault.” she mused.

“Negative, I gave you an appealing out.” He reminded her, running his hand through his hair.

“Not a viable one.” Mentally, she was already having an intimate candlelit dinner with him, witty conversation, falling into bed after. The sex would be amazing, she already knew. She shook her head violently, clearing the maladaptive daydreams out. She could not fuck Draco Malfoy. Aside from the ethical questions, and him being the enemy, she would also end up a commonplace statistic, another notch in his considerable headboard tally.

She busied herself with her cheese plate. Getting food on her stomach would be smart. He seemed to withdraw at that point. She began scrolling through the chat on her phone, now at 1500 messages, angling it away carefully from Malfoy's sight. They were still carrying on about him, though it had slowed down.

'He is a horrible flirt' she typed in.

The chat immediately exploded to full speed again.

"He's FLIRTING with u???"

'Oh my GAWWD.'

'Mi, you cannot fuck him.'

'Isn't he married???'

'Wrong, u should totally fuck him!'

'Have you gotten any useful info out of him yet?'

That was Ron.

'No she can't. He's LITERALLY SATAN'

'No. We agreed not to discuss the campaigns' I replied.

'Well, that was stupid.' Ron again.

'Ron's jealousssssss.'

She abruptly closed the chat and threw the phone back in the seat pocket, exasperated. Ron *was* jealous. He was *always* jealous, *always* trying to rekindle things. It was never going to happen but it still put extra strain on the workplace, with the weird dynamic they had. If it had been anyone but Harry, should would have gone to work for another office.

'Don't shit where you eat', her father's sage advice surfaced. She wished she had listened to him.

Chapter 4: Argumentation

Chapter Summary

Draco and Hermione go hard about politics, the tension ratchets up.

Hermione glanced at Draco, whose head was back with his eyes closed, his arms crossed over his chest. He looked boyish and peaceful. She fooled around with her tray, stacking her dishes and folding her napkin. She really wanted to eat the apricots, but she knew they would give her gas. Though, that would certainly guarantee he wouldn't want to sleep with her, she thought wryly.

Maybe you should indulge after all.

And *why* was she even entertaining this? Rich, hot, famous and objectively horrible, he had *always* been horrible. He was the embodiment of everything she found reprehensible in a person. He was arrogant, bigoted, narcissistic, and an exuberant bully. He was the personification of insouciance. She had no use for him at Barny except as target of derision. His persona was so different now, at least on the surface, she struggled to remember him more clearly in school. St. Barnabas was tiny and exclusive, she was there on scholarship, which he and his ilk never let her forget. He was a good student (not as good as her, however), competitive to a fault and a nasty loser. A nasty winner too, if she was being honest, gloating and boastful.

Insufferable.

There was that word again. He ran with a select group of trust fund babies, constantly throwing their status around as some sort of marker of evolutionary superiority, when in reality they had done nothing to be there but be born to the right people. She was the one that earned her spot.

Early on, he had been scrawnier, with a surly countenance and a large head that he didn't start growing into until senior year, then he became incredibly tall and gangly. Harry said he looked like a white walker which made Ron howl. She couldn't remember him ever having a girlfriend, which probably explained his latter day promiscuity. He played lacrosse and soccer with Harry and Ron, intramural was always entertaining as their mutual animosity was on full macho display there. She remembered dancing with him once at a school event. He had asked her, and like an idiot she said yes. He proceeded to step on her toes and insult her dress for being cheap. He told her that her hair looked like a haystack on her head. After, he burst out laughing, pointing and gesturing at her to his friends. He had been dared to dance with her. The waspy girls he ran with made fun of her for weeks after. That painful memory had been buried deep, she realized. She hadn't dredged it up in years. She recalled crying in the bathroom at the time, she was so mortified. She huffed, cutting an angry glance at him.

He cracked an eye open. "I feel like you are looking at me. I feel like you are unhappy."

"I just remembered the Holiday Formal sophomore year."

"Oh, dear." he closed his eyes again and sighed heavily. "In my defense, I felt like a cretan over that for years."

"Did you? Again, I'm surprised you even remember."

Prick.

"I do and don't look at me like that. I know it was awful even for me, even then. I own it. I was a fifteen year old spoiled punk who cared too much about what his friends thought. Scoring points."

More drinks finally showed up and Hermione, she handed her tray to the flight attendant. She folded away the table and set her wine on the armrest surface.

He laid a hand on her arm, giving her a beseeching look. "I'm really sorry, Granger. You didn't deserve that."

She eyed him, then she slumped, deciding to be an adult. "Apology accepted." He seemed genuine remorseful, even if he wasn't it, was nice to hear.

"Now, you apologize to me." he looked at her quasi-seriously.

"For what?" she frowned. "I was never half as mean to you as you were to me."

"You should apologize for that candle wax passing for cheese you force fed me. Absolutely revolting."

"Snob." She snorted and acquiesced, agreeing silently to move on, allowing his levity. "I am sorry for giving you bad cheese. To the depths of my soul." His hand was still warm on her arm. She was hyper-conscious of it, but made no move to extract herself.

"Accepted. Though, I also seem to recall you slapped me once."

"You deserved it. You used a slur I will not repeat to refer to Professor Reuben." she rolled her eyes. "And I slapped you on the back of the head, you big baby."

"You called me a cockroach, too."

"Still well with in my rights." She countered.

"I suppose. I really was the worst, wasn't I?" He said it almost to himself. Sitting back again, he removed his hand, swirling his scotch and taking a sip.

"*The* worst. The question is, are you still?" she raised an eyebrow at him.

“Is that a real question?” He righted himself in his seat a little. “You know your opinion of me already, purely based on who I work for. What are you expecting me to say? I’m just in it for the money? The recognition? I don’t believe in Tom’s platform and policies?”

She'd hit a nerve. She didn't respond, she just looked at him smugly, waiting for him to hang himself.

He cocked his head. “You want me to lie to you? So you can flirt with me and not feel like a terrible person? Like a betrayer to your utopian crusade?”

“Of course not.” she snapped, taken off guard by his frank read of her. "Just question how someone who seems so decent is also a blackshirt." She glanced down at his actual black shirt, which made him look as well.

His mouth twitched down. “I do not have a 'I have grown as person' speech for you, I’m sorry. Whether I personally believe in all of the Riddle administration’s actions is immaterial, I am a communicator for them, therefore I am aligned with them. That’s really all there is to it.”

“That’s not an answer, it’s an evasion.”

“Do you believe in everything the DNC does? That Potter espouses? I’m sure you dispute some of policies. I guarantee you are personally much more left than the official platform.” He bored in.

“God, Malfoy. You should start a cult, gaslighter.”

"You are the same imperious, stubborn mule, do-gooder you have always been." he shook his head, grinning.

"You are the same entitled, hateful, pompous ass, clearly." she smiled sweetly at him.

"Shrew."

"Bully."

He laughed. "So, would you join my cult?" His eyes dropped to her mouth.

"No!" Eager for an excuse to drop it, she realized she really had to pee. She checked the occupied light on the ceiling, it was green. "Put that on hold and let me out, I have to go to the can."

“The *can*? Now you are deliberately being coarse just to annoy me,” he shook his head, standing to let her slide out.

“Mayyybe,” she cut him a mischievous glare in passing. He responded by sniffing her hair loudly from behind her.

She turned with a quizzical look over her shoulder and moved down the aisle. She felt him following behind her, his footfalls thumping hollowly behind hers. She fiddled with the

restroom door and turned in to slip into the lavatory stall. Draco, propping a shoulder lazily on the galley area divider, pointed at himself then back at her flicking his finger to and fro with a salacious smile. Stacy scowled up at him from the service area.

Jesus Christ he was tall, Hermione impulsively longed to climb him. She rolled her eyes at him instead, shutting the door.

You are in trouble. You are in trouble. You are in trouble.

Inside she turned to the mirror and scolded herself. “What the fuck are you doing, Granger? Are you insane?” She relieved herself quickly, washed her hands, then stared at herself again. “Get a grip. You are not 15 anymore, ugh.” She fiddled with her hair as her conscious warred with itself. Her reflection looked back at her with a sour expression. She threw her hands up in exasperation and exited. Draco was right there as she came out and she had to shimmy past him again.

“You sure?” he murmured, bending into her space as she attempted to escape him.

“Sexual harassment much?” Placing her hand on his chest, she lightly shoved him away against the wall. Looking up to return to her seat to find the cabin was staring at them. She flushed violently, rushing to hide in their row, aware of the many eyes following her.

Spectacle, noun.

‘You are making a spectacle of yourself’ her Nana would say. One of the worst sins possible for a Southern women. The next word that popped into her head was ‘loose’. That one was her mother’s. As brash and independent as she perceived herself, shaming her ancestors by acting like a hussy on an airplane with a possible neo-nazi was not something she aspired to. She realized they might be staring because Malfoy was famous and she was just making it about herself but she was unsure. She wondered how loudly they had been carrying on. She had hardly considered the people surrounding them, she was buzzed, so focused on their angry yet flirty banter.

He eventually emerged, stopping several times as he came up the aisle, presumably to speak to admirers. He spoke with all them graciously, shaking hands, being friendly. He signed a cocktail napkin for one of them. She became hyper aware of how recognizable he actually was, even outside of the beltway. The scandal implications were real, even if she was nobody, she was still a senior staffer for Harry Potter, inner circle of the Democratic candidate for President. And Malfoy was, well, *the* Draco Malfoy.

He finally returned to their seat, prowling towards her in a way that made her swallow hard. “My fan club is certainly representing.” He sat back down, seeming apologetic.

She half smiled at him, feeling subdued by her own internal reality check.

“What’s wrong? Have I offended thee additionally? I was teasing you at the restroom. Mostly.”

How to respond? She turned over leveling with him in her head, they were being remarkable unguarded - telling him it all - her attraction to him, her ethical concerns, her moral distain for him, the voices of her family in her head rebuking her, her fears of discovery, especially by the media and her team. He might even sell her out himself, the fallout would likely be much worse for her campaign than his. It would be another day at the office for a Republican male while she got crucified by both sides for being both sexually liberated and a progressive woman, dallying with the enemy.

Instead she said, "I think I'm a little drunk." She was not. She had a buzz but telling him that was probably way smarter than baring her soul. Why did she even feel the need to talk to him so openly, anyway? How was that a good idea?

He nodded. "We'll slow down." He motioned to Stacy. "Can we get some ice waters? Sparkling?"

"Of course, sir."

"Thanks." She was grateful to him for not pushing more drinks on her and giving a shit about her state of mind. Or at minimum, just her ability to consent, she thought cynically.

When the water appeared she drank it, relishing the palette cleanser. Draco swallowed his down in few gulps and checked at his watch. "Half the flight is gone, I am running out of time to persuade you."

"You really are incorrigible, know that?"

"So, I've been told. It's just dinner," he cajoled "That's all it has to be. I really would love to catch up more."

"Does anyone tell you no?" he started to reply, she interrupted him. "Also, Can you imagine the absolutely calamity if it got out? You can't be serious."

"A, it's rare but it happens, which only makes me work harder. B, we are sort of colleagues and old school pals, easily explainable if it comes up, and C, I am completely and utterly serious."

"I really, really can't, even if I wanted to say yes. I should have been here sooner and tonight is crucial, as you well know."

"Do you really think Potter has a chance?" Malfoy asked, changing tack back to politics. "Tom has taken him apart once already. He's too young and green, he's too easily flustered."

"It's a town hall, it should be an advantage for Harry format-wise." She shook her head. "We probably shouldn't talk about this...Plus you guys are cheaty cheaters."

"All politicians cheat. It's a prerequisite of the job. Don't act all high and mighty." he scoffed.

He was enjoying riling her. "I mean, doesn't it bother you? The doublespeak of your campaign, your policies. When you yammer on about patriotism and Christianity when you are anything but in reality?"

“According to who? That is all a matter of perspective,” he was so calm in his delivery, it was infuriating. “Tom’s base knows exactly who he is and they love him for it. They embrace it wholeheartedly - as patriots, as people of faith. He is fighting for their rights. He has a mandate.”

“Human rights are not ‘perspective’. He is persecuting people and you are helping. His policies are historically anti-American, authoritarian. On top of that he is stealing right from right under their noses and they are too dumb to see it, blinded by their prejudices.”

“Are they? Or have they prioritized the social policies he endorses above their wallets?”

“You can’t tell me the majority know how his policies continue rob them blind, then they will blame minorities and democrats.”

“Funny how that works. Many it will disenfranchise, some it won’t and most won’t know the difference, blaming your team no matter what. And half this cabin at least seems to be the ‘they’ you refer to. They are not all evil billionaires and redneck hayseeds. White woman flocked to him, minority men as well. Maybe our demographic bigger than you think. They are tired of being told how shitty they are while their way of life is being dismantled.”

“Flocking is stretch. Ugh, spare me your primetime talking points, Malfoy. You won last time because the majority of registered people stayed home.” she countered. She was struggling to stay grounded in the face of his time tested responses.

“That sounds like a poorer reflection on your platform rather than mine, with our overt and reprehensible white nationalist leanings, as Potter likes to say. How did we win if we are so morally bankrupt? It’s not all gerrymandering.”

“I ask myself that question daily.”

“Listen, not to belabor the point, but the DNC has had over 40 years to stop this inexorable slide to where we are. At least since Reagan. It’s no secret there has been a master plan to stack the court, take over the media, manage appropriations and laws to benefit conservatives. This is the eventual outcome of a well crafted long game. The democrats have even helped, Clinton, Obama, Biden, nobody has made any serious stand against the right wing take over. They have capitulated over and over again to special interest and to keep the peace, appease their donors.”

“Harry is different. He is part a new wave of young progressives committed to fight this wave of greed, nationalism and pessimism. He will empower those who need it the most, believes in equ....”

Malfoy waved his hand dismissively, interrupting. “Sure. They all think they are different in the beginning. Bright, eyed an bushy tailed. The game will wear them down, the money, the backroom dealing. Isolated in DC bubble, they all lose touch. It’s inevitable.”

“He hasn’t so far. Assaulting every principle this country was built on is not business as usual. Ignoring established protocols and laws? This admin lies when telling the truth would be easier, the propaganda machine is breathtaking. Tom is a malignant narcissist and con

man. Harry may be part of the establishment but he is invested in dragging us back from the brink of authoritarianism that your lot are careening towards. Your playbook is textbook fascism and it's appalling." She narrowed her eyes at Malfoy, bristling.

He didn't say anything for a moment, clearly miffed. He grabbed his scotch again, holding it while he pointed at her with it in his hand. She felt some anger bloom in him, eclipsing his devil may care persona.

"Your problem is you believe in the inherent goodness of people, and it's farce. Most people are selfish and individualistic, Americans doubly so. Combine that with their seeming pride in being uneducated, the lack of understanding of how their own government works, how *anything* works, for that matter, it's a recipe for disaster. The government has no checks on editorial or news anymore, the media is owned by conglomerates that are more interested in self-preservation and quarterly reports. It's all sound bites and manufactured outrage by internet trolls. They parrot what they are fed in an endless echo chamber. Bread and circuses."

"The cruelty is point, is it then? I refuse to believe the majority of people are awful and selfish."

"The cruelty is a means to an end. It's calculated control of a base and their considerable insecurities and prejudices, venal as it may be. The 'people' are just game pieces to those in power. The machine, for lack of a better word, plays you all against each other. Pronouns and Antifa are all just noise, distractions. The money is the point. Power is the point. They who own it will never be sated. *Never*. They will take and take and take until there is nothing left..." He trailed off.

"I get all that, and it's depressing, but we can't be apathetic about it. It's not a game to people that it directly affects."

"Trust me, I grew up in it. Super depressing."

"Why support it then, if you recognize that? Honestly? You are not selling me on any upside." she finished her water and adjusted her ponytail.

He halfheartedly shrugged. "Because, ultimately, I realize the futility of it. I am a company man at the end of the day. I work my 9-5, as it were. I live very comfortably. I followed my parent's wishes into politics, and I am good at what I do; I play the game well. I never had delusions of grandeur. I don't own any burning personal convictions. I am not morally obligated to take the world a better place."

"Spoken like someone that never had to struggle for anything. You could at least try not actively make the world so much worse for everyone else that is not insulated like you. Speaking of history, it will not look be kind this regime or you, for that matter. This will be remembered as another shameful chapter in U.S. politics. Do you want to be remembered for enabling that? Hated like that?"

He clicked his tongue. "I already am, and I would be on your side too, just by the group that loves me now. I can't concern myself with that. I don't care what people think. I am not in it for a legacy."

“What about your happiness, your sense of fulfillment, purpose?”

“Happiness is for pharmaceutical commercials. It’s a fairytale.” He looked at her plaintively then put his attention back on his scotch, taking another drink.

She grimaced at him, tuning away. She didn’t know what to say in the face of such cynicism. It made her sad for him, understanding that under it all, he must be incredibly jaded and lonely. She pushed that realization away, refusing to romanticize him. That had no place in a healthy person’s life. Not that she felt particularly healthy, she had her own set of neurotic shortcomings. She at least had the ability to at least recognize the red flags, she consoled herself.

“Are we done now? Have I bared my soul to you enough to put you off me?”

“Was that the goal?” she fingered her empty wine glass, debating jumping back into another glass.

“No, quite the opposite, in fact, seems you were not the only tipsy one and for some reason I can stop myself. It’s been a long time since I had a real connection with someone.” He smiled lopsidedly, sounding tired.

Her stomach dropped. A connection? She was not sure she could handle earnest Malfoy. It had to be a tactic, he must have loads of game. She was just an interesting conquest to him, a challenge.

Don’t confuse attraction for connection.

“I think I need more wine, actually.”

“Atta girl.” he said, immediately shifting his mood slightly brighter as he hailed Stacy.

Chapter 5: Insistence

Chapter Summary

Hermione attempts to close things out, Draco persists

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Waiting on a new drink, she checked her phone again, email first and social media, then, reluctantly, the chat which had carried on without her for a while, then gone mostly silent. She assumed they were in working sessions now, looking at the time. She went through her travel itinerary, investigating the hotel they were booked into and where to grab an Uber.

“Where are you staying, if I can be so bold?” Draco handed her a new wine glass, Stacy was reaching for her empty, which she passed over.

“Oh..uh,” she squinted at her screen. “The Four Seasons. What about you?”

“The Brown Palace. Tom won’t stay anywhere else.”

“Swanky.” she teased.

“You do know I am from Manhattan, right?” he scoffed.

“Of course you are, Malfoy. How could I ever forget?”

“Sorry, involuntary elitism. It slips out.”

“I come from a long line of people that think Red Lobster is fancy.”

“Salt of the earth, I am sure.” He smiled genuinely. “Is that what you were doing in Atlanta? Visiting family?”

She nodded. “I hadn’t had a break in months and I needed to see my mother. She is not great.”

“Sorry to hear that.”

“It’s fine, dementia. Nothing really to be done.” She didn’t want to talk about it.

“That’s tough.”

The speaker blared to life in muffled tones explaining their descent was starting shortly. The should start preparing, as they would be on the ground in 45 minutes. Hermione couldn’t

decide if she was disappointed or relieved.

“So what is the possibility of me at least getting your number?”

“How old fashioned of you.” she smirked.

“Should I ask for your Snap? What are people using these days anyway? I can barely use Facebook.” He pulled out his phone, looking at her expectantly. His lock screen had two very blond young children on it.

“Cute kids,” she redirected. “How old?”

“Aurora is 7 and Scott is 10.”

“They look just like you.”

“They do, lucky devils.” He opened the phone to his contacts, extending his phone to her. “Number please.”

“I don’t know if that a good idea.” She hedged. Communicating with him was likely a very bad idea. She didn’t quite feel in control of her faculties near him.

“What are you afraid of? You might actually like me if you got to know me?”

Yes, actually.

“I don’t have time. *You* don’t have time. I am only here until day after tomorrow.”

“I think you already like me...I will make time, reminder, we both live in DMV.”

She took the phone. “Just don’t take it personally if I block you when I sober up and come to my senses.” she keyed her nickname and her last initial then added her number.

“M-I? Mee or My?”

“My-ah or My.” she handed him his phone back. She pointedly did not ask for his digits.

“The constant butchering of my full name is real. This is just easier. I don’t know what my parents were thinking.”

“Obscure Greek mythology is my guess. Maybe I will stick to Granger.” He typed something in.

“Shakespeare, actually.” Her phone buzzed a few seconds later.

‘Hi there’ the text read.

“It works.” It was surreal that she had Draco fucking Malfoy’s contact information. Bratty, spoiled Malfoy from Barny. Famously slick Malfoy on TV. Tall and handsome Malfoy sitting right next her, charisma rolling off him in waves. He even smelled good, a vague cologne scent, clean and slightly sandy, like an echo of the beach.

You are in trouble. You are in trouble. You are in so. much. trouble.

She pulled up the group chat, telling them she was landing soon, grabbing an Uber and going straight there. Neville responded that they were in a ballroom already starting the final dry runs, giving her the name. She probably could have asked for a car but it didn't occur to her until now and it felt like an imposition.

Looking out at the quilted landscape of Colorado's farmland as it dropped into focus, she thought about DIA. She normally came to Colorado to ski, she had never landed there without it being turbulent. The Denver airport was out in the middle of nowhere, East of the city. It had a weird reputation, with a giant red-eyed rearing demonic blue horse sculpture at the entrance. The runways were arranged in not quite a swastika pattern and bizarre art rumored as a nod to the Illuminati peppered the main terminal.

Draco was also preoccupied on his phone, probably doing something similar. Things to her felt suddenly awkward, she was already dreading the parting conversation. She finished off her wine so the staff could clearly it away. Checking her face in the phone camera, her cheeks were slightly red from the booze but otherwise she looked fine. Her mouth felt sour, she longed to brush her teeth.

Draco offered her a breath mint and she started to wonder if he was magic.

"Bless," she grabbed two mints from the tin. "You are my hero." She rattled the mints around in her mouth then almost gagged. The sharp taste was off-putting from the fresh wine taste still present. Malfoy gave her an eyebrow.

"Wintergreen and chardonnay do NOT mix. Gah." She fanned her mouth. "Gross."

He grinned wide, observing her struggle with great amusement. "Don't vomit on me, please."

"I will do my best." Swallowing roughly, she waved a airsick bag at him. "Parting gift?"

"Hard pass." he brayed with laughter. "You are amazing."

"Amazingly disgusting?"

"Amazingly amazing. I don't know how else to quantify it."

"Smooth."

The plane started wiggling with turbulence, as expected. The 'fasten your seatbelts' bell sounded and more announcements followed. The pre-landing fiddling and packing began in earnest in the cabin. Stacy handed him a black blazer draped over her arm.

"I'm sorry this is coming to an end. It's been a great way to while away a flight." Draco leaned into her space, locking his gaze back on her.

"Happy I was here to entertain you. You almost didn't get me."

"Ah yes, the gentleman who only had one seat in first class. He was not happy."

“No, he was not. I guess I don’t blame him. But hey, if you had given up your seat to him, you would have been seated with me anyway.”

“If I had known it was you, I would have.”

“In coach? High praise, sir.”

“And miss your vomiting, slurping, chewing and inappropriate tattoos? Not to mention being called fascist by Antifa’s finest.” He smirked. “Perish the thought.”

She ignored his last comment. “If I had eaten those apricots it would have been much more dire.” Holding her nose comically, she eyed him.

“Honestly, it’s astonishing. What is going on with you? You used to be such prisspot.”

“Amazingly amazing, remember. And don’t forget my excessive drinking.”

“The real question is, what’s you closing act.”

“It’s tough, I feel like passing gas is overzealous but seems like the natural progression. Not really sure I could muster one anyway. I could sneeze on you, but that’s anticlimactic. I didn’t actually burp already did I?”

He just stared at her with mock horror. “You only threatened to.”

“I can behave, I swear. I act up when I’m nervous.”

“I make you nervous?” A slightly puzzled expression appeared. “How do I make you nervous? Why would I make *you* nervous? You literally slapped me in school and called me a roach. Come on. ”

“But you, Malfoy, are not Malfoy anymore, you are *Malfoy*.” She emphasized with jazz hands, laughing her own nonsensicalness.

“That’s eloquent, Dr. Suess.”

“You know what I mean. Your are...for lack of a better word, not you, not who I recall. You’re like seven feet tall and handsome and famous and decidedly not fuckass Draco I knew from school. Except for your politics, your politics are still fuckass.”

“Fuckass? WOW.” he jerked his head back, his mouth twisting. “What about you? I wouldn’t have known you. You are beautiful, and smart and funny and completely unexpected. Your own ‘fuckass’ political affiliation notwithstanding.”

“I thought I was all of those things save beautiful in school.” She blushed furiously despite herself.

“You were not funny, you were bossy and shrill.”

“Still smart though.” she tapped her noggin with her pointer finger.

“Smart or a know-it-all?”

She ignored his last remark. “Yet, we are still sworn enemies.”

“That is your take, Juliet. I can separate work from personal life.”

“Harry’s campaign is my life.”

“Then that is where we differ.” He sighed.

“We differ on a lot more than that.”

“Have it your way, you are still the most obstinate girl I ever met. We have way more in common than your are willing to admit. Plus, chemistry. I know you feel it.”

“Hardly.” The plane bounced around rather violently, making Hermione white knuckle the arm rests. “I loathe turbulence.”

He placed his hand over hers, just resting it. “That we do have in common.”

She closed her eyes to ride it out, just enjoying the of feeling his hand on hers, inadvisable or not.

The plane finally touched down with a jolt, roaring to reduce speed. Cell phones came off airplane mode all through the cabin with dings and vibrations. Murmuring between seat mates began, wrapping up their temporary friendships.

After the longest taxi in the world, they reached the terminal and parked. The final bell dinged, spurring everyone into action like racehorses sprung from the gate. Draco stood, donning the blazer, then got into the overhead bin. “Which one is yours? It has to be the paisley one.”

“Bingo.”

He drug it out before pulling an elegant black bag down for himself then backed up, letting Hermione into the aisle before him. They didn’t speak as they filed out the airbridge into the terminal. She moved off to the side in the waiting area to say goodbye to him. He stood in front of her expectantly.

“Well,” he nodded awkwardly, looking at his watch. “It’s good to see you again. I will text you?”

“Is that a question?” she eyed him quizzically.

“No, of course not. Look, do you want to get a drink before we part ways?” he motioned to sports bar close to the gate. “Just one,” he was almost pleading.

“I really can’t. I’m late today and I should have been here sooner,” then she said for what she thought was the one billionth time. She checking her own watch, avoiding his intense stare.

He dropped his head back.”Ugh. Well, ok,” then something occurred to him visibly. “Do you need a ride? I have a car picking me up. We are basically going the same place.”

“I was just going to grab an Uber...” she trailed off.

“Nonsense. Come on,” he visibly beseeched her.

She sighed. “I guess that would be alright.” She didn’t know if it would be alright or not but couldn’t help herself.

What on earth do you think you are you doing?

“Excellent! Let’s go.” Draco perked up immediately, guiding her on with a gesture of his outstretched arm.

They traversed the concourse together, grabbing the train and making small talk along the way. When they arrived in the main terminal, Draco approached a chauffeur holding an iPad at the top of the escalators with a name on it. It said something besides Malfoy, she assumed it was an alias, but she didn’t catch it.

“Welcome, sir” the driver nodded. “Do you have checked bags?”

Draco glanced at Hermione, who shook her head. “Not me.”

“Very good. Any more members of your party? Security?”

Security. She realized he must usually have a bodyguard or two. Did he get Secret Service protection? She didn’t qualify so she doubted he did either, but based on his notoriety he’d be stupid not to have private security.

“No, just us,” he motioned to Hermione. “She is going to the Four Seasons. You can drop her off first.

“Very good, sir.”

They walked through the bustling airport, following the driver, while people paused, occasionally doing double takes or taking cell phone pictures of Malfoy walking past them. She felt conspicuous, like she was some actor’s girlfriend. The air was chilly on Hermione’s bare arms as she emerged into the pickup area outside. She was glad she thought to pack layers for Denver’s schizophrenic weather.

A black limo was waiting with another person inside on the commercial pickup level, because of course he had a limousine.

Chapter End Notes

Almost there! ;)

Chapter 6: Lap of Luxury

Chapter Summary

In which Hermione give up and gives in.

Chapter Notes

Here be the smut.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

“This is not a car, Malfoy, it’s a limo.” She rolled her bag to the driver to be loaded.

“Potato, Potaaahto,” he shrugged. "It's usually an SUV, like a Tahoe or something. Weird."

“Sure.” she noted dryly. Shaking her head and went to climb into the backseat, the driver hustled to open the door for her. Draco slid in on the other side and the driver shut his door, piling into the passenger side of the limousine. The car departed smoothly, gliding into the bright sunlight from the tunnel of arrival pickup. Hermione fumbled around in bag unsuccessfully for her sunglasses. Draco offered her a bottled water, which she took, their fingers brushing again, letting his linger. She felt another electric current pass through her from his touch. She her cheeks heated, scarlet was creeping up her chest. She took a drink, then chewed on her thumbnail.

Don't even think about it, missy.

She glanced at him, he was staring ahead, a smile playing on his lips, lost in thought. He cleaned his glasses with an ultra suede cloth. He was so fucking handsome she wanted to scream. Aristocratic and aquiline features, flawless skin, high cheekbones and forehead, a full mouth; she studied him like he was art, undeniably beautiful. He turned his head to her, giving her an ethereal look. In that moment she completely caved, tearing down every bit of resistance she had managed to nail in place so far.

“What are you thinking about?” he asked, cocking an eyebrow suspiciously.

“I’m thinking about you,” she tilted her head, answering forthrightly. His eyes darkened and snapped with energy.

She took a couple of swallows of her water put the bottle in the cupholder. Taking a deep breath, like she was jumping off the high dive when she was 10 years old, she slid towards

him. She felt reckless and hot. Draco followed her movements with fascination.

Turning artfully on the seat, she swung into his lap, straddling him. He watched her, his expression morphing from curiosity to confusion, to one of mirth, his gaze blowing wide. He carefully placed his glasses on the console, then put his hands on her hips, making no other advance on her. Looking up at her openly, he was completely still, waiting on the precipice for her leap.

“Is this ok?” she asked softly. His answer was to reach over and push the button that closed the divider between them and the driver, not breaking eye contact.

“What do you think?” His voice was gravel, eyes piercing her. Her heart leapt wildly in her chest. He slowly leaned in, inexorable and deliberate. She felt his breath on her chest, neck, then her cheek. His arms encircled her, wrapping completely around her back, pulling her in like tractor beam. She couldn’t breathe or think. Her chest was against his, her back arched so she could still look at him. She couldn’t *stop* looking at him, while he fixated on her mouth with hooded eyes. She moved in on him, her hands on his chest. Their lips met.

He sighed.

At first, he was chaste. Pressing his lips gently against hers and drawing back, searching for her reaction, repeating, going in again and again. She laid hands on his jawline, opening her mouth to him and he obliged her, deepening their kiss. A low moan escaped him, making her stomach plummet. Kissing him was thrilling, like free fall. Her skin hummed with electricity. As their mouths and tongues tangled together, hinted with desperation. He brought a hand up to her pony tail pulling out her band, her chestnut hair falling down her shoulders.

He broke from her to check her expression again. “God, you are so fucking beautiful, Granger.”

“Shut it, Malfoy. Just kiss me.”

“You’re the boss,” and he was on her again. He pulled her dress strap from her shoulder, moving his mouth down her neck across her collarbone, sucking and biting. She ground into his lap shamelessly, feeling him harden. Only her thin underwear and his slacks were between them. His other hand was in her hair pulling her head back to give him better access. He hissed as she wiggled.

“Naughty strumpet.” he murmured into her neck, his lips ghosting the hollow. Pulling the tie on her side that wrapped her dress to her, it fell open, exposing her chest, her breasts in nestled in a delicate white bralette. Viewing them, he groaned, dragging his tongue up her sternum, in an act of unmitigated fervor. His mouth crashed into hers again, he cupped her breast, working his long fingers under the lacy fabric. Hermione’s core throbbed, she felt ignited just having her mouth on his. She pushed him off, reaching between them, methodically unbuttoning his shirt. Trying not to pant, she drew it open over his shoulders, revealing his chest. Running her hands down the clean lines of his body, she took him in. Lean and sculpted, a smattering of blond hair on his chest, becoming a line trailing down his abs and disappeared into the the top of his pants. Laying on him, she fastened her mouth to his neck, sucking on him playfully then moving down, kissing along the way.

She peered up at him, grinning as she nipped at his pecs. "How much do you want me?"

"More than world peace," he rasped, his voice holding slight tremor. His face reflected fathomless desire. He let her explore him for a few minutes more, then grabbed her up by her arms. "My turn." He pulled her dress all the way off of her and lifted her bralette up over her head, exposing her pert breasts. His fingers trailed across them, circling her hardened nipples, making her writhe.

"Draco, you have to...." she whimpered.

"Shhhhhh. Let me work," he hissed as his mouth closed on the peak of her areole. Sucking her in lightly, he squeezed her with his hand. Throwing head back, shivering and a small cry hitched out of her. His mouth felt amazing, gentle and sensitive, his tongue rolling over her. He moved to the other side, suckling her nipple and pinching the one he just abandoned. She thought might come right then and there. Planting her hands behind her on his knees, she leaned back, letting her eyes flutter closed while she continued to grind on him. Had this ever been so good? She couldn't remember it being so heated, so all consuming with anyone. Unhinged with desire, he tongued her chest, freeing one hand to drift down her abdomen and teasingly ran a finger across the top of her panties. Punctuated with a snarl, he fisted the thin string around her hip and with a quick jerk, snapped it, pulling the fabric away from her. She squeaked, then bit her lip with a struggled with a moan, looking down at him blearily. His hand traced her hip bone, over her tattoo then slipped between her thighs. She rose up on her knees to give him better access, feeling him lightly tease her before dipping his fingers into her wetness.

He made a guttural sound into her breasts, raising his eyes to her. "You are absolutely soaked."

She put her hands in his hair, fisting, tilting his chin up. "Who fault is that?" she demanded. He slid two fingers inside of her and curled, making her gasp.

"It. is. all. my. fault." he canted his wrist rhythmically, reaching deeper into her, thumbing her clit, making her spasm. "This my fault too," he growled, his other hand sliding up to the nape of her neck, pulling her down. He bit her pulse point.

She shuttered, begging in small voice as she leaned his hand. "Don't stop," She reached up, placing her hands on the ceiling on the limo, pushing herself down, twisting on him.

"That is the sexiest fucking thing I have ever seen." His eyes drank her in, roaming over her bareness stretched out before him, helping him pleasure her.

Lust was coiling inside her low, he pumped his fingers into her skillfully. Her core was molten lava. His grey eyes stormed as he worked her body, watching her carnal reactions with rapt attention. She chased his rhythm and pressure to suit her with her hips, she was losing herself in the sensation, unable to think straight anymore.

"This feels how sin should." she moaned.

"This is proper transgression." he whispered.

"Pray for me."

The heat of her climax threatened to scorch her, burning up her nerves, eclipsing her ability to for coherent thought. Giving into the sensation, she abandoned any semblance of dignity, cursing his name, pressing into him desperately. His hand was coiled in her hair as she rode him, eyes locked on her, blazing.

"Come for me, baby." he commanded, his voice drenched in desire.

She surged, flying apart like firework. Her orgasm consumed her much sooner than she wanted, she cried with a gasp. Her head lolled back, tendrils of hair stuck to her face and neck. Her ass thumped back down on his knees, her own limbs trembling uncontrollably under her. He stroked down her chest and stomach as she recovered.

Her rest was only momentary. Regaining her breath, she rolled forward on her knees. Putting her mouth on his, she fumbled for his belt buckle, attempting to assert herself again. He his arms lay limply at his sides on the leather seats. He grinned salaciously, focusing on her actions intently but not interfering. She unzipped his trousers, doing the work of freeing him. She pulled his pants and boxers down enough that he sprung loose. He sucked in a breath as she wrapped her hand around his length, he was rock hard and twitching. He fished around in his crumpled pocket and pulled out a condom, ripping it open with his teeth and handing it to her. She rolled and stroked it on, then shimmied to position herself over him, working him into place, his tip crowning her entrance. She let him suffer for a few moment, rubbing herself on him. Frustrated sounds erupted from his throat. Watching him struggle, she sank down, lethally slow, taking him inside her with a hiss.

"Fuck." He thrust up to meet her, his arms curling around her back, hands over her shoulders, guiding her down. She felt him filling her up, the pain was delicious, stretching her walls, making her moan as she began rocking against him, taking him deeper and deeper. The cords stood out on his neck.

"Fuck." he spat again. "You are so tight, so wet. I can't..." he stuttered.

"Shhhhhhh, working," she leaned in and kissed him sweetly, fingers laid across his jaw as they started moving together. She swept her hips to and fro, steadily at first, as his mouth devoured hers. His flexes up gradually became faster and harder. She sat up, meeting his rhythm, her breasts bouncing as she fucked him. She ran her hands through her hair, pulling up and letting it fall around her shoulders and back as she undulated.

"Jesus Christ, Granger." he smoldered. "That's cheating."

"You would know." She writhed on him wantonly.

She felt his climax building, his movements becoming rapid and erratic, along with his breath. Bracing her hands on his chest, she squeezed him inside her as she spread her thighs wider so he could push into her deeper. A guttural sound came from deep in his throat and the dam broke. He came so hard he suppressed a bellow, digging his fingers into her, smashing her body into his. He shook and buried himself in her with a final drive. They collapsed back upon each other, panting, their bodies slick with sweat.

Hermione's arms wreathed around Draco's neck, she buried her head in the crook of his neck. In turn, he stroked circles on her back with both hands. His fingers dragged lightly on her skin, down her spine, up her shoulder blades, making her shiver. He was still inside her, the aftershocks from both of them still pulsing.

She finally sat up, surveying his face. "How was that for a closing act?" she smirked slightly.

"It was amazingly amazing," he smiled slyly, wrung out. He had slipped way down in the seat.

She slowly extracted herself from on top of him, swinging her leg over and landing with a plop beside him. He still had all his clothes on though in half-dressed disarray. Hermione was buck naked except for her sandals, her dress pooled in the floor along with her ruined underwear.

"Wow. I've never fucked anyone in a limo," was all she could come up with. He was suspiciously silent. She grabbed the water and glugged half of it down, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. Draco was pulling off the condom, wrapping it in tissue and handing her some from the box on his side in the console. She poured water on the wad and wiped herself down. He was cleaning himself off as well.

"This is colloquially known as a 'whore bath' in the South," she said matter of factly. She leaned forward to grab her dress off the floor, but Draco caught her arm and drug her back to him.

"Oh no, we are not done yet," he muttered. He shed his shirt completely, turned to her, pulling her prone, under him.

"What on earth are you doing?" She squirmed as he pressed his weight on her, maneuvering between her legs. He kissed her on the mouth hard and she opened to him. He was more demanding this time, bearing into her with channeled want. His skin was burning, he smelled of sweat and the salty air at the beach. He wasted no time, kissing down her body, licking her breasts, then descending across her stomach, swirling his tongue along the way.

"Leaving the sandals on is hot as fuck, by the way," he murmured, eyes flicking up to her.

She knew where he was going, she tingled in anticipation. He urged her legs wider, nipping her inner thighs, teasing closer and closer to her center. She squealed as he toyed with her, then without warning he dragged his tongue up and in her, his mouth falling on her clit. He sucked and flicked her, watching her face for clues. She pressed into him, moaning, her hands curling in his silver hair. Lost in the haze of the pleasure that enveloped her, she writhed. He sank his tongue in her canal, probing her with his mouth, then eating her like a ripe peach, slurping and licking.

"You fucking taste like salted caramel," he murmured, burying his face again.

It was so salacious and silly, she almost giggled as she started to come apart at the seams. Her legs were spasming involuntarily. His fingers entered her again, slowly, deliberately, urging her climax further on as his tongue laid into her sweet spot again. Her body snaked as he

feasted on her. Her there was a roaring in her ears, as she fought to hang on, prolonging the intense pleasure. He shifted the rhythm of his tongue, the position of his mouth and her struggle became futile. She burst with a cry, straining against him as he finished her off, while she fell apart around him, the air shimmering.

He kissed back up her body, rising up on his knees. He struggled to pull his pants all the way off, extracting another condom from them. He tore in open and rolled it on his length, looking at her with a lopsided grin, stroking himself lazily. It was so torridly sexy she thought she would faint.

“Ready for round two?”

“How are we counting rounds? I think this is three or four, if its orgasms.” she panted, drawing him closer.

He said nothing, lying on top of her gently, his forearms seated on either side of her head. He twisted his hands in her riot of hair, pushing into her with a sharp inhale. Thrusting deeper, he closed his eyes, savoring her feel, his breathing tremulous. His movements were practiced, languid and sensual. She dragged her nails along his back, she whimpered, wanting him to fuck her harder, begging in whispers to him. Moving rhythmically in time with him, she could not get close enough to him. His skin was hot as a stove.

“Your pussy is divine.” he murmured in her ear, before covering her mouth with his, sheathing himself in her all the way. “So tight.”

She hissed, leveraging herself and locking her legs around his hips. He groaned withdrawing from her almost completely and plunging back in. He reached to pull her up more, his strokes growing in urgency, she cried out at the stretch and depth, clinging to him as he fucked her mercilessly. It felt so good she was high, her swollen center pulsed as his thrusts connected with her. She squeezed her walls around him, his rhythm becoming uneven. Her immense satisfaction over his reactions to her drove her ecstasy further. She wrapped herself around him tighter and biting him hard where his shoulder met his neck. He rutted into her, grunting, his face hard with concentration. He seized with a sharp, strangled cry. He let go, shuttering violently, spilling into her. He gasped and lowered himself down, lying on her as he panted.

“I don’t ever...want to fuck...anyone else,” he declared between breaths. “This is it...I can die happy now.”

“I thought happiness was for pharmaceutical companies.” she stroked his hair, his cheek laid between her breasts.

“Yes, that and me right after getting off with you.” he amended. They were still and, silent for a while, just breathing. She had no desire to move, to return to reality.

“Sir, we are approximately 10 minutes out.” the driver spoke through the tinny intercom, it then clicked back off.

Draco raised himself up scrubbing his hand up and down his face. He eased himself out of her and sat, pulling his clothes together, handing her dress to her. He grimaced at her torn underwear. "I think these are ruined. I got carried away."

"Might as well trash them," she sighed. They cleaned up with more tissue and dressed silently in awkwardly squat space. Draco pocketed her undies, looking at her boldly with a shit eating grin. "Such a deviant," she scolded.

He shrugged pulling her to him again. He cupped her face in his hand and gave her a longing, luxurious kiss. "I want to see you again. I don't care how or when."

She shrugged noncommittally, moving away from him. "You have my number." She put her hair back up in a ponytail and checked her face in her phone. She was mildly sweaty with high color in her brown cheeks.

"You look lovely," he assured her.

"Just making sure there was no spooze in my hair or something," she deadpanned.

"Ugh, you are so needlessly crass." Draco threw his hands up in mock disgust. She laughed at him.

The limo was navigating the convoluted streets of downtown Denver. The streets were alive with people on a nice fall day. Hermione stared out the window, blissed out, wondering about their random lives. Wondering about what the fuck she just did.

Soon enough, the limo pulled under the porte-cochère of the Four Seasons. Draco drew her in, kissing her fervently, not wanting to let her go. Her murmured to her about how sexy she was and how much he wanted her. She let him go on, enjoying the surreal praise.

"I have to go, I have obligations, and *you*...you stay in the car," she carefully extracted herself and got out with caution, as to not flash the staff. She leaned in, looking at him. "I had a wonderful time with you. I truly mean it, Draco. That was so unbelievably hot, I will never forget it."

He caught her hand. "This is not goodbye, as much as you want it to sound that way. You will crave me now, like an addiction," he winked, letting her go. "I'll be in touch," he half smiled, turning away.

She took her bag, disappearing into the lobby of the hotel, not daring to look back.

Chapter End Notes

CW

Limo sex

Spontaneous sex

Chapter 7: Fraternization

Chapter Summary

Harry and Ron are stressed out. Neville is suspicious. Hermione's resolve continues to crumble and she agrees to meet Draco for a meal after work.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The hotel was beautiful, Asian inspired, minimalist design. It was clean and elegant with earthy stone, marble and teak. The Potter campaign had definitely gone up in the world. She should have headed straight to the rehearsal ballroom like she intended, but she couldn't possibly now. She lacked undies and surely smelled like a brothel. Security was everywhere, making her additionally self conscious. She checked in, cleared with the Secret Service, got a badge, and was directed to the floor Harry's team occupied. Agents were on every door, elevator and stairwell. She still had not gotten used to the additional watchdogs, finding it tad unnerving. Even more so, after her extracurricular activities with Malfoy. She smiled to herself, she couldn't bring herself to regret it. Not yet, anyway.

She attempted to summon some hardcoded southern shame how she had just behaved. She had completely abandoned her insecurities and hangups, along with her chaste upbringing and common sense. One did not have sex in limos with (mostly) strangers you met on a plane, like a groupie from the 80s. One did not have sex unless you were married. One certainly didn't enjoy it or at least tell anyone you did. Poppycock, she giggled to herself, feeling slightly insane.

And granted, it was a vanilla encounter for the most part, but she recognized her willingness to go further with him. *Wanting* to go further with him.

In her room, she quickly showered and changed, continuing to ponder. Maybe, it was easy to abandoned her self-consciousness because there was no future for them in her mind. He, on the other hand, seemed to know exactly what he wanted and had no problem asking for it. His confidence melted her.

Dressed in her campaign uniform of slacks and a blouse, she put her hair into a messy bun and did some light makeup. She wondered what he was doing now, immediately reproaching herself. She needed focus on the job at hand and get him out of her brain. What had he said, she would crave him now? This debate was crucial for Harry, why had she allowed herself to get sidetracked by an ill-advised dalliance with the opposing force. A flicker of memory seeped it's way in, Malfoy's lips dragging down her neck and she shivered.

God, you are stupid.

The ballroom's was blocked out to mirror the debate stage set as closely as possible, lights, cameras, moderator and candidate seats, audience etc. There were no podiums, it being a town hall format. Harry was gesticulating wildly upstage, arguing at the first row of his advisors and consultants in the chairs in front of him. She wondered what she had walked in on. Tom Riddle's stand in, a hired gun by the name of Brett, was on his assigned stool, waiting patiently. She slid into the second row where Neville and a few others were sitting.

"Welcome back," he whispered. "Harry is unhappy."

"Dare I ask?"

"He feels the audience questions are soft, that he is being left open for curveballs."

"He's probably right," she silenced her phone, dropping her bag the floor

Ron and another advisor, Terry, as well as Harry's VP candidate, Kelly, were arguing back and forth with Harry, who was now grabbing his forehead and getting his teeth.

"Good to be home." she remarked dryly.

"How was Atlanta?" he leaned in closer, so as not to distract the proceedings.

"Depressing."

"How was Malfoy?" he grinned.

"Hotly depressing." she joked.

Within half hour of her arrival, Ron called for a short break to relieve tension so everyone could regroup.

Harry came straight to her, Ron in tow, she stood to meet them. "Glad you finally made it. I heard you danced with the devil."

"Word travels fast. I assume you are referring to Mr. Malfoy?" hoping she was not going scarlet, noting the subtle jab for not being present earlier.

"Yes, Ron mentioned you sat next him on the flight out. How did that happen?"

"Some sort of error in seating in first class. A couple only had one seat booked and didn't want to be separated so we switched. My seat mate turned out to be Malfoy."

"What are the odds?" He was incredulous. "Any useful intel? I am assuming you chatted with the smug bastard."

"Not much that's specific. He was pleasant, but not forthcoming. He did talk about Tom having your number by baiting you, but we knew that. We talked about Barny mostly. Oh, and he lectured me on the gullibility and inherent stupidity of the masses. The game is rigged and both sides are the same." she shrugged.

Also, I fucked him within an inch his life in his limo, Harry.

She bit her lip, stifling a snort. Neville and Ron both shot her a suspicious look.

“Brief the team on it, we might garner more insight discussing it.”

“I’ll make some notes and find time.” she nodded.

He smiled and excused himself. Everyone was gone, taking a bathroom break. Except for Neville. Neville was assessing her, knowing her too well. He narrowed his eyes. “What actually happened?”

“We drank a lot. We talked a lot. He flirted *a lot*. But nothing of consequence, really. He used the word poppycock in a serious manner.” Lying to him came easier than expected.

Neville stifled a laugh. “I’m seething with jealousy. He is such smoke show. Any chance he’s at least partially on my side?”

“He’s definitely into girls. I guess he could be bi, or something like that? He says everyone hits on him, he didn’t seem put off by it.”

“Him being queer would be massively ironic. Draco Malfoy, power bottom.” he cackled.

“Pretty sure he’s a top,” she teased, stifling a shudder.

Neville groaned and eyed her again but said nothing.

The afternoon gave way to evening and rehearsals dragged on. Hermione briefed the team on her discussions with Malfoy. She was as honest as she could be without giving herself away. The majority opinion was they could capitalize Riddle’s underestimation of Harry, if Harry could stay on message and not be goaded by him. They gamed stronger and differing vectors to talking points, as wells toughing the audience lead questions.

Hermione’s mind kept involuntarily slipping back to the limo and Draco. Her stomach tingled replaying moments in her head, snatches of his touch, his voice, his mouth on her. Her heart fluttered with the thought of him sliding inside her. She would shake herself, refocusing, but the memories kept attacking her, ruining her normally ironclad focus. She chewed her thumbnail, pressing her legs together to relieve the pressure and ache.

What the fuck was wrong with her? It was like he had cursed her.

She purposefully did not check her phone, unsure if she would be happy or dismayed if he had not texted her. Her curiosity was outweighed by the uncertainty of her reaction, preferring the Schrodinger’s Cat status of not knowing definitively. Dinner came, burgers from the hotel. The team took break eat and watch the spin shows on the large screen.

Alarmingly, there he was on CNN immediately, as soon as they flipped to the channel. She almost fell out of her chair. He wore a navy blazer, a grey button down, a tiny American flag pin on his lapel. He smiled easily, filling the screen as he talked, the ticker running under him. The out of body experience was threatening to swallow her whole. She couldn’t hear

him, which probably was for the best. She fought the urge to message him first and ask him why he had the audacity to be on her television. The team turned him up, booing and discussing what he said derisively, while she worked hard to school her reactions. They teased her mercilessly for not finding a way to subtly murder him. She scolded herself for being taken off guard. She knew this was what he did, as surely she realized he would be on the circuit surrounding the debate. Their own people were on other outlets, making the rounds, it shouldn't be a surprise. But for him to be right there, in her face, very first thing, was something she wasn't prepared for. She already had compartmentalized him. There was now pre-Malfoy and post-Malfoy, the hated public entity and the one she knew now personally. Very personally. She had yet to rectify that dissonance as one in the same in her head.

Mentally, she knew was spending too much time on this, on him. It was affecting her work already. She was keeping things from the team, lying to Neville, her best friend. She should block his number and put him away. Distancing herself was key, stop thinking of him in present terms, and file their encounter away as a poignant memory of the past. She promptly self-sabotaged, wondering if he had reached out yet.

Christ. You are in serious, serious trouble.

The session wore on for a few more hours, focusing on Harry's delivery and polish. He practiced his closing statement a few times. Around 10 pm they decided to call it and let Harry rest up and do his own mental prep for tomorrow. Hermione was relieved, sessions had regularly been going until one or two am surrounding a debate on Harry's insistence. He had been convinced by Neville that being tired was a detriment to his performance, his ability to think on his feet and not be easily irritated. Some of the team wanted to go to the bar and blow off steam, but she begged off, blaming her flight and fatigue. She couldn't trust herself being drunk around her colleagues so fresh off her experience with Draco, including Neville. *Especially* Neville.

He put his hand on her forehead "Are you feeling ok, you never pass up a drink?"

"I am just worn out for some reason. I dunno. Time change maybe, drinking on the plane." Which was partially true, but she definitely knew the real reason she was worn out.

He looked at her skeptically. "Fine...*I guess*," he pouted.

"I'll make it up to you tomorrow night, promise."

She made her way back to her room and collapsed on the bed, staring at the ceiling. She debated PJs and a sleeping pill. There was a gym to run off her frustration, but she really was tired. She could masturbate but it felt a cheap substitute after what she had engaged in earlier with Draco. A glass of wine would be nice but room service was hassle and she had already waved off the trip to the bar.

She eyed her bag on the floor. What she wanted to do more than anything was check her phone. She had to check it sooner or later, regardless, she told herself. The only reason she hadn't yet is the people she needed to communicate had been in the room with her, she didn't want or need other distractions. She gave in, dug her purse up and fished out her device.

Nothing from Draco. She considered her thoughts carefully. Yes, she was disappointed, chalking that up to being natural after getting expertly railed by someone she found extremely attractive in their fancy limousine. Maybe it was for the best, however.

Of course it's for the best. Are you insane?

Sighing heavily, she unmuted it. Unpacking her suitcase, digging out her pajamas and doing her skincare routine were welcome distractions. Rote tasks always helped her process things weighing on her. She stacked her list of things to do in her brain, but she failed to avoid thinking about him. She shouldn't expect him to message her right away. He was clearly working earlier, he might still be working. Then again, maybe he too realized extending their relationship was a bad idea, but he hadn't felt like someone who second-guessed himself. Maybe he was waiting to be back in DC?

Goddammit. She felt like an insecure teenager again and it pissed her off. She scrubbed her face and noted the bathroom had a giant stand alone tub, maybe she could drown herself in it.

Her phone buzzed on the bed in the other room and she froze.

It's Neville, it's chat, it's Ron it's anyone but Malfoy, stop being such a ninny. Don't get your hopes up, or down, or whatever you are doing, you are so fucking messy.

Regarding herself in the mirror, she finished washing her face and putting on moisturizer and serum. The phone buzzed again and her heart leapt. It was *him*, she was sure of it. How she knew was a mystery even to her, but it was him.

Half skipping out of the bathroom and snatched up her phone, throwing herself on the bed, stomach down, feet in the air. She was 13 again. The Face ID did its thing, she popped up messages.

It was indeed Draco. She felt warmth unfurl in her chest.

'Meet me here in an hour if you can, I will buy you breakfast'

There was a link to a diner, Pete's Kitchen. She wasn't hungry and she'd have to get out without anyone seeing her.

'Knew it was you' she replied.

She stared at the cycling ellipsis that she waited on with bated breath.

'Was there ever any question?'

'I saw you on TV. My team booed you'

'As expected'

'You looked so smug'

'Yes, but did I look good?'

She giggled, letting him sit on read for minute

'I dunno if I am hungry. I'm getting ready for bed'

'I can come to you'

'Absolutely not. This place is a minefield. You are too recognizable' she typed rapidly.

'I'll send a car. You come here'

Chewing on her thumbnail again, she considered. She already knew she was going to meet him, she was delaying the inevitable. The question was where and when. His hotel felt as risky as hers. A diner felt weird and public, but charming. They could meet at a third hotel but that seemed silly. She mulled more, going in circles.

'Why a diner?'

'We can talk. I'm starving. I want a green chile breakfast burrito'

'A what? You are very strange, Malfoy'

'You have no idea, Granger'

'OK'

'Excellent, see you in an hour. I'd send a car but I assume you wish to be more clandestine'

'Ya. Uber. See you soon'

Once again, she had completely folded, like a card table. With little to no provocation or coercion. What was it about him that made her such a jellyfish? She was hopeless. She quit beating herself up, turning her mind to the task at hand. What to wear, she pondered? Going with comfort and minimal fuss is where she landed. She left her face bare, she pulled on black leggings, plain cotton undies, sports bra, a tank top and her gold Vanderbilt hoodie. She braided her hair into pigtails and put on her big owlsh glasses, as she had already removed her contacts.

What you see is what you get, buddy

She slipped on trainers and grabbed her bag. She took the elevator down, grateful security didn't bother her. She rushed through the lobby with her hood up and out the doors to the entrance overhang. The Uber arrived in a matter of minutes once she requested.

Her driver was chatty. She didn't mind. He was from Senegal and loved Denver. He chattered about the history of Colfax Avenue all the way to the diner, which he also loved. He recommended several things including the green chile burrito which she was already afraid to ask more about. They pulled up to the neon clad restaurant, she got out, thanking her driver. It was on the corner of a brick building that was at least 100 years old with a weird lean-to

extension stuck to it. A loose knot of people stood outside chatting, some vaping. There was the intense smell of weed in the air. She wondered if Draco was inside already. Debating turning around and going right back to the hotel like she should, instead mustering her courage and stepped through the glass door.

Chapter End Notes

Pete's Diner is a Denver institution. Highly recommend if you ever visit. Best greasy spoon breakfast.

Chapter 8: Breakfast for Dinner

Chapter Summary

Green chile, consternation, and fun at Draco's hotel.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The place was packed, a true greasy spoon with an open kitchen counter and stools, worn booth seating and walls covered in framed pictures and yellowed articles. She stood inside the entrance tentatively, spying him in a center table facing the door. He was in a white v-neck tee, black peacoat and baseball cap. The blue hat said “Duke” in cursive. He smiled elatedly, standing up to greet her. He was effortlessly handsome.

“Apparently, it’s college night.” He swept her into his arms and kissed her on the cheek, already handling her with an air of easy familiarity.

“Are you in disguise?” she sidled into the booth, while he shoved in next her.

“Low profile,” he nodded. “You look like you are still a freshman.”

She blushed. “I was literally almost in bed when you texted.”

“Apologies, I had a lot of appearances lined up. I messaged as soon as I was done.”

“I couldn’t decide if I wanted you to or not until you did, then I was glad you did.” she admitted.

“I could not get you out of my head today, it was so distracting. I zoned out during one engagement like rookie. You have completely corrupted me.”

“Neville is on to me. He doesn’t exactly know what is up, but he caught that I was distracted today.”

“Longbottom, huh? Does our entire class work for Harry except for me?” He put his hand on her leg under the booth.

“Just me, Ron and Neville. Cho did for a while but she went to the Green Party. We weren’t progressive enough for her. Oh and Ginny. Harry married Ginny, but she’s a year behind us.” She grabbed a menu and started browsing it. “What the hell is green chile anyway?”

“It’s a Colorado specialty, kind of a Mexican gravy topping. I have been told to come here and eat it, so here I am. Ginny, Weaselbee’s little sister?”

“It sounds disgusting. Yes, his baby sister, and stop calling him Weaselbee, seriously. I *was* married to him at one point.”

He shrugged. “Unbelievable.” She wasn’t sure if he was replying to both statements.

True to his word, Draco ordered a breakfast burrito with Colorado green chile. Hermione decided on some french toast.

“How was the remainder of your day?” he asked conversationally. She half expect him to tack on a ‘dear’ to his question.

“Well, aside from being driven to distraction over our sexual escapades, it was fine. I’m really tired. I probably should have stayed in, but I am stupid.”

He squeezed her thigh gently. “I am glad you came out. We are both a little stupid for each other, I think. I was ready to scale your hotel like Spiderman and swing into your window.”

“I don’t think the Secret Service would appreciate that. Honestly, I wrestled with what I would do if you messaged again.” she played with her silverware, avoiding his gaze.

“You knew I would message you. I know you think this is a bad idea, and I can see why, but I am glad you are giving us a chance.”

“Draco, don’t misunderstand, there is no us. This is a fling. You know that as well as I do.”

“Sure,” he raised his hands in surrender, “I wasn’t asking you to marry me.”

Her brain glitched. “UGH, you are married already.” She dropped her head down onto the table surface. “Oh, godddddd, you are *married*. I blocked it out, I forgot.”

“I promise you, we really are legally separated.”

“You’re married with kids, and a famous conservative fiend. I’m sneaking around like a criminal to see you, when I know better. What is happening to me right now? I’m stupid *AND* a masochist. And a traitor,” she lightly banged her head on the table, rattling the bottles and cutlery. She sat back up looking at him with a scowl. People close to them in the diner glanced over at her with strange looks.

“While I appreciate your martyrdom, I believe you are overthinking it. This is not complicated, we like each other, we have chemistry, we are hanging out, having food, maybe we will get naked after. We are not selling secrets,” he smiled devilishly.

“It’s not that simple and you know it.”

“I don’t, it’s as simple as you want to make it.”

The harried waitress set the food down in front of them, rushing off with a quick smile. Hermione picked at hers while Draco began shoveling his meal into his face.

“I’m starving,” he half apologized. “This is delicious,” he said with his mouth full. He swallowed and wiped his mouth. “Gah, rude, you are rubbing off on me.”

She eyed his burrito dubiously. I was huge and covered with a chunky, greenish-brown sauce. “Delicious, huh?” It looked like snot to her. He kept munching away, happily. She finally nibbled her French toast and realized it was really tasty and began eating in earnest. She offered him a piece and fed it to him when he opened his mouth.

“Better than the gouda?” she giggled.

He nodded enthusiastically. “You want some of mine?” he gestured at the plate that he had almost cleaned.

“That’s ok,” she stuffed more french toast in her mouth. She ate about half before she was full, Draco finishing the rest then ordered a cinnamon roll for desert. She marveled at how much food he put away.

He finished up and put an arm around her. “So, are you coming home with me?”

“I shouldn’t.”

“No one will recognize you. It will be fine. Security doesn’t care, believe me, and even if they did I would pay them off.” he reasoned.

“It’s not just that, tomorrow is a huge day. If I shack with you, we will be up all night. I will be out of it tomorrow.”

“Put a timer on us. I will send you back without argument when time is up.”

“Draco, get real, it’s almost midnight now.”

“What’s your schedule tomorrow? Tom’s is fairly light according to Dad. “

“Breakfast at 9 or 10, I think, and into more prep. I don’t remember when we have to be at the venue but that will be a whole circus in and of itself.”

“So 3 am? Can you work with five or six hours of sleep? Think of what we managed in less than an hour in the limo. And you should see my room. It’s really nice if I do say so myself. It has a piano, for fuck’s sake.”

“I always wanted to shag on a piano.” she joked. “Ever since I saw Pretty Woman.”

“I can arrange that,” he pulled her close to him and kissed her temple. “Come on, you know you want to. You didn’t meet me just to eat french toast.” He waggled his eyebrows at her.

15 minutes later, they were in an Uber, headed to his hotel. Security, as predicted was heavy but no hassle. She even though she caught a couple of knowing looks at Draco as they went through the checks, which made her feel weird. She knew he was a player, but being looked upon as flavor of the month (week? day?) was disconcerting. Draco didn’t strike her as someone who denied himself pleasure when he desired it.

The hotel was spectacular. It was triangular, all architectural brick with green awnings on street level, it sat on the corner of two major thoroughfares converging. The atrium inside was astonishing. The center was open air all the way to the top of the building, where a stained glass skylight covered the whole of the ceiling. The center had a large sunken seating area with period furniture, the walls clad in mahogany and marble with brass accents.

“Wow, wow, wow.” Hermione marveled, looking up as she walked, turning around. Golden marble columns joined by arches surrounded the atrium area. Intricately scroll railing wrapped around the edge of each floor concentrically.

“It’s not bad, right?” Draco remarked as he lead her to the elevators. Secret Service was everywhere. They rode to the 8th floor, she couldn’t help but hang over the walkway balustrade, looking down into the hotel atrium.

“You are like a little kid, your eyes are huge. It’s completely charming. Makes me want to take you to Paris” He braced his hands on either side of her. “A number of presidents have stayed here apparently. Some of the suites are named after them.”

“My huge eyes just might be my hoot owl glasses.” Her eyes continued to sweep over all the details of the hotel, smiling. “It’s definitely not the Red Roof Inn. And I have been to Paris.”

"Not with me," he remarked boastfully.

Feeling happy in the moment, she turned to him expectantly, “Amazingly amazing!” she declared. He snatched her up and kissed her deeply, her knees almost giving way. He dipped her down, arching her back, his arms wrapped around her. She started to push him away, putting her hands on his shoulders, she instead slid her arms around his neck, kissing him back.

Her stomach was in free fall again. Draco broke from her, pulling her along by the hand, walking backwards so he could face her. His eyes were soft, but his smile predatory. The anticipation of what was about to happen with him was overwhelming her senses, she shivered. She ached to be as close to him as possible as soon as possible.

His room was an actual suite. The vestibule had a black and white checkered board floor making her briefly wonder what chess piece she might be in this game. The large living room of the suite lay beyond the entrance. Draco led he to the middle of the room. He kissed her gently.

"Do you need anything before we get started?"

She shook her head, putting her bag down.

“I want to ask you to do some things for me.” he murmured in her ear. “Are you ok with that?”

Her heart skittered, she nodded timidly. "I think so."

“Good. That’s good. Stay here.” He stroked down both of her arms with his hands, then he went and turned a leather club chair to face her. Sitting down in a relaxed slouch, his arms draped on the armrests. He made no moves, and said nothing. He just took her in, looking mischievous.

Her eyes darted around the room, she was trying not to fidget. It was appointed tastefully with classic Georgian Colonial furnishings and details. She spied the piano at the other end of the area. A dining room with a large table lay at one end and the bedroom on the other. There was even a fireplace.

“Take your hair down please.” His request was business-like.

She obliged, pulling out the bands and unbraiding her hair on both sides. She did it slowly, deliberately, meeting his gaze as she worked. Running her fingers through her locks, it fell in waves down her shoulders. When she was done, she stood, waiting for his next request.

“Remove your shoes and socks.”

Hermione used her opposite foot to pull off each shoe by the heel. She wasn’t wearing socks. She laced her fingers in front of her, becoming still again, demure.

“You can take off your glasses if you would like. I understand if you need to see me.”

She nodded leaving them in place for the time being. “I want to see you.”

“Lose the hoodie, then,” his voice was gruffer this time.

She stretched the neck to accommodate her glasses, pulling it over her head. She threw it on the blue divan off to the side, behind her. It had a pattern of little gold fleur-de-lis on it. She made a note to have sex on it later. Clad only in her leggings and black tank, she waited for another command. He shifted forward in his seat, resting his elbows on his knees, not speaking as his eyes roamed over her body. He was still full clothed to include his hat and coat. He looking like a fucking Abercrombie ad.

“Pull those leggings off, if you would.” His eyes were blazing.

She carefully ran her fingers over the waistband and slid them down, avoiding taking her undies with them. She bent over rolling them down to her ankles and stepped out them, kicking them aside. Standing straight, she laced her fingers together again. She tilted her head forward letting her hair partially curtain her face.

“Now the tank top.” he swallowed after she said it. He moved his hand to lay over his mouth and jaw, rubbing it back and forth, contemplating. He observed her intently.

She pulled the top up over her head and flung it away. Now, only clad in a pair of sensible white underwear, a no nonsense white sport bra, and her glasses, she fought not to cover herself. She joined her hands again.

“No. Let me see you. Arms at your sides, please.”

She dropped them down. His expression was indecipherable. She thought it looked a mixture of lust, wonder and pain all at once. She swayed nervously.

“Don’t be self-conscious. You are beautiful,” he offered.

She stilled herself.

“Will you show me the rest of your body?” he murmured.

She willingly pulled off her sport bra, teasing him by draping her hair over her breasts. She let him take her in for a few moments, then she removed her underwear. She put her glasses on the coffee table, stepping back into place. She stood before him complete bare, staring at him boldly.

“Bring me to you. Convince me.”

She thought for a minute, racking her brain. She hated being put on the spot and acting sexy made her feel ridiculous. She recalled some spicy French film she saw a million years ago with Eva Greene. Licking two of her fingers slowly, making a light sucking sound, crossed her ankles together, praying she wouldn’t fall over, then dragged her fingers slowly from her pubic bone, up her stomach, between her breasts, then tilted her head back as she pulled them over her throat and back to her mouth. She tipped her head forward putting the her fingertips in her mouth, hanging seductively off her lips. Turning her hips back and fourth, shimmying, she eyed him as wantonly as possible. She topped it off with a soft moan, dipping her head further to look up through her lashes and a hair with her best ‘come hither’ look.

Draco was up from his seat like a shot, tossing his hat and pulling off his coat in a couple of fluid motions. In a few ground eating strides, he was in front of her. Grabbing her face, he crushed his mouth on hers, then reached down, lifting her up by her hips.

"You look like a pre-Raphaelite goddess," he breathed.

He walked her back to the wall behind them. She circled her arms around his neck, twining her hands in his hair. He kissed her savagely as her shoulders hit the wallpapered surface with a thump. She heard his belt jingle, then his zipper sounded. Her core ached, she locked her legs around his hips just as he drove into her. A sharp hiss escaped his mouth as he thrust up. She let out a guttural sound. His mouth was on her neck, biting as he flexed his hips rhythmically, pushing himself deeper. She clung to him, her face buried in his shoulder as he ravaged her, lost in his single-mindedness. He still tasted like cinnamon bun. He cted as if he was starving, he who could have anyone, but he only wanted her. She was drowning in his intensity.

He pushed her legs higher to sink in further as his speed increased. He was breathing hard whispering to her. “You are so fucking sublime. I can’t get enough of you” he panted. “I can’t hang on, I can't control myself.” He moved with a feral desperation. She sunk her nails into his back. He jerked, suddenly pulling out, letting her go, He cursed. “Fuck, condom. This is what you do to me.” He let her down and fumbled in his pants, pulling one out and ripping it open. She mourned the jarring loss of his heat.

“It’s fine, I’m on the pill, I forgot too.” She slipped away from him, standing in front of the divan, tossing her discarded hoodie off it. “Let’s do it on the divan.” Hermione pulled on him. He stopped mid-roll, looking over at it then back at her, eyebrows up.

“You’re the boss.” He finishing putting on the rubber.

Sitting down, she pushed her self back and spread her legs for him, smiling suggestively. Draco groaned, shedding his clothes as quickly as humanly possible. He was so beautiful, she wanted her hands on him immediately. He crawled on top of her, aligned himself and sunk back in her, meeting her gaze. The masculine growling sound he made sent charges rolling through her body. He after a few strokes, he withdrew again and stood, straddling the divan, looking dissatisfied.

“What do you need?” she raised eyebrow at him, beckoning him back to her.

He held up his pointer finger, like he had an idea. Lifting her at the waist, turned her over onto her hands and knees.

"What about this?" he rasped. She backed into him in consent.

He encircled her hips, entering her slowly from behind. She gasped he filled her. He moved in her languidly, pulling almost all the way out then gradually burying himself in her again and again. She pressed back into him, wanting him further, fuller in her.

Raising herself up, she leaned her back to his chest, reaching her hand behind his neck. He placed his palm on her throat, his other hand splayed on her stomach.

“You are exquisite.” he moaned in her ear as he moved in her. His hand slipped down and caught her center, fingering it with lazy, teasing circles. His other moved from her throat to her breasts cupping and pinching. Her head fell back on his chest and she whimpered for him to move faster, harder. She was going to self-immolate if he didn’t. His touch was so deft, he set her body on fire, as she wound tighter and tighter. She lost her breath his pace increased. He ran his tongue down her neck and shoulder, sparking her with his fingers, flexing in and out of her. The pace became so blistering, she couldn’t hold back any longer. She was floating above her own body as the room shimmered and fell. She let out a long throaty cry as she climaxed. Her knees almost gave way, as he held her like ragdoll, stroking into her, tensing as he grew closer to his own breaking point.

“Fuck, FUCK!” he uttered ruthlessly. He was caught in a massive shutter, crying out from deep in his chest as he gripped her body into his as he slumped back.

“Holy shit, Malfoy,” she panted, laying on him limply. Her legs were twitching under her. His forehead was on her shoulder as he labored to catch his own breath.

He wrapped his arms around her, kissing her neck, cheek and temple. “That was a goddamned religious experience.” he laughed, squeezing he tighter.

All Hermione could do is heave. She she felt completely scrambled. Her was orgasm decaying her, melting her away like a lit candle. She pitched forward, peeling herself off

Draco, flopping over on her back. He was still on one knee, hunched over with the other foot on the floor.

“I’m ruining the divan with all my fluids.” She looked at the ceiling, the ornate crown molding drawing her eye.

“I’m sure its not the first time this thing has seen action.” he said between breaths, shaking his head.

“So. How’d I do?” She popped her head up to look at him.

“What are you talking about?” he raised his gaze to hers, cocking an eyebrow.

“Your ‘convince me’ kink. That’s clearly not the first time you have done that. How do I rate?”

He rubbed a hand, fingers spread on his sweat slicked chest and looked at her with mussed hair. “I have never crossed room to get to someone so fast in my life.”

She decided he was the sexiest man she had ever encountered.

Draco staggered to standing, holding his hand out to her. She took it and let him pull her to her feet. He led her through the suite, her into bedroom then the enormous bathroom, clad in gold marble. There was a giant soaking tub and an extravagant frameless shower. Reaching in, he turned the handle, water erupting from three shower heads. When the temperature met his satisfaction, he stepped in taking her in with him. She closed her eyes as the hot water ran down her body, putting her head back. Draco took her face in his hands and kissed her slowly, pressing his body against hers.

“You are amazing.” he sighed.

“Just amazing?” she asked demurely.

“Amazingly amazing.”

Draco bathed her head to toe with care, taking his time. He gently soaped her in sections, turning her around to rinse her off. He kissed her, murmuring praise to her as he touched her. He washed her hair then backed her to the wall, pulling her leg up, entering her slowly, kissing her, while the water flowed, steam curling around them. She climbed up on him, giving him better purchase without having to stoop. One arm banded around her waist, his other hand braced on the shower wall, he moved slowly, tenderly. Coming again, almost quietly, he set her down with an exhale.

“My turn.” She lathered soap in her hands, running her fingers across every surface of his lean body. She ran shampoo through his silver blond hair. She luxuriated over his arms and legs, his torso and back, then came to his privates. She turned her attention to gently washing him, then dropped to a knee, taking him in her mouth, surprising him completely. He made a sharp inhale, starting to harden immediately. She ran her tongue along his length and worked him with her hand as he grew and twitched. She marveled at how much she was enjoying

herself, she normally hated giving blow jobs. She thought wildly, she might do anything for him, if he asked. His back was braced against the marble, his hands fisted in her hair as she sucked him back in, moving in rhythmically in earnest.

“Womannnnnnn.” He groaned. “You are shameless.” He enjoyed her attentions, letting her lavish him with her mouth. away from her, picked her up and carried her from the bathroom, leaving the shower running. He tossed her down on the four-poster bed, crawling on to her, burying his head between her legs. He overwhelmed her with his tongue, fastening his mouth to her. She writhed as he brought her to a quick, searing climax, then sheathed himself her again with a grunt. He hung over her, his eyes locked on her face as he fucked her, watching her expressions change. Hermione wrapped her limbs around his body, pulling herself off the mattress, clinging to him. He smelled like soap and that mildly salty smell that was undeniable him. She tightened on him inside her as they moved together, relishing his feel.

My god, my god.” he hissed. He flipped them over, putting her on top, still seated in her. “Finish me off, for the love of god, Granger. Finish me,” he begged. She slid on his hips, back and forth, her hands planted on his sternum. He put his hands lightly on her ass, watching her with such fearsome want in his eyes. She couldn’t recall any man looking at her like that during sex or otherwise. They rocked together until he reached for her, gripping her to his chest. He finally let himself go, spasming with a moan. His arms flopped out this side. She fell off to the left him, laying her head on his chest. Her eyes closed, she listened to his breathing and drifted off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

CW:

more smut

Hotel room sex in various places

Light dom/command behavior

unprotected sex

Chapter 9: Confessional

Chapter Summary

Neville busts Hermione. She confesses.

When she woke, she was initially disoriented. She wasn't sure of the time or even where she was. She was on her side with Draco curled around her. All the lights were on and the shower was still running in the bathroom. Trying to wriggle herself free of him, he made a sound of protest and tightened his hold on her. He buried his face in her hair.

"Draco! Stop. I have to get up. I have to go." She sat up, scootching off the high profile bed.

"What time is it?" He squinted groggily at his barren wrist. He had taken off his watch.

"Bah."

"I have no idea but we fell asleep. Shit!" She stomped into the main room.

"Don't panic, love. It's still dark outside" he called after her.

"Shit!" she repeated. Where were all her clothes? What the hell was she doing? "You are the devil, Draco Malfoy!"

"I've been called worse, believe me," he replied. She heard him walking, then the shower cut off. He emerged from the bedroom in a hotel bathrobe. He picked his watch up off the coffee table as Hermione hopped around on one leg trying to put on her leggings.

"It's 4:30 am, I can get a car for you, you'll be back at your room before five."

"No, I will get an Uber, anything else will be conspicuous. She wiggled her pants the rest of the way up. Searching around for where her bra and tank top went, wrangling her mass of hair that had curled up as it dried. Her blowout was ruined. Now it was a partial rats nest she knotted into serviceable bun. "This is a disaster, exactly what I was trying to avoid."

"Hermione, it's fine. You have time. We only slept for a couple of hours," he placated her.

"I wanted to be gone a couple of hours ago. Today is one of the most critical points in Harry's campaign and I am acting like a feckless whore. Oh my god, where is my tank top!?" She rushed around the furniture, looking for her discarded clothes.

"Feckless whore? That's both harsh and untrue. And I didn't pay for anything? I mean breakfast, but I hardly think that qualifies as compensation," his voice filled with amusement.

“Quiet, you. This is all your fault.” She found the top and pulled it on, then snatched up her hoodie. “You are a distraction I can’t afford.” She grabbed her glasses and bag, then worked her feet into her trainers. She stopped and looked at him with an exasperated sigh, slumping as an apology. “I have to go.”

“I know,” he came closer pulling him against her, kissing her on the top of the head. “I know it’s a big day. It’s not some plot, I wasn’t trying to screw things up for you.”

She leaned into him, he smelled clean and salty, the robe like fresh laundry. “I didn’t think that, I *don’t* think that...I just have to go.” She tried to pull away.

He held her fast, tilting up her chin. “Hey, I want to see you again. Tonight.”

She looked up him, he was smiling, crinkling the skin by his eyes. His temples were greying, it was almost imperceptible due to his hair color, but she could see it now.

“I can’t promise anything. There’s a rally mixer thing after I need attend, I can’t ditch out on my team again. If it goes well it will be late. If not, there will be a lot of review and analysis, I mean there will be anyway, but you know how it is.”

“Come late, I don’t care. Just come,” he cupped her jaw in his hand. “When are you going home?”

“Tomorrow morning. Now I *have* to go.”

“Okay,” he leaned in and kissed her softly, his frame enveloping her. “but this isn’t over.”

She shrugged out of his hold and went out the door, he followed. This time, she looked back as she left him.

She made it to her room with out incident, though she was paralyzed with fear of getting busted as she scurried back in to the hotel, through security. Neville liked to run early, she feared crossing paths with him in the lobby. He had blown up her messages until late, giving her updates on on the bar activities, asking her to reconsider coming down then late in the evening, petulantly demanding to know why she wasn’t responding to his texts.

She put her pajamas back on and fell into bed, shoving Neville off as a later problem. Her phone buzzed on the nightstand and she panicked a little. Did Neville see her, was he up, did he know? She was sure he suspected something at this point. She grabbed the phone, peering at it nervously.

‘We forgot about the piano’

Smiling despite herself, she silenced the phone. It hadn’t even been 24 hours since she started up with him, she marveled. She snuggled down to try and sleep for a few hours before she had to be up again.

You are in really, really big trouble with this guy.

She rose at eight when her alarm went off, sore but fairly refreshed considering. She showered and dressed in her work usual clothes for the morning prep sessions. Her muscles and core ached and her neck was faintly bruised on one side. Great.

She focused on on the schedule for the day. More drills and run-throughs to polish policy responses and messaging. They would travel to the venue, University of Denver, in the afternoon. The debate would go live at 7 pm mountain time. There were final notes and the closing statement to rehearse again, then hair and make up. Harry liked to have a short stretch of time to meditate immediately beforehand.

There was breakfast already out when she arrived in the practice ballroom. Harry was huddled with Ron in an intense exchange at one of the tables. Neville motioned to her and got up from the table he occupied to meet her.

“Feeling better?” He gave her a stern look that let her know she was likely busted on some level.

“I’m a little tired but otherwise good.” she nodded.

“You haven’t texted me back since last night, which is very unlike you,” he prodded. He was setting a trap for her, waiting for her to lie to him.

“I wasn’t paying attention to my phone.” That was the truth, so far she was not a lying liar. She started walking to the table on the wall spread with pastries and fruit.

“Your location sharing was still on from the 4th,” he said to her plaintively.

She stopped dead in her tracks and stared at him. Oh, God, he really did know. They had gone to the celebration on the Mall for the 4th and shared location to keep track of each other in the massive crowds.

“Mi, you could have told me. I would understand, believe me. Of all people, I get it.” he scolded.

She shook her head. “I’m sorry, I didn’t want anyone to know, not even you. I don’t know what I am thinking. I can’t help myself. When did you figure it out?”

“Late, you weren’t answering me, I was drunkish and in a mood, so I checked your location. You were at the Brown Palace. There was only one reason for that based on who was on your flight earlier.” he shrugged sat her. “I am viciously jealous. Tell. Me. Everything.”

She grabbed his arms and drug him away from anyone in possible earshot. “You can’t tell anyone. *EVER*. I am so stupid and you are my best friend and I will tell you but you have to take it to your grave. *SWEAR*.”

In a rare open display of his queerness, he cocked his hip and looked her up and down. “Miss Girl. Remember with who you are speaking to. I held your hair in a marble bathroom in the Old Executive Building.” Neville usually tried to keep his public persona neutral, he considered it a professional necessity. He referred to himself as an Old Navy Gay, he was not

closeted, but he disliked perpetuating a worn out caricature. He tended to code switch privately.

“Okay, okay. Let me get some food.” She grabbed a danish and some fruit and they sat down at a far table away from prying ears. He looked at her expectantly.

“Sooooo, I might have fucked him in a limousine.” She spoke lowly, with the forthright honesty usually reserved for just his sexual adventures.

“WHAT?” Neville blurted out loudly, causing the rest of the team scattered around the room to look at them. He slapped a hand over his mouth. “Sorry,” he whispered. “but whaaaat? You savage.”

“We flirted the whole flight and got a little drunk. He offered me a ride in the car he had picking him up. I thought, what could it hurt, better than an Uber, right? The ‘car’ turned out to be a limo and I completely lost my shit and jumped him in it.”

“Who are you and what have you done with Hermione?” he asked incredulously. He dropped his voice to a low hiss. “You really fucked *the* Draco Malfoy in his limo?”

“Twice.”

“TWICE!?” his voice cracked.

“Neville, shut the fuck up or I am not saying another word, Jesus Christ,” she whispered yelled, smiling like everything was fine. “There is a lot to this story and you are not getting it if you can’t calm down. Harry would fire me. Ron would never speak to me again.”

“I doubt that Harry would fire you but it would be *drama*. And who gives a shit about Ron, none of his business anymore. Have you slept with anyone since the divorce anyway? Present conquest aside.”

“That guy from that fundraiser two month ago,” she waved it away. It’s like I am on fire around him, I can’t help myself. I don’t know what has gotten into me.”

“Malfoy, clearly.’ he joked.

“Be serious, what am I doing? I don’t know who I am. His name comes out of my mouth and I fee like I am on shrooms or something.” She stared down into the plate of food, tearing off a piece of danish and shoving it in her mouth.

“So last night you snuck out and went to his hotel room? I am assuming he is a spectacular lay, based on your late night shenanigans to get a repeat performance.”

“He took me to this diner on Colfax and bought me breakfast, then we went back to his room, suite actually. Like it was really sweet, actually. Then we had ridiculously hot sex all over the place.” Confessing to Neville did feel good.

“What is he like? I assume he’s not a prick since it seems like you like him?” He gave her side eye, turning his head, making suspicious face at her.

“He’s *such* a gentleman. I mean, obviously he a player by reputation alone, so it may all be his schtick, but he’s been nothing but kind and considerate. Funny, no games, open about his situation, open about his attraction to me. He wants to see me again, tonight. It’s really hard to hate him.”

“Uhhh huh...K” he was looking at her with warning.

“What does that mean?”

“You are already catching feelings. Still speaking of him in present tense. Your eyes go all baby deer talking about him.”

"I don't..." she began.

“If you two are done gossiping, can you come join the rest of us please?” Ron’s voice broke across the room, disrupting their conversational bubble.

Shrugging and scowling at Neville, Hermione got up and headed to where the team was gathering.

“This is not over,” he mumbled, following behind her.

“So people keep telling me.” she tossed over her shoulder at him.

Chapter 10: Debatable

Chapter Summary

Harry and Tom face off in the debate, Hermione frets.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

That evening, the debate green room was buzzing with energy. Harry had momentarily disappeared, first for hair and make up, then council with Ginny and meditate. This was his customary routine before appearances and events. He had been on the verge of snippy all day which was also routine, because he was nervous. Ron was as amped up as Harry, pacing around the room like a giant red cat, two devices in hand, checking social media feeds, taking calls and messages from HQ. Everyone was waiting for Harry to reemerge. Hermione stood talking with Neville and other staffers about the imminent debate.

Nervous energy crackled through the room. A photographer wandered, taking candid of the staff preparation. There were several screens set up in the holding area with campaign surrogates from both camps rotating across different channels attempting to control the narrative. She has seen Draco's face pop up at few times in just casual glancing up, or when Neville would elbow her. She knew she was in danger of running into him in the spin room later, if she went.

With ten minutes to go, Harry reappeared for his final messaging checks and pep talk from his tight knit group. Techs were checking Harry's lapel mic, while talking on their headsets to the stage manager.

They went over the major talking points and traps that would possibly be laid for him by Tom Riddle's campaign. Redundant advice was given on avoiding the pitfalls and gaffs of live television. He nodded, shuffling his feet, taking it all in. He looked boyishly handsome in his coat and tie. His brilliant green eyes brimmed with apprehension, belied by simmering conviction. Ron stood next Hermione, his hand on Harry's shoulder, as she wondered at how the trio had managed to end up here together.

Ron talked in his ear lowly, shaking him slightly as he spoke.

"Your whole life has lead up to this, no big deal, so don't screw it up, it's only your destiny," he smiled. Harry hugged him hard slapping his back.

Then it was Nevilles turn, "T-Rid is a worn out old twat. This is your diem, carpe it." They embraced as Harry laughed.

Hermione took her turn hugging him and straightened his tie that was always slightly askew. "Kick his fucking ass."

"Succinct, as always, Mi," he grinned, kissed her on the cheek and withdrew.

They huddled together, Harry pulling Ginny in. Arms linked over backs, all looking between each other in a now well worn ritual, they broke apart with a game-day war cry from Barny.

The two-minute call came. He and Ginny walked from the room to go to the stage with the debate handlers as the campaign team clapped him on in encouragement.

As the debate began, Hermione thought she might be sick from nerves. They gathered around the screens, some with notebooks and laptops at tables or couches. Most of the hardcore analysis and traditional and social media responses were taking place at campaign headquarters in Maryland until the debate ended. Post-debate, all the sound and fury would concentrate at the Media Filing Center, or the "Spin Room" where networks and news organizations were set up. Campaign surrogates would converge there like moths to flame, kicking out the messaging of their candidate and party. They would reinforce the notion that their party had triumphed, whether they actual had or not.

The debate started a bit wonky for Harry, clearly jangled and stilted in his responses, but a few minutes in, he had recovered himself. The town hall worked in his favor, as he was at his best interacting with everyday people. His charisma and humor came roaring through as he worked the room. As Tom hammered his established strategy of cynicism and exclusion, Harry's idealism rose up and pushed the notion of hope and reconciliation in the face of the fear and oppression of the current administration. Tom's usual tack of painting the Potter campaign as weak, inexperienced and naive seemed to backfire as Harry used the characterization as a vehicle for change and innovation in policy. The bands of dread around Hermione's chest loosened as her boss displayed his ultimate gift in full force, his ability to inspire and empathize with his fellow citizens on a large scale. When he was on, no one could touch his oratory talent.

Tom was not going out without a fight, scoffing at Harry's optimistic rhapsodizing as the unrealistic ramblings of an inexperienced junior senator. At one point he used the word 'poppycock' which made the their whole team howl. Harry capitalized on the term as outmoded and out of touch, like Tom's policies and ideas. Hermione silently thanked Draco for that inadvertent gem. Towards the end, Harry got in a few kill shots, calling out the Riddle administration cruelty and aggressive persecution of marginalized groups with lies and mischaracterizations. Being cruel and divisive wasn't cool, it was the easy way out, offering zero solutions. In fact their erratic governing was making things worse. But that was the point, Harry remarked, to divide people, keep them paralyzed in outrage and fear. If they looked behind the curtain of what the Riddle regime was really doing, he would be finished. Harry was scathingly frank. Tom was actually flustered for a moment, which Hermione had never seen.

The green room became more and more boisterous the further into the debate they got. By the end, Ron and a few others were yelling and gesticulating wildly like it was a football game. As the debate wrapped up, everyone was hugging and crying and jumping up and down. When Harry and Ginny reappeared, the whole room went absolutely wild with joy.

Her phone was blowing up for the east coast, HQ, her parents, her friends, and one from Draco. He was going to have hustle tonight, she almost felt bad for him.

'50 points to Gryffindor' it said.

'Boy do you have work to do ;)' she replied.

'Poppycock, piece of cake'

She giggled at his response.

Half the staff was preparing to head to the Spin Room, while the other half would head back to the hotel with Harry for his post-debate rally and a party that would be absolutely wild tonight, she already knew.

"You coming to spin or going back with Harry's motorcade?" Ron asked as she hugged him in the chaos. She wasn't designated as one of the surrogates, but Ron would probably need more than one handler.

"I'll go with you, I assume you will need the assist beyond just Melanie."

"It's going to be a circus, I need all the help I can get," he agreed with a pleading expression. She knew she had ulterior motives, even if he didn't.

The Spin Room, was eye-wateringly vast. It took up an arena, rows and rows of tables for media publications and organizations with mini TV studios wreathing the outskirts of the hall. Clusters of cameras and reporters were scattered around the floor speaking to the campaign surrogates who were already in circulation, denoted by the tall paddle boards the held up with their names on them. Some were in the studio areas, speaking with whatever anchor was on duty for coverage. They would reenforce the messaging and take a victory lap based on Harry's stellar performance tonight. Her eyes darted around looking for a tell-tale silver blond head. As soon as a couple of reporters spied Ron they were enveloped in a media swarm.

Ron confidently answered the press corps question with ingrained knowledge of the campaign they had helped Harry engineer, clearly thrilled with the outcome of the debate. Hermione, and his normal assistant Mel, deftly extracted him from the pool to get him to prescribed sittings. He had scheduled time with established outlets on their studio platforms while fielding question from their staff embedded with their surrogates. She caught sight of Draco a few times, head above most of the knot of press on the floor surrounding him. He magnanimously answered questions with a warm smile and hands spread, a consummate pro. This time she spied him, she was up on the CNN platform, while Ron yapped on camera. She gave Draco an amused look when their eyes locked, he grinned back at her predatorily. Only for a moment, his facade easily shifting back to his tv persona, focusing his attention on the job at hand.

Goddammit, he was beautiful. She wanted to melt off the dais.

You are so very screwed.

Hermione was wrung out when they were finally wrapping up. The barrage of attention, the jostling, lights, and endless questions were grating on her. The social battery she had was good for about eight hours, it was now well past done. After this she still had the rally to face. The remaining staff headed back to the hotel in a large van, chattering excitedly. She was both relieved and giddy that Harry had killed it. It may have been a death blow for their campaign if he hadn't. Even just a decent performance would have left him wide open for considerable doubt. This debate didn't cinch anything but it clearly put Harry in a much stronger position going into their final meeting in a few weeks.

Her mind began reaching out to the possibilities of the future. If he won the election, she would be working for him in the White House. She hadn't dared let herself think about before now. He had been such a long shot from the beginning, everyone took everything one day at a time, one event at a time, one primary closer to the big show. Except for Ron. Ron said Harry was going to be the President of the United States from the get go, his belief in Harry was always unwavering.

But it had been like that in school. Aside from a few minor skirmishes early on, Harry and Ron were bonded as brothers for life. Harry, with his unshakable vision of a future he wanted to build for the country and Ron, unswerving loyalty to him. Ron ran his campaigns at Barny the and when the couldn't attend college together, Ron helped Harry remotely as much as possible. Harry had married Ron's sister, Ginny. Ron asked Harry to be his best man at their wedding, above his any of his many brothers. When Hermione and Ron's marriage became troubled, Harry tried not to take sides, but it was clear Harry was Ron's sounding board and confidant throughout.

She had almost left the campaign over it. She felt like a distraction to them both, but Harry begged her to stay. She had gotten involved in politics to help Harry, it was the plan between the three of them starting at Barny. He told her she was his sister as much as Ron was his brother and he couldn't do it without her. Her strategies and turns of phrase were too brilliant, he said. He needed her brains, common sense and pragmatism. He needed someone unfailingly honest with him. So, she stayed on and things had been okay for the most part.

Dating openly had been out of the question, so far. Ron could barely handle the pizza guy flirting with her. She mulled her dalliance with Malfoy. Ron would go ballistic. The betrayal Harry would feel if he found out, how they both would look at her gave her a rock in her stomach. The same way Neville had started looking at her this morning, when she admitted to maybe liking Malfoy as a person. All four of them had suffered at the hands of Draco's and company's bullying in school. They gave as good as they got, but they never got over it. He became a mascot for everything they all stood against in principle. A privileged white guy shilling for the status quo to retain his own money and power, no matter the cost to everyone else. His nastiness and cruelty in school now indicative of the his administration's tactic to punch down to hurt everyone that wasn't them. Not hitting people as a side effect of a large goal, but hurting people on purpose, because they could.

She sighed, looking out the window of the van as everyone continued to talk. She wished Neville was here, she felt the need to unburden herself on him again. He had returned to the hotel with Harry and the rest of the staff to begin the rally. She expected Malfoy to message soon and ask to see her tonight. It was only one more night, she could end it after this, she

promised herself. She was compromising her own moral code. If it wasn't, she wouldn't feel so guilty. How was it she liked him in spite of their fraught history, not to mention his current deplorable situation? This was not hard, it should be a clearcut decision, unambiguous. She had a choice between what she wanted versus what was right, yet she continued to spin her wheels mentally over it, looking for a solution that did not exist.

God, you are hopeless.

Tonight was a huge win for Harry and their campaign, for her personally. She should be overjoyed right now. Instead she was stewing about a boy. She felt like an idiot.

Sometimes, no one annoyed Hermione more than herself.

Chapter End Notes

I did a ton of research on the mechanics of presidential debates, prep, travel, security etc, but I acknowledge all of this could be horseshit realistically ;)

Chapter 11: Enabling

Chapter Summary

Hermione attends the after debate rally, Draco makes an effort.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The rally was in full swing in the ballroom, now bigger than the rehearsal space. Packed to the gills with people, it was buzzing with music and conversation. The DJ was blaring some cringey 80s wedding reception playlist. It always annoyed her that they used the most generic, ancient music ever. She reasoned that a progressive campaign needed more a more current soundtrack, even if it was extra spend, which fell on deaf ears. Even in late stage campaign mode, money was guarded by Ron like a dragon.

She had changed into a print skirt in patriotic colors, blue peasant top and flats. Professional, but more relaxed and festive. She left her hair curly, not bothering to straighten it again. She clamped it up in a loose bun and freshened her make up.

Harry clearly had not addressed the growing crowd yet, the room was well on its way to being inebriated. The venue was full of supporters, volunteers, staff and donors as well as a smattering of invited press. It was a private affair, the big turnout was indicative of how well Harry's performance was received. The space was not overwhelmingly huge, Harry wanted a quasi-intimate place to share his success with the contributors to the cause. Alternately, if it hadn't gone well, it wouldn't be so cavernously depressing half empty. Ron just liked that it was cheaper. Hermione waded through the crowd, stopping to make small talk with friendly faces.

'Where are you?' she texted Neville as she flitted around the room.

'Up front, Harry's about to go on'

She pushed her way to stage where the podium was set up on a dais, festooned with bunting, signage, American flags and balloons. The campaign slogan *'Elevate Us All!'* was plastered everywhere. Harry was waiting off to the side with Ginny and their two boys, James and Silas, dressed in little suits, talking with other staffers. Ron and Neville were conferencing near the stairs to the stage. Ginny waved her over, Harry standing by her beaming.

"It couldn't have gone better. Harry was absolutely in his element." she hugged Ginny, then the boys.

"Aunt Mioneeee!" they squealed.

“You guys are up past your bedtime,” she fussed at them jokingly, ruffling their hair.

Ginny smiled at Harry, then at Hermione. “Thanks to you, the whole team. The prep, the messaging is brilliant. You have been key in getting us here.”

Hermione blushed. “We are not there yet, but tonight was a good step up.”

Harry embraced her long and hard. “*You* are the brilliant one. I can wait to give this rousing speech you wrote me.”

“Pssshht. You and me and Ron and Nellie and Casey and...” She waved him off.

“Take a compliment, Hermione. You never can. You are my ace. Always have been.” He held her out his front of him.

“Fine.” She flicked her hair dramatically, “*I am* bloody brilliant,” she said in her best fake British accent.

“Exactly. Don’t forget it.”

“Darling, you are being paged by big brother.” Ginny motioned to Ron. Senator Blythe, Hermione’s former boss, was at the podium, readying to introduce Harry. She nodded, smiling affectionately at Hermione. She was every bit the seasoned political shark with a together silver polish that she was portrayed as. Hermione had learned a great deal from the canny, thoughtful woman when she worked for her. Most of all, using humor and grace to sell yourself, while scoring points. Smile while you kick your opponent in the nuts, she liked to say. She was a force of nature.

The music faded down, people cheered and crowded the stage in anticipation. The room was electric. She stood with Ginny as Harry prepared to climb the stairs. Neville sidled up to her and handed her a flute of champagne.

“This is probably as good as gets unless he wins the whole fucking thing,” he said in her ear, putting his arm around her.

“Just enjoy it, you cretin.” She took the glass and swilled it back. “This is our blood, sweat and tears come to fruition. You’re so emo.”

“Fuck off, Mi. We are kindred dark spirits. I luv ewe.” He gestured dramatically.

“Well, we can braid each other's hair and drink absinthe later, Souixee.”

Neville snatched her in closer to his side, air kissing her on the cheek.

Senator Blythe finished up her remarks and brought Harry up to the podium with the kind of flourish only someone who had been in national politics forever could accomplish. The audience went wild and Harry approached the podium, hugging her and looking out at his supporters, who continued cheering relentlessly.

“Honest to god, Nev, I think I might really cry,” she whispered to him. Ginny was already wiping away tears.

“Same, bitch,” he said still holding her.

Harry lowered his hands, palms down, calling for quiet as he grinned looking around.

The room became hushed. “So how’d I do? That was okay, right?”

That propelled the room into another joyful craze. Hermione actually did tear up. It felt like church. This was one of those moments, like a snapshot in time, she knew she would never forget. No matter what happened after, she would always have the triumphant high of how this night felt.

Harry launched into his remarks with his unrehearsed style and undeniable charisma. She stood and sipped her bubbly as the phrases she wrote came out of Harry's mouth. She spoke the words along with him, under her breath, punctuating his emphasis with her fist. He was flawless of course, the attendees were whipped into a frenzy, cheering and jumping up and down. Ron joined them with a gleam in his eye that she knew well. He was already counting the money from donors. Exciting himself about the good press that was already heavily in their favor in early news cycle churn. They stood together, arms hung over each other's shoulders as Harry worked his magic through the room. Her heart was full.

It doesn't get any better than this.

Then she thought of Draco, wishing he was here to share it with her, which was a batshit, left-field desire. He couldn't be here. He would never be here. He was hated here and rightfully so. She scolded herself for ruining her own fantastic moment with silly, distracted pipe dreams. Could she ever just let herself have something?

Harry's speech wasn't long, 20 minutes or so. Everyone was tired, worn out, actually. The party was a thank you with a photo op more than anything. He predictably enraptured the crowd completely, then brought Ginny and the boys up to the stage for the goodbyes after he finished up. He was such a good candidate, Hermione thought, watching him wave and hug his family, holding his youngest up in his arms. Sharp, funny, kind and determined. Blessedly scandal free. He never doubted about who he was or what he wanted. He set about executing his vision like a well trained assassin. There had been bumps in the road, but Harry had been single-minded in his pursuit, and remarkably successful at such a young age for a politician. She was so fearfully proud of him, so very proud of their team.

They had come a long way from their fraught days at St. Barnabas. There was a lot to be said for success on this scale, she thought wistfully.

It was past midnight when they wrapped up. She and Neville, along with some other staffers, had holed up in the smaller hotel pub in a horseshoe shaped booth across from the bar. Everyone was tipsy with both booze and adrenaline. Harry had retired with his family to their suite. Ron sat in the booth with opposite Hermione, giving her 'the look' as Neville called it.

His half drunk, 'give us another chance' look like a puppy dog, tie loosened, head dipped. She squirmed next to Neville, who was acutely aware of Ron's focus.

"Oh, lordt," he whispered in her ear. "He is on one again." Neville always got looser in his persona with a few drinks. The music was loud enough in the bar there was no way Ron could hear them.

"Why the fuck does he do this to me?" She made face at Neville. "Why can't he move on? I wish he would fuck an intern or something."

"Honey, you don't think he already has?"

"Oh my God, I don't want to know!" She shoved a hand in his face.

"You really don't, though what's your snatch made of, for real? First Ron, now Malfoy, Jesus. Did you know there was a dating pool outside of Barny alums?"

"Don't be awful," she laughed. "So bitchy when you are drunk."

"I am just *saying*. What is with your see-you-next-Tuesday, bish."

"Oh pleaseeee. Shut the fuck up." She poked him.

"Hello. Poor innocent Hermione. Sleeping with the super hot, slutty enemy. Serve!"

"Serve what?"

"You are so out of touch. Cunt, of course!"

"My God, Neville, you sound like RuPaul. I am not out of touch, I hate that word." She rolled her eyes. "Like you wouldn't. Don't lecture me."

"Of course, I would keep my eye on the ball, though...balls?" He gave her a judgy look, then bust out laughing at his own joke.

"I can't tell if this is jealousy or distain. Or self loathing?"

"It's both, all of the above. Whatever. Be careful, no matter how great of lay he is."

She was silent for a moment. She glanced at staring Ron.

"But he's really is great. Really!" She snorked then dissolved into laughter, almost spitting out her drink. "It's fucking epic. EPIC." She held her hand out in a length measure.

"Glorious, he's also neo-nazi fuck stick. Don't get me started."

"Gooddddd Nev. Well fucking aware. Oh em gee, do you know how much I have fucking wrestled with this? Like, I get it. He is fucking Satan. I needed a release, I haven't seriously fucked anyone since Ron, the chemistry is absolute fucking insanity. I don't intend for it to continue beyond this."

"I dunno but can you work fucking into another fucking sentence?" He pursed his lips.

She snorked, then blew a breath out her lips, shaking her head. "I don't know what I am doing. He's is a beautiful, beautiful, fuck stick, for sure."

The some of people close to them at the table were staring at them with questioning looks.

"Ope." Hermione cringed and ducked, then erupted into more laughter. "I am pathetic."

Neville wrapped her up in his arm. "You are, but I love you."

"I am unworthy of your charity."

"True."

"You are not supposed to agree with me!"

"Ok, but maybe I *am* jealous," he signed, looking around.

"It's midnight and no flare so I think I am shit out of luck anyway."

"So, you go to him, fine. Then cut him off. That's what I would do. Hit it and quit it."

"Did you just say 'hit it and quit it.'?"

"Possibly." he snarked.

"Anyway, he hasn't messaged me. Maybe he won't. I am not texting him. It's up to him. It's getting late anyway." She looked at her phone for the 20th time.

"You are a lost cause." He kissed her on the cheek heartily. "Also, he is at the bar in a baseball cap sooo..."

"You are hilarious."

"I'm 100% serious."

"Get the fuck out of here." She popped, up swiveling her head around, arms braced on the back of the booth.

"Smooth, Granger." Neville yanked her back into her seat. "Sit your ass down, don't blow his cover." Then he snickered at himself. "Blow."

"How did you know? I still don't see him." She was slightly panicking.

"Honey, I felt disturbance in force the minute he walked in. I could clock that man ten miles away."

"Christ, what do I do?" She grabbed her phone. Still no message from him. "Are you sure it's him?"

“Yes, I am sure.”

'Are you here?' she sent.

'Indubitably'

'Is that a yes!?''

'Yes, I am here'

'Neville spotted you'

'ok?'

'what the fuck, Malfoy?'

'what can I say? I wanted to see you'

'OMG stalker'

'meet me outside. put on jeans or something. dress warm'

'why?'

'I'm taking you for a ride'

'what does that mean?'

Neville was hanging over her shoulder. “Just go. Just fucking go, change and go,” he sighed.

She looked at him with abject helplessness.

“Just go,” he repeated, faux disgusted with her “Have the best night of your life. Shag him to death. Keep your head on straight, as much as you can.”

She nodded and nudged the people to her right to let her out of the booth.

“I’m really out of it, it’s been an amazing night but I really need to sleep.” she explained, probably unconvincingly.

Neville began running interference as Ron slowly started to protest her departure. “Night dear, drink lots of water and take Advil. See you mañana.” He air kissed her and shoved her away.

She pushed out to the floor and quickly walked to the door seeing the silver blond hair and the familiar Duke baseball hat at the bar from behind. What fucking balls he has, she marveled.

She cleared security took the elevator up to her floor and keyed in, flopping on the bed.

'In my room, what do I need to wear?'

“Pants, jacket, socks, warm stuff”

“where are we going?”

“You’ll see”

‘what are you doing here? do you have a death wish?’

‘That’s what Pansy said’

‘Pansy?’

“Never mind.”

She put on the clothes she was going to fly home in, socks and her trainers, jeans, t-shirt and her favorite cream Irish cable knit sweater. She didn’t really have a jacket packed, she hoped this would be enough. She fixed her hair into a french single braid, grabbing her bag as she headed back down. What did ride mean? Horses? Convertible? Surely not? Where would he get either in the middle of the night? Maybe it was double entendre. Dress warm meant outside, maybe. She puzzled and puzzled, as she covertly shot across the lobby and out the automated glass doors.

There was Draco, under the awning, standing in front of a motorcycle. He had a half shell helmet dangling from his fingers in one hand, another full helmet was seated under his other arm. The bike was beautiful, matte black and chrome with an Indianhead logo.

“Hi there,” he smiled. “Wanna go for a ride?”

Chapter End Notes

CW: lots of testicle talk
Lots of F-bombs

Chapter 12: Unburdening

Chapter Summary

Draco takes Hermione on a romantic adventure

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Draco was handsome as ever in jeans, hiking boots a classic leather flight jacket. It was not terribly cold, but there was a snap in the night air. It would matter on the bike.

She gaped at him, this was too much. He was being spontaneous and charming, like they were dating. This was not what she signed up for, even though it was thrilling. Having a two-night stand in a hotel room was one thing. This was more, it was a bigger, more persuasive move. He was campaigning for her.

She approached him cautiously. “Where did you get this? How?”

“It’s astonishing what you can do with money and a well compensated concierge service.”

“Draco, all this is too much,” she motioned at the motorcycle. “I have news for you, I am sure thing, buddy. I don’t...”

“Don’t over think it,” he cut her off, handing her the other helmet. “It doesn’t have to mean anything. It’s just some fun. We are going parking.”

“Parking?” she scoffed. “Like 1950s parking?”

“That’s the one.” He reached into the saddle bag casing on the bike and pulled out another jacket, his black peacoat he wore the night before, and two sets of gloves. “Put these on so you don’t freeze to death.”

Without protest, she donned the gloves, which fit fine and his jacket, that pretty much swallowed her whole. She slid on the helmet, he helped tighten the strap under her chin, then put on his own. He sported fitted wraparound glasses instead of his usual wire frame spectacles, which somehow changed his whole look from hot patrician professor to roguish Hollywood actor.

“You are adorable,” he laughed at her being dwarfed in his coat. He swung onto the motorcycle and held his hand out to her to help her on to the back. It really felt like she was in some 90s rom-com movie, it was all so unfailingly romantic. Her stomach flopped, emotions flooding her with warmth. “It will take 30 minutes to get there. Hopefully, it’s not too cold.”

“Where are we going, exactly?” She took his hand and slid behind him on the smaller passenger seat behind him, wrapping her arms around his waist. She hadn’t been on a bike since a college boyfriend, she tried to remember her leaning lessons. Being a little drunk would probably help.

“Up the mountain,” he yelled, kicking down, as the bike roared to life under them.

He maneuvered out from the porte cochère and navigated the bike through downtown, which was still plenty active with traffic. She never even questioned if he knew what he was doing, she was so overwhelmed by his gesture. He had thought about this, planned it, probably paid a great deal of money to make it happen. She was all at once flattered by his attentions, while stuck with the guilt she felt for enjoying herself with him.

It doesn't have to mean anything.

She resolved to take him at his word. She pushed the hesitation away, deciding to enjoy herself. This was their last interlude, so why not? She had forgotten how much she loved being on a motorcycle. They roared through downtown, the engine echoing off the glass buildings with cadenced blaps. They accelerated up an on ramp to I-70. Being in highway traffic was intimidating, but Malfoy was careful, clearly mindful of his passenger’s possible nerves. She clung to his back, using him as shield against the wind. It was chilly and noisy but not unbearable. She wish she could talk to him, she was so curious about where he was taking her.

The darkness of the range loomed closer as they rode into the foothills up the highway. Soon they were exiting at Lookout Mountain according to the sign. It was so dim with no streetlights, Hermione wondered how he could see but Draco seemed to have no trouble steering around the curves and switchbacks as they ascended higher into the hills. They passed a smattering of houses with dim porch lights and closed businesses. They slowed, turning onto the approach road on the left, flying past some stone gates. He motored into the parking lot and cut the engine. There were a few other cars a parked, muffled, thumpy music coming from one.

She jumped off and pulled off her helmet, patting her hair down on top to ensure it was still intact. Draco unhooked his helmet, laying it on the seat, she followed suit with hers.

“You still comfortable in my giant coat?” He tugged her hem. “You kind of look like a penguin.”

She smirked and nodded, looking around. They were in a parking lot at a closed tourist attraction at one in the morning. She had no idea what he had up his sleeve. He took her hand, leading her towards a darkened building declaring itself 'The Buffalo Bill Museum'. Curiouser and curiouser. He pulled her through a wide gap in the stone wall next to it, up a ramp, to a large concrete platform fenced by more of the stone. As they drew closer to the far wall, the point of the trip became apparent. A sharp drop off fell from the where the platform was situated down to the plains of the city east. Denver revealed itself as a massive grid of bright lights stretching to the vanishing point on the horizon. The illuminated latticework went on in every direction, twinkling across the landscape. Slashes of major thoroughfares

pulsed like arteries. The high rises of downtown poked out of the middle of it like a tiny golden crown.

"Wow." was all she could muster.

"I was told there were stunning views up here so I thought I'd drag you up here and we'd make out." He leaned in, gathering her in his arms, her back to his chest, kissing her neck. She turned in his embrace, kissing him, losing herself in his mouth enveloping hers, tasting the liquor on him. She had to stand on her tiptoes to meet him halfway. He pressed her into his body, placing a hand the nape of her neck and she melted into him. No one had ever set her heart racing the way he did. He smelled like leather, cigar smoke and scotch, the most elegant backroom ever. He smelled like old money.

He slowly broke from her, putting her back in front of him. Looking over the railing at the riot of lights below, he rested his chin on her head, hands on her shoulders. He was swaying slightly.

"Spectacular," he sighed.

"It really is. Worth the trip," she agreed.

"Were you freezing back there?"

"Not too bad. You?"

"Mostly fine. Wish I had a full helmet. Not sure I have feeling in my nose yet."

"Want me to blow on it?"

"Not my nose."

"Funny."

They were silent for a few minutes. She gazed up at the stars blanketing the night sky. A few other people milled around on the platform. One couple was clearly hammered, laughing and talking loudly. He kissed her on top of the head a few times.

"Where did you learn to ride a motorcycle?" she asked, craning her neck to look up at him.

"It's so cliché. You will groan."

"Europe? Am I warm?"

"Yes, rode across Europe for my gap year." He gazed down at her.

"That's cool though, did you go alone?"

"Remember Theo Nott? Him." He answered, she nodded at the name with recognition.

"That must have been something, you two carousing about London and Paris and the like."

"It was complete debauchery. One of the best times in my life," he grinned. "No obligations, no time table, just endless beauty, food, sex and booze."

"Drunk the whole time?"

"Pretty much, when we weren't on the road," he confessed.

"I think I am jealous. I went straight into college from Barny. I was on scholarship."

"Ah, well, yes. I had no money issues, obviously." He sounded a tad contrite.

"How is Theo, anyway?" She wasn't sure she cared but it seemed polite to ask. Theo, unlike Draco, was stunning even in school and had no problem with girls. Lanky in all the right ways Draco wasn't, wavy hair and an ethereal dark beauty, Theo oozed seduction. Her trio often laughed about poor Malfoy settling for Theo's leftovers. If Draco had matured more by the time they hit Europe, they would have been a wicked pairing. Child of darkness, child of light. She shivered at brief unclean thoughts about her stuck in that particular mash up.

"Theo was smarter than me, he stayed single, though I think he's finally really serious about someone now. He is into wine now, he has vineyards, which is hilarious to me."

"Why is that?"

"He used to talk about how 'faggy' wine was and scoff at any one who drank it, now he's a vintner and living with a man that he is complete in love with. Life is funny."

"I didn't know Theo was queer."

"He wouldn't admit to it then. Theo was always sexually fluid, super defensive about it. Usually, if something happened, he was drunk. He never treated men as anything more than a diversion. Until now, anyway." Draco shrugged.

"Well, good for Theo, he was so smoking hot."

"That he was. The trim he got made me absolutely crazy until I grew into my head, as you so succinctly put it."

Hermione giggled. "Sorry."

They were silent again, contemplating the view.

"Draco, did you marry Pansy?"

"No."

"Oh." She left his one word answer to lie there.

He inhaled deeply. "Pansy, much like my soon to be ex-wife, found my treatment of her tiresome. I slept with her, wouldn't commit, I chased other girls and treated her like shit, though she was the only one that would have me. So, she finally got over it and over me."

"I didn't know you were together."

"I didn't either. I used her horribly and she loved me enough to let me. We are still friends, which a testament to the power of forgiveness on her part."

Hermione didn't know what to say to any of that so she didn't say anything. She thought about Pansy, who was as nasty to her as the rest of them at Barny, struggling to feel sorry for her.

"Don't pity her though. She married some rock band guy. She jets around the world with him to shows."

"That sounds more like Pansy," she mused. She almost asked him if he had loved Pansy, but decided she didn't want to know.

They marinated in more silence.

"Ron cannot, or will not get over me, " she confessed.

"Understandable. I never figured on how he scored you anyway, the dolt."

"Malfoy, you hated me, we hated each other, what did you care? I would have thought you deemed us equally pathetic, therefore well matched. You were worse to him than me, if that was even possible." She turned around to face him, questioning him with her expression, brow furrowed.

He was looking at her softly. "I hated you in the way boys hate girls they can't have. I hated him for it more."

"What? Be serious. You can't retrofit your treatment of me."

"I'm not, I just recognize it now for what it was. I had a crush on you and I couldn't admit it and I couldn't handle it, so that's how it came out."

She shook her head. "I don't know if I believe you. It sounds good though, makes a hell of a story."

"At night, I would lay in bed, and I would think about you. I would seethe over it. You pissed me off so much. In my head, I would grab you, shake you and tell you as much. Then would kiss you and have my way with you in a fit of righteous, angry passion. You were willing in my hormone soaked brain, telling me you wanted me as much as I wanted you and your distain was all an act."

"Oh my."

"So there's that." He looked sheepish.

"Malfoy, you are twisted. How long did this go on?" She was incredulous.

"Most of school, it got worse as it went." He pulled her closer, she had dropped her arms to her side.

"Well, could have fooled me. Did anyone else suspect?"

"Pansy outright accused me of crushing on you, Theo suspected, I think." He grabbed her hands and put her arms back around him.

"Draco, I don't know what to say, I mean, I get the whole 'I tease girls I like' boy thing but you were truly awful and cruel to me. When I let myself think about it, I question why I am even spending time with you at all."

"I know and I get that. I am truly sorry." He rubbed circles on her back.

"And I still don't know, you had no idea who I was on the plane and you told me you had no interest me in school, so it seems mighty convenient."

"I didn't recognize you at first, but I was preoccupied and wasn't expecting you, of all people. It started kind of playful but kind of hostile, it seemed like bad timing to confess the truth to you. In my defense, you have changed a lot from Barny."

"I am the same person in essentials." She did note how intensely fascinated with her he came across.

"Yes, which I why I still have a terrible crush on you, you bossy, smart, beautiful girl."

"Stoppppp, ugh." She blushed furiously and ducked her head. "So embarrassing."

"Apologies, I will cease the cringy adoration."

"Thank you."

She turned back to the view of the city, leaning back on his chest.

"So *anyway*, there hasn't been anyone really serious but Ron. It's been hard to date at all, with my job, much less with him in my orbit constantly." She didn't know why she was telling him any this. Maybe because he was putting himself so far out there for her own scrutiny.

"Lucky Ron."

"I don't know, I am not an easy person. He's clueless in relationships. We just weren't good fit. It would be nice if he stopped fucking our interns, though."

Draco gave a long whistle.

She sighed heavily, letting the quiet envelop them again. Voices from the other people on the platform wafted past them. Mist was starting to gather, haloing the lights. The midnight sky was it was pressing in, the stars becoming softer, closer.

“Potter nailed it tonight. I had to paddle hard to keep our narrative on track.” Draco admitted, changing the subject.

“And did you?” Hermione surprised he brought it up, genuinely curious.

“Who knows? Of course Fox and the like say Potter was shit, I don’t ever have to work to sway them.”

“Most have it for Harry, like in a major way, from what I can tell. You know, aside from the bootlickers.”

“Tom was not at his sharpest tonight, Potter was on and capitalized. It was not pretty.” He conceded, then huffed, “Fuck, I hate losing”

Hermione screwed her face up at him, suppressing a laugh.

“What’s funny?” he asked incredulously. “I am bleeding out here and you are laughing at my pain.

“You could never take the L in school either,” she twisted to look up at him. “You were a such sore loser. A shitty winner too, if I recall correctly.”

He rolled his eyes. “Yeah, ok, ok. I was a bastard. I get it...”

“And it was hardly a death blow. At least he didn’t lose his shit like Biden did in the primary,” she reminded him, shoving him playfully. “Wait, why am I comforting you again?”

“Because you are better person than I am?” He pulled her to face him, tugging her into a hug.

“You know, every passing minute is another chance to turn it all around.”

“Pithy.”

“Movie quote. I like them.”

“The brilliant speechwriter plagiarizes. Ouch.”

“I am but a product of meme culture.” she shrugged.

“Harry’s speech tonight was exceptional, was that you or AI?” he teased.

“Hilarious is what you are. Most of it was me... You heard it? How?”

“I was at the back of the room by the doors. It was dark, no one noticed me. Most everyone was crowded up front that might have known me. Plus, I was wearing my super stealthy baseball hat and bitchin' motorcycle glasses”

“How did you get in?”

“Press badge and a dazzling smile,” he grinned.

“You are wily, just hanging around my hotel like a total creeper. Why didn't you text me?” A sharp wind blew and she shivered against him.

“I didn’t want to intrude until you were closer to finished. I was going to text you right before you beat me to it.”

“Yeah, Neville saw you come in I guess. He’s in love with you, bee tee dubs.” Hermione snuggled into his chest.

Draco jerked his head back, “Huh. You mean I’m out here with the wrong damn person?”

“I mean, maybe, if it's like that.”

“Sadly for me it’s not, because I could be having a lot more sex. *A lot* more.”

“Somehow, I don’t think that you suffer too much.”

“No, but SO boring when it just falls in your lap constantly.”

“Like I literally did in the limo,” she smirked, pushing back from him.

“I don’t mean you.” He grabbed for her but she jumped away from his reach.

“Sure, suuuuure,” she mimicked him playfully in a deep polished voice. “Not you, darling, you are different than all the other young ladies. Verily.”

“Come here.” He went to snatch her back but she dodged him. He chased her around the platform, while she pivoted away from him when he came close to catching her.

“You are not even trying, your reach must incredible.” She ducked him again as he swiped.

“Speaking of wily, little minx.” He redoubled his effort, as she twirled away from him. “Wait ‘til I catch you.”

“Why sakes, Mr. Malfoy is that a threat?” She huffed, out of breath, watching him like a hawk, trying to anticipate his next move. He lunged straight at her, long arms outstretched. His boots thudded, echoing on the concrete. She squealed, jumped sideways and ran past him in the opposite direction. He was still in forward motion, almost losing his feet.

“Inertia’s a bitch, eh?” she laughed at him as he stumbled past. He stood up with his hands on his hips and dropped his head, shaking it. She crossed her arms and tapped her toe, impatiently. “I’m waiting.”

He shrugged and walked casually towards her. She backed away, looking at him with suspicion. He coughed a couple of times, hands up in surrender, like he was winded. She relaxed, and he shot toward her in a blur, pulling off her feet like she was nothing, slinging her over his shoulder. She screeched, playfully beating on his back with her fists. “Unhand me you brute!!”

He walked her over to the stone wall, spinning her around to face the drop, cliffs sloping below, choked with trees. He pitched his shoulders down a couple of times as she shrieked. "Shall I chuck you over? Are you going to behave? I bet there are wolves. Maybe trolls."

"Oh, shit! I'll be good, fucking put me *downnnnn*, Malfoy!" she demanded. "I'll behave!"

Draco gracefully swung her off his shoulder, setting her down on her feet with flourish. "Good girl." He patted her on the head.

She kicked him in the shin.

"OW," he winced. "I am really going to throw you over now."

She stepped to him and drew his face down to hers. "Ohhhh, I'm sorry, lemme kiss it an make it better." Layering a short burst of kisses all over his face, she hummed to him in a singsong voice. "Poor man, so put upon."

Draco rolled his eyes with an annoyed flutter but let her continue. "This is very condescending."

"Quiet. You know you love it. Plus you deserve it, patting me on the head like a *dog*." Smooch, smooch, smooch in between statements. He chased her hovering lips to get a reach kiss, finally achieving his goal. He claimed her mouth and she opened to him, her stomach flipping over as he pulled her tighter, picking her up off the ground.

"Hey, Malfoy!" a male voice called from the drunk couple walking by, leaving the platform. Draco's eyes flicked up and over to the noise, freezing but not breaking from her lips.

"Fuck you, buddy." Hermione turned her head just in time to see the young man in a puffer jacket shoot them the rod. "Eat a dick, you fascist douche bag!"

"Brian!" His girlfriend hissed at him, dragging him out faster.

"Have a great evening, Brian. Don't forget to vote!" Draco shot back with a two fingered wave. Hermione erupted into laughter, standing back.

"Jesus Christ, Granger. Really?"

"Blue State," she giggled, shrugging.

"God almighty. Unbelievable." He rubbed his forehead. "You ready soon? We have more business to attend to."

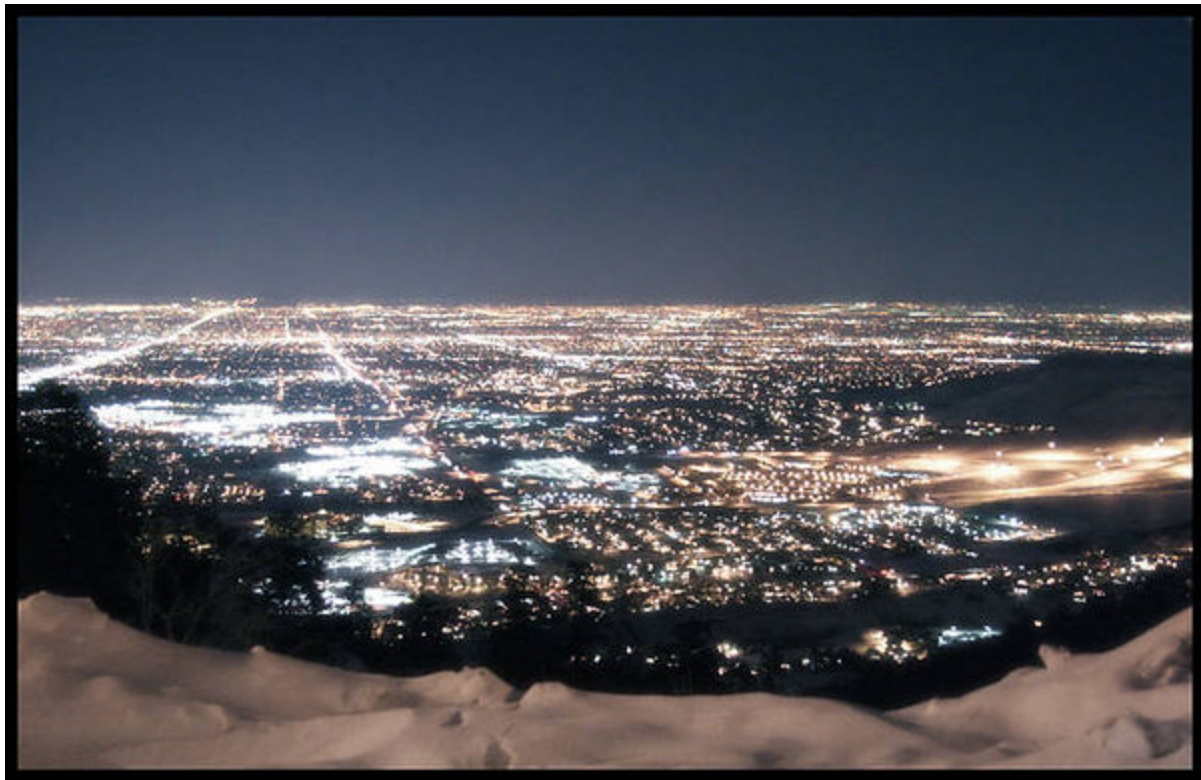
"Let's look one more time before we go." She turned back to the view then looked up at the stars, savoring the moment. She felt swoony, overwhelmed with him, trying to push him back in the one night stand box. Besides wanting to constantly jump on him, she really liked him, despite herself. She felt comfortable with him, she wanted to trust him, knowing full well it was premature. His horrible track record even forbid it, even if it was self-admitted. There was also the chance he was manipulating her, that this was part of his elaborate game, the earnestness, the love bombing. She didn't want to think that of him.

It's your stupid hormones. Don't get emotional.

He looked out across the city. "I'm having a really fantastic time with you."

"Same." They stood, hands linked, alone on the platform and she felt like a teenager. She squeezed his fingers almost involuntarily, he returned the pulse. As they stood silently, she leaned into him. He slipped his arm around her shoulder. The sense that saying anything else would ruin it was unspoken between them.

After several minutes, he gently tugged on her to go and she followed him. They descended back into the parking lot, to the motorcycle. Putting on their helmets, they settled in to their seats and Draco started the bike back up, guiding them out of the park and back down the mountain to Denver.



Chapter End Notes

Lookout Mountain is a famous scenic view in Denver. Unfortunately, as of last year, you can no longer go in at night, as people were being unruly and ruined it for everyone else. Draco and Hermione squeaked in under the wire however.

Chapter 13: Tickling the Ivories

Chapter Summary

Draco and Hermione have room service in more ways than one.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hermione settled in for the ride back, her arms wrapped around Draco. Anticipating what she might do with him soon, she gripped him harder, the leather of his jacket creaking. He laid a gloved hand over hers at his waist momentarily, in response. She recalled Neville harassing her for catching feelings, and that he was absolutely right. She was on the ice, already slipping. Truthfully, she probably had been since the plane. Certain he would ask for more at some point, she mulled her response. Part of her wanted him to ask for more, but it felt arrogant to want that, only to turn him down.

What if he was her person? Was he her fated chance at happiness, true love, the kind that overwhelms you? The kind love that she had only experienced through books and movies. Burning the world down for each other and all that heady romantic shit. If it existed in reality, she had never known it. She had loved Ron, but not the way she was supposed to by that measure. With Draco, that type of devotion seemed possible. He affected her in way wholly unfamiliar to her. Her stomach clenching, her heart stuttering in her chest at just the very thought of him. Dopamine flooded her system like a tidal wave he touched her. Her rational self dismissed it as merely chemistry, physical attraction, maybe some weird nostalgia thrown in. It all synthesized to produce their torrid attraction. Lust, in the simplest terms, a temporary emotional state that could not be sustained.

That's what was so ridiculous about it. She was a realist, a pragmatist, she didn't believe in 'the one' when it came to relationships. There *was* no fated mate, no single person that was meant to be, just for her. Odds were there were at least hundreds, maybe thousands of people in the states alone she could be happy with.

So, where the hell were they?

Calm down.

She was getting away from herself, as usual. Pros and cons scrolled through her head like a list, logically analyzing her situation. Pros, he was intelligent, funny, handsome, rich, amazing in bed (and everywhere else), she was genuinely attracted to almost all of him. Except the biggest cons of all, huge red flags, his politics and his infidelity.

He was not just a conservative, which was bad enough. He *the* spokesperson an abhorrent administration with awful policies they espoused, and worse enacted with vigor. She had

always proclaimed there was no way she could ever be seriously involved with someone holding rightwing beliefs. Her politics were too intricately interlocked with who she was. She knew she was compromising her moral self.

And then there was the cheating. He had openly admitted to being a serial offender, even while expressing regret. It was her unshakable belief that once a cheater, always a cheater, it was a hard coded character flaw. While he seemed invested now, he would likely grow bored or distracted and transgress eventually.

On paper, he looked terrible. She shouldn't trust him and she couldn't really respect him as a partner.

She also knew who he used to be, which was a turn off on its own. It would take time to truly figure out who he was now, if this version was all a facade. While this was true of most relationships, she shrank from taking that chance in this instance. It had the trappings of a life with an addict, always looking over your shoulder for a slip up, a sign of failure. A life of suspicion, living an existence she didn't want.

Unfortunately, in person, she could not help herself. Her physical reaction close to him was borderline primitive.

He could let it go and just not ask. She was possibly spinning her wheels for no reason. The thought gave her a pang of disappointment, though it was the best outcome. She would not pursue it, having no idea what she would do if he did. Going in circles in her head, she again rifled for an answer that would allow her to have it both ways. Nothing satisfactory was going to materialize and she scolded herself for looking for one.

Lost in her thoughts, they were already skimming through the emptied streets of downtown Denver. Once walking into the stunning atrium of his hotel, she wondered at its grand architecture all over again. Most of security had vacated, leaving it pre-naturally quiet inside. Tom's entourage had departed directly after the debate, according to Draco. Had he stayed later for her?

They sauntered to the elevators, hands joined, swinging between the two of them. They made out in the elevator, at the railing overlooking the lobby, in front of his door and in the vestibule of his suite. She could not keep her hands off him.

Inside, she shrugged off his giant coat and laid it over a chair. She settled on the couch while Draco disappeared for a few minutes. He emerged from the dining room with a couple of glasses of wine, handing her one. He had already removed his coat and had his wire rim glasses back on. His hair was ruffled from the motor cycle helmet. Her heart skipped at the sight of him. He sat down next her, clinking his glass to hers.

"Cheers." He looked at her thoughtfully, taking a sip.

Sipping her red, she met his gaze, smiling, drinking him in too.

"So what is on the agenda? Shall I have you on the piano or ravage you on the dining room table? Maybe in front of the fireplace?"

“Do I have to choose?” She ran her finger around the rim of her glass.

He gave her a wolfish grin, then looked at his watch. “We have plenty of time if you forego most of your sleep.”

“Have to get back to my hotel with enough time to pack and get to Centennial Airport to be on Harry’s plane.”

“When’s the flight?” he took another swallow.

“10:30 I think, I should be there by 10, which means hotel at nine-ish so I can make the car with Neville to the airport.” She back timed, looking at the ceiling.

“So I have you for roughly six more hours.” He sidled up to her closer and grinned. “Ample time for many, many adventures.”

“Ok, but I am kind of starving. I hardly ate all day.” Her middle growled at the wine on an a very empty stomach.

“Gosh, yes. Me too.” He ran his fingers through his hair. “Sorry, I wasn’t thinking. Pizza?”

“That is fine with me.” She rubbed her hands together. “Cheese, please.”

"Please don't tell me you're vegetarian?" he smirked.

"So what if I was?"

"Just..." he squinted one eye, like he had a tic "Never mind."

"That's what I thought, smart ass."

Leaving her with a playful smile, Draco got up, pacing while he talked on his phone. Calling a service, she assumed, he requested a cheese pizza to be brought to him ASAP.

“No Dominos?” she teased.

“Hush.” Returning, he plucked her wine glass from her hands, putting it down with his. He pulled her into his chest, drawing her face with his hands, his lips meeting hers. His kiss was slow and seductive, she melted into him, her eyes closing, as tongue twined around hers. He scooped her into his lap, his mouth traveling down her neck. She angled her head, giving him better access as she moaned softly. “God, I love the little noises you make,” he whispered against the column of her throat.

“Hmmmm,” she purred in his ear, he shivered slightly. He reached down to pull her bulky sweater off, dragging it over her head. She ghosted her fingertips over his cheek bones, gently removing his glasses from his face. Twisting to lay them behind her on the coffee table, she turned her attention back to him. His eyes snapping with desire, he turned her head at her chin, fingering her braid. Sliding the band loose, he carefully combed his hands through her thick braid to loosen it.

“Your hair,” he trailed off, burying his face in it, breathing in her shampoo scent from the newly released locks.

“No more haystack head, yes?” she whispered to him wryly, side eyeing him.

“Forgive me, I was a fool,” he mumbled in to the wavy nest. He returned his attentions to her neck, tonguing the hollow of her throat, his hand on her nape, wrapped in her mane. She tilted her head back, losing herself in his nips and licks. “I want you more than I have ever wanted anyone. Even now that I have had you, I can't escape you. I can't stop thinking about touching you. It's madness,” he whispered as he travelled.

She clutched his shoulders, digging in with her nails at his words, drawing a hiss from him. The things this man said to her absolutely finished her. Hermione loved that he was a talker. It was massive turn on she didn't know she had until him. She tipped her head forward searching for his mouth. He met her with growl, devouring her, yanking her body into his as she ground on his lap.

“Ughhh, woman, we have to keep our clothes on until pizza gets here,” he gritted.

“Are you whining?” she said again his lips.

“Yes, I am. I am an impatient man.” He picked her up and placed her on the couch next to him. “Look at this. Behave.” He motioned to the pronounced erection apparent in his jeans with both hands.

“So you wouldn't want me to do this then, would you?” She ran her hand over his hardness, smiling salaciously.

He grabbed her wrist up, his face full of mock reproach.

“Be good, I said.”

“Fine.” She crossed her arms over her chest, pouting. She nudged him with her foot.

“I mean it.”

She started poking at him, just to annoy him. He swatted at her, finally retaliating by tackling her. They were about to fall off the couch, mid-wrestle, when a soft knock came from the door.

“Saved by the bell.” He launched himself up to go grab the pizza. Of course, it was a fancy margherita pizza with fresh basil. It was piping hot and delicious, complete with real dishes, cloth napkins, and cutlery.

“Malfoy, you are from another planet. You realize that right?” Hermione teased though mouthfuls of pizza. She was so hungry she might inhale the whole thing. “At least you know to eat it with your hands.”

“I'm rich, not a freaking martian, Granger,” grouching, he shoved half a slice in his face.

“Whatever, you say,” she chewed away. “This is amazing.”

“Just amazing?” he goaded, grabbing another slice.

“Yes, I am holding the double qualifier in the tank for later use.” Downing her wine, she cocked an eyebrow at him. “Don’t want to overuse it and dilute its meaning.”

“I see,” a slow smile spread across his face. “And what, pray, would you be ‘holding’ it for?”

“Sexual escapades,” she said casually, Draco almost snorted. “It’s like The Icecapades but no ice and naked.”

“Sharp blades?”

“Depends on how kinky you want to get.” She batted her eyes at him.

“Sounds dangerous.”

“I hope so,” she gave him an exaggerated wink.

Draco made a low sound in his throat and put his plate down. “Finish. Your. Pizza.”

She swallowed the last bite with gusto, making noises that caused Draco wrinkle his nose.

“Nervous?” he moved closer to her.

“No, just enjoying offending your delicate sense of decorum.” She slurped her wine loudly.

“That’s it,” he threw his hand up in there and dived at her, growling “You need some discipline.” She squealed and jumped off the couch, running around the coffee table. He reached out and snatched her up, putting her wine glass down. His hands forked into her hair, as his mouth locked onto hers. He backed her across the room, to the grand piano by the dining room.

“Up.” He commanded.

“What if I am not done eating?”

“Too bad.” He lifted her up to perch on the edge of the piano to the right. “Foot there, he pointed to the ledge by the keyboard. Don’t fall in.” She braced her hand on either side of the case head, securing her foot like he instructed. He pulled out the bench and sat down, flexing his fingers.

“You will have to pardon me, it’s been years.” He made a couple of more flourishing movements and posed over the keys intently, then slammed his fingers down into a broken version of ‘Chopsticks’.

Clank, clank, clank, clank.

“Whyyyyy?” Hermione rolled her eyes, and shoved him with her free foot. Draco chuckled and the began playing 'Mary had Little Lamb'. “For fucks sake, Malfoy.”

“Sorry, sorry.” He waved his hand apologetically. “This one gets all the girls in a twist.” He started keying out a simple song that she didn’t recognize at first until she realized it was 'Wonderwall'.

“Seriously? Give me a break.” She jumped down, slapping the side on the instrument. “Enough, let’s do it on this baby. Think it will hold?”

“We are going to find out but hold on.” He held up a finger. “Just one sec.” Mischief was in his eyes. He put his hand to the keys, tongue between his teeth and started playing the beginning of Claire De Lune. She stilled, leaning on the piano, as he struggled a bit through the beginning passages but as he got warmer his playing got stronger. He cursed softly at his mistakes. “I haven’t touched a piano in forever, I still remember this one. This is the easy part, too.”

She didn’t care, she was so surprised, she stood mesmerized. As he reached the more intense areas he became more absorbed in the music, playing through the cascading crescendo with passion. Hermione felt her eyes widen, watching his long fingers fly across the ivory keys. Whatever she had reduced him to mentally, he was such a complex person up close, full of secrets and surprises, hidden talents and an inner life no one could know. He was more than a caricature she kept filing away him as. This act humanized him more to her than anything else he could have. She also recognized that was likely the point.

Even before he wrapped up the delicate ending notes, she threw herself at him, the piano keys emitting loud, discordant notes as she tackled him.

“Impressed?” he asked as she straddled him on the bench, seeking his mouth.

“I don’t care if this your evil ploy get girls, it worked, I am in.” She kissed him, tonguing his lips to let her in. He complied, arms encircling her, squeezing. She nuzzled him, raking her fingers through his hair. He pulled her t-shirt up over her head and tossed it away, smiling wide at the reveal of her frilly black bra. “I do have some nice underwear, see?”

He buried his face in her neck, nipping down her throat and across her shoulders, his hand stroking her breast through the silk of her bra. She leaned back in to the keyboard, the notes sounding in protest. He pulled a cup down and took her nipple into her mouth, swirling his tongue and suckling. Her moan erupted involuntarily, she gripped his head, fingers laced in his hair. He pressed his fingers in the softness of her other breast, bringing his mouth over to attend to it. She rolled her hips on him, eliciting sharp huffs from his nose.

He sat back, running his finger over the closure of her jeans. “I feel like I am unwrapping a present.” He unbuttoned her, drawing down the zipper. His hands ran over her stomach and rib cage, He trailed kisses over her torso.

"Merry Christmas." She swung her leg over him and stood, shimmying out of her jeans and socks to reveal a lacy black thong. “Tah dah, ” she said softly as she twirled for him. He rose,

carefully closing the lid of the piano, stealing hungry looks at her. He smacked her ass then lifted her up to sit on the side, in the sweeping groove of the instrument.

“You are so goddamned beautiful.” He ran his hands up her legs, gripping her hips. Her arms were around his neck, her head angled down at him slightly.

“So are you,” she breathed into his mouth, pressing her thighs into his sides. He pulled her forward, bringing her ass to the very edge of the piano, her legs dangling.

He began to pull her panties down. “Do not destroy those,” she warned.

"You're the boss." He tossed them away, smirking. He spread her legs slightly, lowering his head. His mouth traveled up her inner thighs, his lips dragging. Her breaths quickened, her pulse rocketed. “Lean back.” he asked. He parted her more while she propped back on her elbows, feeling his fingers running lightly toward her core. He teased her mercilessly with subtle brushes and near misses.

She whimpered at him. “Draaaaaco.” Her whole core trembled, yearning for him to satisfy her ache.

He shot her a smoldering look, gently running a finger over her center, teasing her seam.

"Baby, you are soaking wet."

She shivered, her breath hitching. He slowly spread her, grazing his fingers and running them up and around her labia and hood, toying with her. She hissed, arching up on the black lacquer. He continued teasing her deliberately, not quite connecting where she wanted him to, he was driving her crazy. He moved in closer, brushing her clitoris with two fingers, then dropping his mouth to it. He stayed still, just breathing heavily on it while she squirmed.

“Please, Draco,” she begged, feeling his hot breath panting on her. “Please.”

He engaged her, ghosting her with his mouth. She throbbed in anticipation of his full touch. When his tongue finally landed, her heart surged, hips bucking. His tongue tip seductively carved a circle around her center with a lazy intent. He lightly teased more, then fastened his mouth to her, sucking greedily, placing his hands on her thighs, spreading even them further. She struggled, staying the urge to grab his head and press him into her.

Her head dropped back, a long whine escaping her, shuttering involuntarily at his attentions. He pulled her right leg over his shoulder. His left hand slid off her leg and up her thigh, she felt two fingers enter while his mouth resumed his attentions on her clit. He urged into her, curling his fingers up inside her, rocking his hand. The slurping and sucking sounds he was making were so obscene, they made her writhe with bashful pleasure. He was talking shit the whole time when his mouth wasn't busy with other things, a running commentary. She couldn't make out what he was saying. Phrases containing 'hot', 'wet', 'tight' and inexplicably 'strawberry' drifted past her scrambled senses. She shuddered and jerked, the ache low in her body coiling tight. She started to feel out of body, unmoored, closing her eyes and focusing on the lifting sensation, the clench of her body. The noises coming out of her were primal as he consumed her, shoving her over the cliff of her orgasm. Her vision shimmering and she

broke, free falling to her finish. Squirming to get away from his intensity, he held her fast. Looking up at her eagle-eyed, he slowly removed his fingers. He savagely licked up her cunt as a finishing move, eyes locked on her face.

“Oh my god,” was all she could repeat, flat on her back.

He shucked off his clothes off in record time, applying a condom. Easily vaulting himself up onto the piano, he drug her under him. The instrument protested with a soft rustling chime. Devouring her mouth, he popped her bra clasp in the front, turning his attentions to her breasts again. He ran a palm over her chest, cupping her breasts then licking her nipples, groaning with arousal.

“I need to feel you right now,” he pled into her chest.

“I am all yours.” Hermione implored, spreading her legs wider as he nestled into them. Aligning himself, he thrust in to her with a grunt. The piano made an another muffled ring. She gasped and clutched his back, clawing at him. He buried himself in her with a snap of his hips, lowering his body to hers.

“Tell me you hate me, Granger.” He whispered against her ear.

“I hate you,” she mewled, as he thrust again.

“Tell me again, mean it.” as he withdrew.

“I fucking hate you, Malfoy,” snarling this time. He pushed into her again, harder, as she shifted upward at the force.

“Good. More.”

“You disgust me, you fascist pig.” She almost meant it. Her eyes fierce were as she berated him more, prompting another sharp thrust as they slid more on the lacquer with a squeak.

“Is that all you got?” he hissed.

“Fuck you, you spoiled rich boy brat.”

He groaned with pleasure, clearly enjoying her words of humiliation. He sheathed himself all the way in her, as they slid more up the slick surface. Her head was almost over the edge now.

“Goddammit” she gritted.

“Sorry, I’m fucking slipping,” he complained. Reaching out, he anchored one hand to the top edge of the piano, pushing them back down, sinking himself into her again with a grunt, he murmured “Better?”

She nodded as his strokes now came harder and faster, she could feel his heart race against her chest, arms bracketed around her, biceps flexing to hold them in place. He stared at with a white hot intensity, his face reddening, beaded with perspiration.

"You don't fucking deserve me," she spat at him.

"I know. I know I don't." He panted, snapping into her harder.

She craned up to capture his mouth his hers, scratching his shoulder blades as his body undulated on top of her. He fucked her harder, moaning as he kissed her fervently.

She could sense his tipping point was near. His body was taut as one of the piano strings, moving erratically. She lifted her hips, squeezing him inside of her. He grimaced with a throaty moan. Wrapping her legs around his waist, clung to him as he rutted into her. She clamped down more. The piano protested with jostling notes.

"Granger, Jesus Christ."

"Fuck you, Malfoy. Let go, you bastard." She squeezed again, grinding her hips up, biting his pulse point.

He made a strangled hitching sound, uttering an impressive string of curses. Seizing with a stuttering exhale, he followed it with a guttural noise forcing out of him in a sustained whoosh before he collapsed on her. The piano creaked, jangling unhappily. A thin sheen of sweat cover them both as they lay still but for their panting.

Hermione felt dazed, but sated, running her fingers along his back, still pulsing with aftershocks. She wanted to dive back into him immediately. The unquenchable thirst she had for him was unprecedented. Ron had been a fine lover. Not selfish, but unadventurous to the point of making her feel weird when she would suggest something less vanilla early on. He certainly would have never fucked her on top of a grand piano, or anywhere else really interesting, for that matter. She would let Malfoy have in the middle of runway in peak traffic if he asked, without hesitation. It occurred to her that her best encounters were flings, which probably said more about her own hangups than her previous lovers' aptitude.

Draco kissed her temple with gusto then rolled cautiously off her carefully to avoid tumbling off the side to the floor. He sat up with a squeak. "I am sticking to this damn thing," he laughed.

"Same." She drug herself up and scooted over to the other side, jumping off. She stretched and sighed, searching the floor for her underwear. Draco watched her with rapt attention as he ambled over to the pizza. He grabbed a slice, eating it stark naked.

"I hope you are not planning on dressing yet." He eyed her derisively. "We are far from finished. Get a robe out of the bathroom if you want interim cover, but trust me when I say it won't be on long."

"I have my own plans," she teased, putting her underwear back on. She took him up on the robe, grabbing one from the back of the bathroom door, emerging back into the common area. Draco was propped up on the divan in his white boxers, ankles crossed, finishing his slice.

She sat on the end by his feet, facing him.

“What’s on our agenda next, boss?” He asked, cocking an eyebrow.

"You mentioned discipline..." She stroked his thigh with a coy smile.

Chapter End Notes

CW: Smut

CW: flagrant piano sex

CW: verbal humiliation kink

Allusions to knife play, pain kink, dom/sub

Chapter 14: Discipline

Chapter Summary

Draco and Hermione's encounter continues, the dining room furniture gets involved.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Draco eyed her warily. "Discipline, you say?"

Hermione smiled demurely, padding over to the dining room. She pulled out a Queen Anne side chair and waited. Draco's eyes tracked her, raising an eyebrow at her when she produced the chair. "I don't suppose you have any rope?"

"Nooooooo," he answered suspiciously. "Dare I ask?"

"I will have to trust you to keep your hands to yourself."

"Mark me officially intrigued." He got up, sauntering over.

"Are you ready? Do you need a moment?"

He shook his head.

"Sit." She pointed at the chair. He did as requested. "Put your hands on the back legs and don't move them, like you are tied up. You are not allowed to touch me until I say you can."

"I will do my level best." He wrapped his hands around the back legs and gave her an oddly angelic look, fluttering his eyelashes at her.

She stood in front of him, opening her robe and letting it slide off her shoulders to the floor.

Draco shifted in his seat but didn't release his hands. He made a small noise of disapproval. "I am not sure I like this."

"Safe word?"

"Do I need one?"

"You are not technically restrained so, maybe?" she grinned.

"Okay, then. Illegitimi non carborundum."

Hermione snorted, grabbing her t-shirt off the floor. "That's three words, but go off, King."

"Correcting your tattoo," he snickered.

"Can we not?"

He shrugged with mischievous expression. She ignored him, methodically folding the shirt diagonally into a long, makeshift sash. She tied it like a blind fold around Draco's eyes.

"You really are a bad girl," he chuckled as she secured the cloth.

"Honestly, I have never done anything like this my life. I am a self-described prude." Checking the fit on his face, she stood by the chair Draco occupied patiently, letting him marinate in the silence.

"Could have fooled me, you little fox."

"I read a lot." She placed a hand on his chest. "Are you comfortable?"

"Yes." he inclined his head.

"Then let's begin."

She stilled again, pulling her hand away. Minutes slipped by.

"You are too quiet. What are you up to?"

She moved, circling around to him trail her nails across his shoulders then across his chest.

"That feels nice," he purred.

"Shhh. No talking."

"What about my safe word?"

"Except for your safe word, stop being difficult," she scolded. What a handful he was. She almost wished for one of her riding crops. She kept that to herself.

She straddled him, taking his face in her hands and lightly kissing him on his cheeks, his chin, his forehead then his mouth, barely bushing his lips.

He smiled.

Kissing him again, Hermione inched up his thighs. Running her fingers over his torso, down his arms and back, she blew in his ear. He flinched, making a hitching noise.

"Ticklish?" she crooned. He nodded vociferously. "Awww," she blew on him again as he shivered. She began licking his ear and biting his lobe, tonguing down his neck lightly before crossing his throat repeating up on the opposite side.

He moaned softly, already growing hard. Hermione layered soft bites and kisses across the hard lines of his shoulders and pecs, snaking across and down his chest. She pinched his nipples lightly before putting her mouth on each them, suckling, which caused Draco to gasp

and shudder. Scooting even closer, he chest pressed to his, to him she tongued at his mouth, requesting entrance, kissing him deeply when he relented. She could feel his arms trembling, hands clenched on the legs of the chair. His heart thundered against her breastbone.

“Do you want to touch me?”

He sighed heavily, nodding.

“Well you can’t.” She booped his nose.

He made a derisive noise.

"None of that," she warned. He squirmed like an impatient child.

She rose, stepping back off from him, observing him as she stilled herself again. He was listening intently for clues, his head tilting.

Quietly dropping to her knees, she parted his legs, entering the divide, Putting her hands on his abs, she stroked them laterally. A guttural sound escaped from his throat. She brazenly licked up his stomach from the waistband of his shorts to the middle of his chest (stealing his move from the limo), imparting kisses on her way down. She held still again, listening to his labored breathing, her hands on his thighs.

“Am I torturing you, Draco? Would you file a report with The Hague?” she asked innocently, trailing nails through his downy blond leg hair. His laugh was tight. He dropped his head back, shaking it. She ran her finger under his waistband, across his abdomen, humming softly, making him suck in a breath as she barely grazed his tip.

“Oops,” she giggled, dragging her finger back across, avoiding the head this pass. She pulled the hair of his goody trail. He sucked in, stomping a foot in frustration.

"Sorry," she simpered at him.

He bared his teeth at her with a grunt.

Hooking her fingers into the elastic on either side of his underwear, she pulled. “Cooperate please.”

He complied, raising his hips. She slid off his boxers and ran her fingers up his calves, pushing back in. She blew on his cock, watching it jump. She licked her palm, curling her hand lightly around his length and stroked him slowly up and down. Pursing her lips again, she blew on the tip. His head was still thrown back, his tongue wetting his lips.

“Ask me for something. One thing,” she whispered, continuing to as she caress him as his pulse fluttered at throat.

“Take this blindfold off, I want to see you.”

"No."

A whine escaped his lips.

"Spoiled brat" she murmured. She delicately tongued just the head of his cock as it twitched.

The chair creaked under his grip, a guttural sound escaping him.

"Good boy," she cooed, returning the favor from the mountain.

He scoffed through his teeth.

She licked him again, more sustained, applying more pressure. He tensed and groaned, his hips jerking.

"Ok, you may remove the blindfold, as long as you put your hands right back where they were, buster."

"Buster?" He flung the T-shirt off, pinning his intense gaze to her. He obediently returned his hand back to their original position. She'd never seen anyone look so hungry, so possessive. She slowly licked up the underside of his shaft, not breaking eye contact with him. He twisted as she swirled her tongue around his head then enveloped him in her mouth. He hissed with a sharp inhale, bucking. Sliding back down the length of his cock she paused, then dragged her mouth back up his protruding vein. She worked on him, sucking and licking him like a popsicle, tasting the salty beads of moisture he was producing. He struggled to keep his discipline in check as she suctioned his tip, licking the underside of his head. Cupping his balls, she established rhythm with her touch and tongue, becoming faster and more urgent.

Holding the chair so hard it was shaking slightly, it started making small cracking sounds under his grasp. She broke off, fearing he really might break the furniture, climbing into his lap. She grinned at him wickedly.

"You can ask for something else." She bit his neck.

"Baby, please let me touch you. Please," he begged.

"No. Not yet." She smiled tartly.

"Ugh." He slumped. "I am going to break this fucking chair into splinters"

"Choices - I can finish sucking your dick until you explode or I can sink on to you like this and fuck you crosseyed. But you still can't touch me."

"I don't know how much longer I can hold out with the no touching thing."

"That's not an answer." She ground on him to punctuate her reply.

"I want to be inside you, right fucking now. Condom, jeans," he gritted out. She jumped off him and rifled through his pockets, finding what she needed, returning to him. She took her time unwrapping it and rolling it on him. He was breathing hard through his nose.

He flexed his hands few times, stretching his arms over his head, and place them back on the chair legs. "Is this going to work, can your feet reach the ground?" he looked either side. "You're pretty tiny...and pretty, pretty, too."

She blushed furiously. "Uh, I dunno, let's give it a test drive." She straddled him again, her toes barely touching the floor, not enough to give her leverage. There was not enough room for her knees on the seat.

"Crap," she surveyed the area for solutions. "One second." She grabbed a couple of chairs putting them on either side of him and hopped back up, checking motion and stability, lowering herself on her knees up and down.

"Ingenius." Draco rolled his shoulders with a smirk.

"Do you want to undress me?" She stood up, moving within his reach.

He carefully unhooked her bra, and tried to kiss her breasts, but she pushed his head back. "No, no."

Grumbling about cockteases, he slid off her thong with flourish, tossing it away. She waited for him to return his hands to the chair legs.

She reseated herself, scooting up his thighs. She reached between her legs, touching herself, looking at him with a reckless expression.

"You are so fucking evil, you curly-headed harlot. I am going to fuck you into the next century when you let me go."

"Did I say you could speak?" She let her hair fall around her face, pulling her glistening fingers out as she gyrated and smeared two fingers across his lower lip.

"That ought to shut you up," she snarled, his eyes wide. His tongue darted out, tasting the trail she left. Her hand dove back into her center and she moaned as she pleased herself, lolling her head. She felt feral, taunting him with her lewd behavior. It was so out of left field for her, she was emboldened even more by his visceral reactions to her.

"Baby, please. I can't handle much more of this. I need you to let me go," he plead through gritted teeth. The chair trembled.

She relented, pulling her wet hand up his length few times, smoothing her juices on him. Positioning herself over him, she sunk onto him at a pace so slow he growled at her as she took him in. Palming his chest, she languorously rocked on him. She made soft mewling sounds as he filled her up. He was literally spasming when she finally released him verbally.

"You can touch me now, Draco," she acquiesced.

He emitted a loud exhale, grabbing her roughly, pulling her forward while slamming his mouth into hers, devouring her. He buried himself fully in her, grinding her body on his. He hungrily sucked her nipples, bit her shoulders and throat, his mouth roaming everywhere. His hands guided the tempo of her body, thrusting up into her.

He fucked into her with a desperation she hadn't felt from him before now. Staccato moans escaped her, as she matched his rhythm.

He halted abruptly and she reproached him with a cry.

"My turn," he grunted, taking her with him as he stood up. He laid her out on her back, splaying her on the dining room table. Putting her legs over his arms, her legs canted back, he pushed into her again with a moan. He bucked in savagely, setting a blistering pace. He held her place by her thighs on the slick surface, as their bodies collided with vicious slaps. She felt him deep within her. The sound was as jarring to her as it was arousing. She closed her eyes as he ravaged her, reaching for him.

"Eyes on me," he spat, straining. "I want you to watch while I violate you." A thrill coursed through her at his vulgar words. He leaned into her so she could run her hands up his body.

"Harder, you prick," she moaned in response. "Deeper." He dropped a thumb to her clit as her flexed into her with more urgency. Some remote part of her logical mind questioned the this divine feeling born of such seeming violence. How strangely brutal it must look removed from the act. Her brain was wandering, hazy. Her core was vibrating, tense and hot. He leaned back to change the angle and access her clit better. She clamped down on him, cursing his name. Twinkling bloomed in front of her eyes.

"Come for me baby, I need to feel you," he panted, slamming into her arrhythmically. His long fingers fondled her center. She looked at him, His body taut with cut lines of muscle, tendons locked. Sculpture come to life, he looked so beautiful consumed by his lust, it knocked her over the edge.

The surge in her womb erupted from her center into her limbs and nerves, flooding to her fingertip and toes. She cried out, coming apart, arching up as her senses blossomed in every direction, muscles seizing.

"Oh Godddd."

Draco laid into her for the final stretch, thrusting, smashing her into her, grinding like an animal.

"*Fuck!*" he roared into her neck with hard finishing strokes, biting bluntly at her shoulder, gripping her desperately to him. He held her for a moment, then lay her back down gently, withdrawing from her. Her arms flopped out the table with a thump, letting her legs go limp and dangle off the end as he staggered back.

"I will never recover from this," she huffed out, her chest laboring. Closing her eyes, she focused on controlling her breathing. The sparkling energy in her skin started to abate, dissolving throughout her body. She felt Draco's arms under her, lifting, cradling her to his chest. She looped her arms around his neck as he walked them back to the bedroom. He secured her with one arm and pulled the bedclothes back, depositing her in the four poster bed.

"Break time," he murmured, kissing her forehead.

She immediately started to drift. She heard him doing something in the bathroom, running water, flushing. Then he was next to her in the bed, pulling her back into his chest. Whispered devotion floated past her ear as she slipped into sleep, not a single thought troubling her.

Chapter End Notes

CW:

light dom/sub behavior

light BDSM

verbal humiliation

dirty talk

sex on really nice dining room furniture

Chapter 15: Bargaining

Chapter Summary

Hermione and Draco's time together draws to close.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dawn was barely breaking outside the windows when she woke. She was nestled into Draco, facing him, her head tucked against his chest. His breathing steady and deep, his arm slung over her loosely. Her bladder clenched, she began to wiggle loose, only for him to growl in protest pulling her back in.

“I am going to pee on you, Draco, let me up.”

“Yeah, not into that,” he grumbled, reluctantly letting her go. He rolled on his back, looking up at the ceiling, then closing his eyes again. She gave him a quick peck on the cheek, hopping off the bed, shutting herself in the bathroom. The expected cold marble floor was warm on her feet. She realized it had radiant heat installed, because, of course it did. Contemplating a quick shower, she washed herself off in the sink instead. She wanted to have him again before she took her leave, she would shower after. She appraised her self in the ornately framed mirror over double sinks. Her hair was a fright, fluffed out and chaotic. She looked at the counter for help, but all Draco had was a fine tooth comb and her hair would likely break. Hand grooming her mane was a chore, but it at least got it a few inches closer to her head. She washed her face and ate a little bit of toothpaste, rinsing her mouth out.

She pushed every negative thought away as she made her way back to the bed. She could have all of those after she left him. Right now, she wanted to concentrate on the time they had left, before their bubble of denial collapsed. He was still on his back, eyes closed, hands joined across his chest. He looked angelic (if not slightly funereal) in the early morning light with his white blond hair and pale skin almost radiating. She slid back in bed with him, he turned over on his side to meet her drawing her to him, his mouth seeking hers.

Draco made love to her slowly, reverently, as if he knew might be the last time. He worshipped her entire body with his fingers his tongue, his lips, murmuring words of praise and endearment to her. His touch was passionate and deft, while Hermione fell into him with her entire being, returning his attentions with her own relish and tenderness. She poured all of her all her desire into him with equal fervor. Leaving not an inch of his skin untouched or unattended, she consecrated him with her mouth and hands, wishing for the indescribable chemistry they had to never end. She explored the terrain of his form with a craving she'd never known. He entered her deliberately, but with gentleness. They moved together, eyes locked on each other, with an immutable devotion to each other's pleasure and connection.

She didn't not want to miss a single second of him. There were no harsh words, no snarls of insult. He was every ounce the sensual, assured lover she needed. His long, chiseled lines, covered in soft skin, met with her rounder, softer curves. He was sublime. His body enveloped her, cradled her, coaxing shattered pleasure from her several times. He cared for her in a way that made her feel precious and she was drunk on his attentions.

She thought about the nature of divine things as they crested together the final time, tumbling back down to earth. They trembled with heavy sighs and gripping hands, speaking murmured words of adoration to each other. This wasn't love, but she appreciated how the declaration tended to slip out when sex was this intoxicating.

"I want to see you again," he said after several minutes of silence. Neither of them dared to break the magic of the moment until now.

She only sighed on his chest, not daring to look at him, her stomach knotted.

"At least think about it." His voice rumbled in her ear.

Everything in her wanted to say yes, wanted to ensure him (and herself) she would think about it, but he had broken the spell.

"I don't know if it's a good idea." She knew it wasn't. He must realize it too. She could not, in good conscience, carry on further with him in any serious capacity.

"Tell me why? I like you, you like me. What's the problem?" He started to sit up, sliding out from under her. "There is something more between us."

She groaned and sat up. Reality came crashing back full force. "Is there? Or did we have a really great two night stand? Maybe it's just physical, because we could not be more diametrically opposed otherwise." She laid on her side, drawing the covers over her breasts, propping up on her elbow.

"I think there is. This is not about the rest of the world, Hermione. It's about us. I know you feel it too." He is gaze pierced her. He was not wrong, she surely felt it.

She instead deflected. "That's afterglow. Or novelty. Or whatever. All we have done is fuck and have fun, and it's been amazing, no doubt. But we don't really know each other. Suffice to say we abhor each other's politics. We hated each other in school, whatever you say about your ulterior motives. Besides the conflict and ethical issues, which are huge, it's problematic morally for me. I would be betraying my core beliefs, my convictions."

"Betrayal," he flinched. "I think that's farfetched."

She just stared at him. How could he not see the gravity of the issue here?

He laid down next to her mirroring her pose. "I think you are looking at it from a very different lens than I am. This is my job. Yes, I speak for the Riddle campaign, but I do not agree with the on everything personally. In fact quite a bit of it I think is heavy handed theatrics."

"You told me on the plane what you thought was immaterial, you were aligned with them." She poked his chest. "Don't backpedal now."

"Publicly, I have to be. This is what I do. However, it does not define me, it doesn't occupy my every waking thought. Shit, I don't even vote half the time."

Hermione shook her head in disbelief. "Oh my God, Draco, that doesn't make it better. That is your massive privilege talking. You can afford to not vote and not care. It doesn't affect you. You are hovering above everyone else in this artificial stratosphere of wealth that insulates you from most the rules and consequences."

"While that may be true, I see the game for what it is. It's not black and white, there is no good and evil. There is the lesser evil outcome of a system that is rigged. The illusion of choice in a system that is staggering towards total ideological dominion, bought and paid for and it will use whatever it can to get what it wants. Do I benefit from it, sure? It doesn't mean I approve."

"Then, why, Draco? That is a fucking cop out. It's coward..." She stopped herself, taking a breath. "Tell me *why* you are a part of it? Helping to further the goals of this deeply shitty administration, the whole movement, for that matter? Why sully yourself with it?" She pled with him to understand.

I scrubbed a hand down his face in exasperation. "I feel like we have been going in circles over this. It's all part of the same animal. Riddle is a symptom, not the disease. He is the outcome of a strategy that has been in place for decades. This country has repeatedly empowered this at the polls. '*The people*' you want to protect from us, time and again, have chosen this path. Your party has enabled it, moving further and further right rather than fight back, which is what they arguably should be doing. Harry may believe what he espouses, but it all safe, party approved nonsense. Toothless and lacking resolve, it will all get watered down. No real change will occur."

"There are huge differences, and you didn't answer my question. Why?" Scowling, she sat up.

"I repeat, I work with my family and honestly, I can't help a group of people who are too stupid to realize they are being had. I have no respect for those who act against their own best interests. They are too blinded by their own avarice to wake up."

"They are being cheated and manipulated."

"They are fools who revel in their own ignorance and inhumanity. They get what they get." His face was hard and she felt like she never knew this incarnation of him, as the old Draco she remembered all too well peeked through.

"Jesus christ, Malfoy, that's harsh. Are you saying the half of this country that doesn't think that way deserves this?"

"Do you ever wonder why the 1%, as you call it, has such scorn for average people," he almost sneered. "This is why. They see them as sheep, which I know sounds cliché but,

public fails see how in the overwhelming numbers they have on the powers that be. They allow themselves to be controlled and disenfranchised. Easily controlled, by the way, it's pathetic. It's always the same playbook and they never learn. Wave blacks criminal, drag queens or feminists in front of them and the succumb to lowest common denominator tactics. It's too easy."

She started to protest, but he cut her off. "Additionally, you high and mighty liberals talk a good game but you don't mean it. Your endless simpering and caving has done nothing but preempt the inevitable. Meanwhile you look down your noses at everyone with elitist messaging, thinking everyone is just going to automatically know to do the right thing innately, and see through the bullshit, in your estimation. Until you stop being holier than thou, wake up and fight as dirty as the conservative machine does, you are compromising yourself into irrelevance."

"I don't believe that, if we sink to your level, we are no better than you. Truth matters, justice matters." She furrowed her brow.

"That is where you are wrong. Those concepts are moldable, history is written by the victor. There is no such thing as a fair fight. You do what you have to - To win, to survive. You are losing the war, badly. The machine never rests and has gotten its hooks into everything. All branches, all public institutions, most of the media, the internet and tech. This country will have to burn it down and start over to fix it, it's so profoundly compromised."

"So it's this or revolution? I hate that 'both parties are the same' shit. They are not. God, I think you are actually a leftist! What are you doing with Riddle if this is what you believe?" She sat up, waving her arm, clutching the sheet to her breasts.

"You are missing the point, willfully I think," he challenged her, ignoring her question.

"No, I understand. You are not going to pass off racism, sexism, so many phobias I can't even count, plus corruption, authoritarianism and genocide as a difference of opinion to me. Business as usual? You can't be serious?" She could feel herself reddening. "This cynicism, this engineered hatred is corrosive and wrong, it cannot hold. We have to fight back in the face of this nihilistic doctrine. *I* have to fight back. It's an imperative for me, it is who I am at my core. You have to see better than that, look harder, Draco. Think harder."

He collapsed into the bed on his back, sighing loudly. "I don't know how to combat such pollyanna stylings. It's so naive."

"See, *this* is why we won't work. Even if you personally don't ascribe to what your boss, what that completely *fucked up* regime is doing, you are helping them. You are consciously participating in the destruction of this country and I can't have that in my life. Not as someone I want to care about. I won't let you quantify my altruism as foolish, it's fucking insulting." She turned away, starting to get up.

His hand snaked out and grabbed her arm. "I'm sorry, please don't leave me yet. Can we just table this for now? I don't want you departing on a sour note."

She sat still for a moment the edge of the bed, wanting to scream. He slowly drug her back across the bed, as she damned up her feelings and let him pull her back into him. He curled around her back, holding her tight.

“I know you want to hate me, but you can’t,” he whispered in her ear. She shivered but said nothing. He was right, there was no help for it, and making it worse by arguing more was pointless. They were at an impasse.

Dawn fully broke, Draco had dozed back off cocooned around her. She couldn’t stop her brain from chewing over their conversation. She finally extracted herself from him and retreated back to the living room to dress. It was time to go.

Leave and never look back.

She almost was fully clothed when he emerged from the bedroom in just some black sweatpants, his face subdued.

“It’s only seven-ish, we still have some time left. Can I order us some breakfast before you go?” He asked hopefully, running a hand through his mussed hair.

“No, I need to shower and pack and I don’t want to rush.” She picked up her bag, slinging it over her shoulder.

“So, this is it.” He exhaled, stepping to her, taking her in his arms. Her bag fell, thudding on the floor as he took her face in his hands, kissing her slowly. Her whole chest ignited once more.

She retreated from him, hoisting her bag up again. She met his gaze with a small grimace, he returned a sad and wistful smile.

“I had the most wonderful time with you, Draco. I mean it.” She grabbed her hair tie off the coffee table and twisted her mane into a slapdash ponytail as he watched her intently.

“At least tell me you will think about giving us a chance?” He spoke so quietly, she almost didn’t hear him. “Take as long as you need. Maybe after the election?”

“Maybe,” she shrugged noncommittally. She was over arguing, needing to escape his gravitational pull. She hugged him and went to the vestibule, giving him a last look. His face was soft and open, his eyes longing. She pushed up on her toes, pressing a soft kiss into his lips.

"You are beautiful." he murmured, looking down at her.

She went out his suite door blushing, but not glancing back. She feared for her resolve if she did.

CW:

Penetrative sex

more political bickering

Chapter 16: The Last Goodbye

Chapter Summary

Hermione heads back to reality.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Neville was blowing up her phone, as expected. Endless texts about if she was back and if she was ok. As if Draco might have murdered her and hidden her body. She finally replied after the notification cacophony became too much.

'back yet?'

'packing'

'car is here in an hour'

'kk'

'how was it, hoe?'

hoe! ho, a hoe is garden tool'

'ho is something santa says'

'touche'

'so? (eggplant emoji)'

'it was fantastic, also sad'

'you cut him loose'

'mostly, long story'

'we will talk'

'can't wait :|'

She finished packing and hopped in the shower, attempting to scrub Draco off her physically and mentally.

You will crave me now, like an addiction.

Her stomach leaped. Struggling to shake off memories of touching him, making love to him, she pressed through her routine. Their last round had been more meaningful for her than she wanted it to be. Her heart stuttered at the way he had looked at her, with so much desire and adoration. She cursed, emptying her head to focus on anything else. Pulling on grey slacks and a wine colored sweater, she found her flats and slipped them on. Make up and hair donned, she added the final toiletries along with her dirty clothes to the carry on. She took a last survey for forgotten things and headed out the door.

Neville was already in the lobby, cooling his heels on a blocky couch when she exited the elevator. His lanky form rose from the couch, dressed immaculately as usual.

“See, I am here in plenty of time.” She sauntered over as he handed her a coffee to go.

“Car will be here in like five.” He sipped his drink looking at her over plaintively over the rim of his cup, eyebrow up.

“Can it wait until we in are in the car?”

“Oh I’m sorry, is the NSA listening?”

“Maybe!” she shoved him, sending coffee down his chin.

“Bitch! Watch the Lora Piana.”

“Puhhhlease.” Hermione rolled her eyes.

The Uber arrived, tossing their bags into the trunk, they piled into the vehicle. Hermione settled in, waiting for the enevitable inquisition.

“Did Ron give any trouble after I left?” she asked preemptively.

“Meh, he bitched and moaned about how you won’t give him a chance then started macking on Allyson, who graciously put up with him. He’s so desperately inappropriate,” he rolled his eyes.

“Well thanks for covering me, I know how he can be.” She chewed on her thumbnail.

“You are the queen of conflict avoidance,” he laughed. “Just tell him you fucked Malfoy how many times? That will fix it.”

“Can’t do that, that has unthinkable repercussions that I am too chickenshit to deal with.” she sighed, shaking her head.

“No, I know, but I would sell my Gran to see his face.”

“The fallout would be nuclear.”

“But seriously, how many times?”

"I lost count." She dug in her purse for her phone. "It was...So. Fucking. Hot. He was magnificent. I have never been that wrapped up in anyone like that, ever. I had no idea it could be so...so...I don't know. I don't have the words."

"What do you mean, like that? You've had orgasms before now, I know you have."

"Totally, but this was just a whole other level, he consumed me. I could not keep my hands off him. The things I was willing to do with him, *wanted* to, dear god. And I have never come harder in my entire life."

He cocked an eyebrow at her. "Magnificent, huh?"

"Like, I came a lot. A LOT."

"Mazel tov," Neville deadpanned. His voice became serious Neville tone. "What are you going to do?"

"I know what I should do. Which is 180 degrees away from what I want to do." Sinking in the seat, she blew stray hairs out of her face. "You know, it just figures the one person I have any sort of connection with is completely untenable as partner. This is my life."

"He still wants to see you?" Neville played with his watch, not looking at her.

"He does. He asked multiple time, not shy about us at all. His self-assuredness is just..." she searched for words. Where were her words? She was good at words normally. "... And he doesn't see the issue either, which blows my mind." She threw her hands up in exasperation.

"I mean, that might work between normies, even people in different campaigns, but damn. I guess there's Carville and Matlin, but they are so weird it's not a good example."

"The stakes were so much lower back then too." She rubbed her forehead.

"George and Kelly Anne Conway?" He laughed.

"They divorced over their political views."

"Another bad example, I guess."

"Like, how can respect him?" She spread her hands helplessly. "I couldn't, I don't! I'm not sure I even respect myself right now. I have tried to ignore the elephant in the room. Believe me, Schrodinger's cake."

"Cat." Neville corrected.

"No, cake, mixed metaphor, get it? Have your cake and eat it too?"

"Doesn't work. Schrodinger's cat is not metaphor it's a thought concept." he smirked.

"God, Neville, shut the fuck up, nerd! It can be used as a metaphor. Fucking Draco corrected me about my latin on the plane." She pointed at her tattoo. "That's what started all this shit,

as matter of fact. Mansplaining. He didn't even recognize me and told me my Latin was wrong."

"Technically, he's right," teasing her.

"Oh my God," she facepalmed. "Pick a side."

"Sorry." Straightening up, he studied her.

"Oh! And, *and*, he told me he had a crush on me in school the whole time, that's why he was so mean to me."

"Pfffft." Neville made an intensely skeptical face.

"I know, I don't know if I buy it either."

"I don't, but it doesn't matter. I just don't see a way out for you, seriously. You'd have to sneak around like you are having an affair. God forbid the media gets a hold of it. TMZ city. He could literally be almost anyone else on the planet and it would be easier. I mean, don't get me wrong, I've fucked republicans. They are all so far in the closet they are in Narnia, which makes it even funnier. But, you can't date one, not seriously anyway. The self-loathing is biblical. And Riddle is just evil. Malfoy is evil by proxy."

"He just thinks it's his 'job' Like it's some banal 9 to 5. He chooses not to care. Because he can, because he knows he benefits from it, he doesn't think it's something that can ever be changed. He works for Riddle so he aligns with him. His is Dad is a conservative, so he is too. End of story. He says he doesn't vote half the time." She shrugged.

"Ughhhh, don't be an apologist. Alignment, schmalignment, he is still contributing to their fuckery in a major way." He offered her a stick of gum, which she waved off.

"I'm not, just...I can't figure him out. I don't think he's textbook amoral but I think his experience just put him on another planet perspective wise, above it all or something. I let it go, because I figured nothing but a good time would come of it. Silly me."

She was silent for a moment, hesitating to tell Neville the next thing.

"Also, he married. With kids. Separated, he swears, due to rampant infidelity. So there's that," she cringed.

"Cheese n' Rice, Mi. He's more red flags than a golf course."

"I know."

"You can't pursue anything with him. The conflict would make you a total basket case. It would literally kill you."

"*I know*." She huffed petulantly.

"Don't get mad at me, I didn't sleep with Mr. Alt-Right Pipeline," Neville snapped.
"Repeatedly."

Hermione just sighed and shook her head. There was no way out. Two days ago, she wanted to slap Draco's face and shake sense into him. Today, she still wanted to, but for very different reasons.

Her phone buzzed and she slowly turned it over to look at the message.

'What have you done to me? I am bewitched.'

Her breath caught in an almost sob.

"Oh nooooo, honey, you are really cooked." She could feel his pity flowing off of him. She didn't dare meet his gaze or she would completely fall apart.

Her thumbs hung over the keypad, contemplating how to end it. Feeling, overdramatic and self-absorbed, she attempted to stiffen her resolve. Her father would tell her painful decisions were usually the right ones.

She felt an ache for things they would not have together. They would never laugh over dinner or walk on the beach. She would never touch him intimately again. He would never take her to Paris.

She snorffled back another sob and began to type.

'It was amazingly amazing :)' she replied.

'It doesn't have to be past tense, we don't have to end here.' he returned instantly, as if he had the response loaded.

She took a deep breath, feeling the inverse of the cliff she jumped off in the limo with Draco 48 hours ago. Neville put placating hand on her shoulder as she responded.

'It does and I am sorry there is no happily ever after for us.'

She waited another moment, staring down at the phone. His response percolated. Willing him to type anything that would miraculously change things. The ellipse stopped, started, then stopped again. She forged ahead, choosing her final words carefully and hit send.

'I will see you in another life when we are both cats'

The ellipse on his end popped up once more. Before his text could materialize, fearing for the loss of her nerve, she flipped to his contact information and blocked his number. She teared up and stared out the window, while Neville soothed her.

"Oh God, Nev, I'm crying over Draco Malfoy. Fucking shoot me," she choked out a laugh. She collapsed into a hug from him. "Why am I like this?"

"Honey, we are all like this," he soothed. "It's ok."

Hermione wiped her eyes after a few minutes of letting her sorrow finish flowing down her face. She sat up, mentally shutting the door on Draco to consider the immediate future. The election was month away, and the consequences of not winning were too terrible to contemplate. If Harry Potter was going to be the next President of the United States, he needed her 100% dedicated to him and him alone. For now, he was the only straight man Hermione had room in her life for.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! This idea came to me literally in the middle of the Atlanta airport as I went home from DragonCon with a Manacled hangover.

I can't decide if there is a part two. I the only thing I know, and have known since the beginning, is Draco will not be so easily deterred. Let me know if you think their story should continue, or if it being eft ambiguous is the best ending. It's a HEA from the proper perspective :)

I thoroughly enjoyed writing my first fic! I have more ideas percolating.

CW:

sex chat

sadness

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!