

Navigating the Perils of Parental Plans

by GinervaWeaslby

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 of 5

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

Hermione Weasley and Astoria Malfoy sat at their regular table at Pasquale's Restaurant. They had met weekly at the restaurant for the past fifteen years, since the week after their children's first Quidditch match. Both of their children had been sorted into Ravenclaw house. Rose had been the Keeper for the team while Scorpius had been the Seeker. Before the game had started, Ron and Draco were face to face, arguing over who would get the last two seats in the top row of the guest stands. Hermione and Astoria, with a shared look, had decided to break it up by each taking one seat and telling the boys to shove off. Ron and Draco had looked at their wives and stormed off to their respective houses' student bleachers, argument settled. The women had become instant friends, bonding over their children, their general dislike of Quidditch, their husbands' less than subtle complaints about the house their children had been sorted into, and strangely enough, SPEW.

At lunch, they would talk about what had happened since they spoke last: politics, the weather, and the state of the world in general. As their friendship grew, they started making plans for shared vacations, family get-a-ways, summer parties, and knew they *had* to do something about the animosity between their husbands. It had taken four years of careful plotting and planning, but eventually they had managed it. Now they had a new challenge. They had decided, without consulting their children, that Rose and Scorpius were perfect for each other. They were both bright, loved Quidditch, and just happened to be best friends. They both had in, their parents' opinion, the *worst* taste in the opposite sex that they had ever seen. Admittedly, Rose and Scorpius both thought that the other's choices for relationships were horrible as well. The problem was that Hermione and Astoria were stumped. They had been trying for six months to come up with a plan, and so far nothing seemed like it would even come close to working.

"We need to get the boys involved, that's the only way." Hermione sighed. "You just aren't ruthless enough, and I don't have Ron's skill for strategy."

"I have to agree with you. Let's get together for dinner on Thursday and discuss it."

"That is a wonderful idea. In the mean time, talk to Draco, and I'll talk to Ron. Among the four of us, we should be able to come up with a few decent plans."

Later that evening, Scorpius opened his window and let in the small scops-owl that was madly flitting about. He retrieved the small scroll attached to its leg, fed Anastasia a treat, and watched, amused, as she tried to get his eagle owl, Morty, to make room on his perch.

Scorp,

You were right! They are definitely up to something. I overheard my mom telling my dad how she wished I could find someone smart, funny, and sweet, like Scorpius, to settle down with. It sounds like they are trying to bring in reinforcements. Secure your room and Floo me when you read this. We must nip this in the bud!

Rose

On Thursday evening, the couples got together for dinner. Astoria still hadn't been able to come up with anything solid but decided to host a dinner party for observation purposes. Draco and Hermione both decided independently that a methodical approach was called for and decided to work together. Ron had a plan that was "sure to work"; however, he hadn't quite worked it all out yet so refused to share the details. Confident that one of their ideas was bound to work, the four parted ways promising to meet again after Astoria's dinner party on Saturday.

Astoria's Plan – "Monitor subjects and hope to come up with a better plan" plan

On Saturday evening, the Potter and Weasley families descended on the Malfoy summer home. Why it was still called the Malfoy summer home when it was where Draco and his family lived full time, one would never know. About halfway through dinner, Scorpius decided it was time to initiate the "Spoil whatever our parents have planned" plan.

"Lily, you look lovely this evening. Is that a new outfit?"

"Thank you, Scorp." Lily blushed. "I bought it a few weeks ago as a present to myself for completing my Healer training."

"Rose mentioned that you finished. Have you decided on a specialty yet?"

"Not exactly. I'm wavering between Artifact Accidents and Potion and Plant Poisoning."

"I can see your dilemma. I know it doesn't count, but I vote for Artifact Accidents."

"Really? Why?"

"Because if I join the Magical Law Enforcement Squad, that will give me an excuse to come visit you," Scorpius said with a wink.

Scorpius flirted with Lily through the rest of the meal, much to his parents' consternation. After the meal, he asked Lily to join him for a stroll through the gardens. Once they were out of earshot, Lily broke out laughing.

"Oh, Scorp, I've had a wonderful time. You flirt incredibly well. Thanks for not going over the top, much more and you would have really had me in the palm of your hand."

"Well, I learned from the best, and flirting with you wasn't a hardship. You really are a lovely person, Lily. Thanks for playing along. I know Rose is grateful as well."

"Anything I can do for the cause. Besides they have ganged up against the two of you. The least I could do was help even the odds. I'm not really sure why you guys are so opposed to the idea, though. I mean, you really are perfect for each other."

"I wouldn't go that far. Besides why change a good thing? Rose is my best mate. A romance would just complicate things, and if it didn't work, things would never be the same."

"Possibly, but you should at least consider how much better things could be if you were lovers ~~and~~ best mates."

A/N: This story was inspired by a prompt and written for drcjsnider. Thanks to my Beta for correcting my egregious comma errors.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of 5

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

A/N: Thank you to julymorning for betaing this story, to drcjsnider for her endless encouragement, and to my reviewers for egging me on!

Hermione & Draco's Plan, Part 1 "Establish Existence of Mutual Attraction"

Hermione and Draco met at the café approximately two weeks after what had now been dubbed by the elder Malfoys and Weasleys as the "Disastrous Dinner". Each carried with them a bag containing two decorative bottles. Their plan was simple: step one, establish that Rose and Scorpius were attracted to each other. Once that was established, step two would be to dose them with a potion to get the ball rolling. Draco and Hermione had each spent time brewing different potions for the first step of their plan. Hermione had brewed the Scent Synthesizing Solution, which was designed to be used as a cologne or perfume and would take on the scent of the object immersed in it. Draco had brewed Amortentia, the powerful love potion, which would smell like whatever the person sniffing it found attractive.

"How did everything go Draco? Any problems with the potion?"

"None at all. I have it right here. You?" he said, placing the two bottles on the table.

"Everything went smoothly," Hermione said, placing her two bottles on the table. "Did you get a piece of his clothing?"

"Yes, I asked one of the house-elves to bring me his shirt from yesterday."

"That will do nicely." Hermione took the proffered shirt, poured the potion on it, and then siphoned the potion back into the bottle and stoppered it. Once complete, she gave Draco the solution she had made earlier with Rose's shirt from yesterday. Draco in turn gave her one of the vials of Amortentia.

"Don't go playing with that once you are done. I'm not sure the Weasel's heart could take the side effects," Draco said, adding an eyebrow waggle for effect. Hermione just rolled her eyes at Draco and promised to get back to him with the results of the experiment.

Draco approached Scorpius later that afternoon. "Scorpius, I need your opinion. Which of these two perfumes do you think would be better for your Mum?" Draco handed each vial to Scorpius.

"Well, Dad, they are very similar. However, the first one, in addition to vanilla and lilac, smells a little like bacon, which is odd in a perfume. I'm not sure either is right for Mum. She tends to enjoy a spicier scent over the more flowery ones."

"You are absolutely right; I wonder what they were thinking by adding the bacon odor?"

"I don't know, but it is certainly a wonderful scent. I think I'll ask Bitsy to make me up a BLT," Scorpius said and wandered off towards the kitchen.

Bacon, Draco thought and hollered after his son, "Have her make one for me, too!"

Hermione determined to get her results as quickly as possible was able to take Rose aside after dinner that evening. "Rosie, could you help me for a moment? I'm trying to recreate this particular scent, and I'm having the hardest time. Your nose is better than mine; what am I missing?"

Rose sniffed each vial. "Dirty socks and baking bread."

"What do you mean, 'dirty socks and baking bread'?"

"The difference between the two scents. The first one smells a little like baking bread, while the second has the unmistakable addition of dirty socks. If it weren't for that, they would be identical. Whom are you making that for?"

"Hugo. He's always trying something new. I thought I might be able to make something more to his liking for his birthday."

"Well, other than the dirty socks part, it is very nice for a man's scent. It seems a little fancy for Hugo, though. You might want to replace one of the spices with clover to bring in some of the outdoors."

"Thanks, Rose. I'll think about it. I may scrap the whole plan, though, you never know."

Early the next morning, Hermione Flooed the Malfoy summer home. "Good morning, Astoria. Is Draco available?"

"Good morning, Hermione. I believe he was just getting ready to start brewing. Why don't you come on through?" At Astoria's invitation, Hermione stood and walked through the fireplace.

Hermione greeted her friend with a hug, and Astoria led her into the foyer and started down the hall towards the back of the house.

"Good morning, Mrs. Weasley. Not here on official business, I hope?" Scorpius said jokingly, coming down the stairs.

"Of course it's nothing of the sort. I just Flooed Astoria this morning regarding getting some fresh herbs from her garden for a project I'm working on. Since my first meeting of the morning with the Junior Deputy of the Improper Use of Magic office isn't until 9 am, I figured I had a few minutes to collect them and enjoy a cup of coffee."

"Erm, well yes," Scorpius blanched. "I'll see you at 9 am sharp, Director."

"I expect so," Hermione responded. With that, the two witches watched Scorpius enter the room that they had just left. Hermione motioned for Astoria to remain where she was and stay quiet while they waited for him to Floo to the office.

"Bugger!" They heard from the room, immediately followed by, "Ministry of Magic".

"Oh, I love watching you work, Hermione," giggled Astoria. "You certainly know how to scare them out of their shorts!"

"Well, one must take pride in one's work," Hermione said, breaking down into laughter.

"And what may I ask is so funny?" Draco said, entering the hall.

"Hermione, intimidating her underlings, dear. She has nearly the same flair for it as you do."

"Well, we had an excellent teacher," Draco said, thinking of Professor Snape, whom he tried to emulate when being intimidating.

"That we did," Hermione solemnly agreed. "On to brighter subjects; Rose passed the test brilliantly! I thought I was in trouble when she detected the odor of dirty socks, but since I told her I was making cologne for Hugo, I think she wrote it off as my handling some of his things while making the concoction. How did Scorpius do?"

"As expected. I'm going to start the second potion this morning. It should be ready in two weeks' time."

"Wonderful. That will coincide perfectly with Rose's birthday. I'll start planning the party."

"Why don't you let me do that, Hermione, seeing as that is all I've been able to add to this venture so far?" Astoria offered.

"Are you sure? You do have a much better flair for it than I do."

"Think nothing of it."

"In that case, we should probably head out to the gardens. I actually do want to collect some herbs. Rose had some excellent ideas to improve the scent for Hugo. I'd like to try them out before giving up completely and buying him a present for his birthday. Oh, before I forget, Draco, do you want the *Amortentia* back? I have no need for it, and I really don't want to leave it about the house. I hate to dispose of it if you can use it for something."

"Give it to Astoria when you meet for lunch. I'm sure I can find it a good home."

Ron's Plan (augmented by George) "Stick them together, literally" plan

Rose and Scorpius were sitting in Rose's room, trying to figure out what their parents' next move would be and how to foil it. They were getting nervous; other than Rose's mum's unusual visit to the Malfoy homestead a few days earlier, things had been quiet for over two weeks. So engrossed, they were caught completely by surprise when Rose's Uncle George knocked two times quickly on the door and poked his head in her room.

"Perfect, two test subjects! May I come in?"

Rose looked to Scorpius for an answer; he shrugged his shoulders in assent, and Rose invited her uncle in.

"What can we help you with, Uncle George?" Rose asked.

"I've been working on improvements to some of my existing products, but I need to test them on someone other than myself. I was hoping you would agree," George said.

"I don't know, Uncle George. I'm pretty happy with my overall color and the size of my appendages as they are."

"No need to worry, Rosie. This is a puzzle, guaranteed not to change you one bit."

"A puzzle, hmm. Well, I guess so. What do you think, Scorp?"

"Sounds like it might be fun," Scorpius replied.

"Excellent! Alright, both of you please stand." Rose and Scorpius stood, and George quickly cast *Obscuro*; two blindfolds appeared over their eyes. He repositioned Rose quickly and said, "Don't worry; I'll remove the blindfolds in a moment. Now Rose, please cross your arms in front of yourself as if you were hugging your arms for warmth. Perfect! Now stick out your index fingers. Okay, don't move."

"Scorpius, I'm going to need to shift you about a bit; take one step to your left. Now two steps forward; I'll help you. Alright, arms loose, index fingers pointed." Scorpius heard some rustling noises, and then George grabbed his right hand and placed what felt like a tube over his index finger and then gave a little tug. This action was repeated with his right hand. Next both hands were lifted by whatever was attached to his index fingers, and some more rustling was heard and tugging felt. Scorpius tugged a little himself now and found that he couldn't lower his hands back to his side.

"Right. *Finite Incantum*," George said. "So, have fun. You'll need to work together to solve it. I've set a timer; come get me when you're loose, and I'll give you both a five-Galleon gift certificate." With that, George turned and left the room, closing the door behind him. Both were dumbfounded for a second: Scorpius was standing directly behind Rose; she had her arms wrapped around her, and neither could clearly see what was attached to their fingers. What was clear was that Rose's Uncle George was now in on the planning, and they were definitely going to have to step their game up a notch if they wanted to avoid future traps.

After several minutes of tugging, name calling, and swearing, topped off with tripping and falling onto Rose's bed, Scorpius took several deep calming breaths and finally begged, "Rose, please stop wiggling!"

"I will as soon as I get comfortable. Something in your pocket is poking me in the bum."

"Rosie, I guarantee you, if you stop wiggling, in a few minutes, it will stop poking you."

"What? Oh! ... Scorp, all of this matchmaking stuff, it isn't having an effect on you, is it?"

"No, Rose. The only thing having an effect on me right now is a wiggling, sexy witch. Now LIE STILL!"

"You think I'm sexy?"

"For the love of Merlin, Rose, do you really want to have this conversation RIGHT NOW?"

"No, I suppose not, but it's not over, either. Now that we are in this position, can you see what my uncle put on our fingers?"

"Not really, but if you move a little closer to me, your left hand should have enough freedom that you should be able to see it for yourself."

Rose tried to ignore how good it felt to be wrapped in Scorpius' arms, and the distracting feel of his erection on her backside, while she stared intently at the purple and fuchsia woven bamboo tube attached to her finger. "I've seen this before; Uncle George sells them in his shop! Dad got his fingers stuck in one when I was little."

"Well, he's free now, so how do we get these things off?"

"I have no idea!"

"Well how did *he* get out?"

"Dad Flooed Uncle Harry, and once he got done laughing, he grabbed the middle, said *Voila*, and Dad was able to pull his fingers free."

"*VOILA* ISN'T A MAGICAL WORD!"

"I KNOW!"

Hugo walked in to find out what all the yelling was about, saw the couple in their predicament, and nearly fell over from laughing.

"How on earth did you two manage to get caught in Chinese finger cuffs attached to each other? And in such a compromising pose," Hugo laughed.

"Uncle George did it. He said it was a puzzle we needed to solve together," Rose grumbled.

"Oh, well, in that case, I'll let you solve it on your own."

"Hugo Weasley, if you know how to get us out of this mess, you will help us right now!"

"And interfere with all of the plotting that has gone on to get you here? I don't think so, at least not without some photographic evidence. Back in a flash!"

A few minutes and several photographs later... .

"HUGO, JUST GET US OUT OF THESE THINGS!" Rose bellowed.

"Gee, Rose, and they say you have dad's temperament. He's not nearly as scary as you are when you are mad." Rose gave Hugo a look that promised retribution. "Okay, push your fingers together, let me grab the middle, and *voila*! You are free." Hugo smiled.

"*Voila* isn't a magical word! Why did you say it? And how does this work?" Rose asked.

"I said *voila* for flourish, and because it would annoy you. Now, simpletons, shall I reveal the secret to you?"

With the secret revealed, Rose and Scorpius stared, gobsmacked, at the Muggle device. Some quick spells revealed that the only thing magical about it was that the fibers had been reinforced such that the trap wouldn't wear out, break, nor could it be opened by pure strength alone. They played with them for a few more minutes, successfully releasing themselves while attached to each other or just alone. When they went to see George, he gave them their gift certificates and said they could keep the finger cuffs. Rose didn't have much use for hers, so Scorpius kept them both.

Chapter 3

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

Later that week, Rose and Scorpius met up at Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. Rose decided the direct approach was best with her uncle to determine what was planned next. After getting tricked by him, she thought it was best to neutralize him as a threat. Scorpius planned to peruse the shop for items they could use to help fend off further parental attacks. They had ten Galleons to spend between the two of them; they might as well put them to good use.

"Uncle George, that really wasn't very nice of you to trap us that way. I didn't realize my love life was that interesting to you."

"Oh, it isn't, love, but your father's plan was in need of serious help, so I decided to step in and save the day."

"So you aren't going to interfere anymore?"

"Goodness no, the element of surprise is gone. Besides, Angelina would kill me. When she found out what your parents were up to and that I had helped," he gave an involuntary shudder, "well, needless to say I'm staying out of it."

"I always knew she was my favorite aunt!"

"Don't let my sister, or any of your other aunts hear you say that or there will be hell to pay, little one."

"So, two plans down, only two left. I think we can handle that," Rose murmured.

"Actually, only one left, for now, anyway. If it fails, though, I'm sure there will be more."

"WHAT!" Rose shouted. "What do you mean, only one plan left?"

"How many plans are there?" Scorpius asked.

"Three well, two and a half really, since your mother's plan really couldn't be considered a plan. You managed to sink that one fairly effectively, Scorpius."

"So, what is the third plan?" Scorpius asked.

"You've already fallen to the third plan," George said.

"But you said that there was only one plan left. If Dad's was the third plan, then what was the second plan?" Rose asked, getting more confused and panicky.

"Rose, I don't know the details, and after Angelina's reaction I don't want to know them, but do you honestly think I would interfere with your life if there wasn't at least some evidence that this," he said pointing between Rose and Scorpius, "might be the right thing?"

"What evidence? What was the second plan!" Rose asked, now starting to get a bit hysterical. Scorpius had a sinking feeling in his gut. If they had uncovered Rose's dad's plan, and his mother's plan had failed miserably without their actually knowing what it was, then that meant that Rose's mum and his dad were working together, and that the plan was already in motion. This was not good.

"Rosie, I'm going to ask you a question, and this is the absolute last thing I'm going to say on the subject. So listen carefully. You two are bright enough that you should be able to figure it out and then decide what you want to do about it."

"Okay."

"Have you smelled anything interesting lately?" George asked.

"WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?" Rose screamed, dumbfounded.

Scorpius paced back and forth; George had said that there was evidence that a relationship between him and Rose was a good thing, and that the evidence had been collected by their smelling something. The only thing he had smelled was the perfume for his mum. With that, the realization set in.

George looked over at Scorpius, who had turned white as a sheet. Good, George thought to himself. The boy had inherited his mother's brain and solid reasoning. Now, hopefully, the cunning he had inherited from his father would kick in, and he would snatch up the amazing witch in front of him. Suddenly, Scorpius' knees wouldn't hold him anymore, and he sat right down in the middle of the floor and buried his face in his hands. Oh, hell, he loved Rose Weasley!

Rose raced over to his side, still not thinking about the clue. "Scorp, what is it, what's wrong?"

"Rose, I'm sorry, love. We are totally fucked." With that, he stood up, still a little shaky, exited the shop and Apparated home to think.

Rose stared after Scorpius. "Uncle George, what just happened?"

"Well, love, I think Scorpius figured out the answer to my question and is trying to figure out how he feels about it."

"Can you clue me in?"

"Clue you in to what, dear?" Aunt Angelina said, coming into the store.

"What Scorpius' and my parents' plans are for us. Don't worry, Aunt Angelina, Uncle George has promised to stay out of it. I just wish he was clearer with his staying out of it." With that, Rose left the shop, worried, frustrated, and more than a little annoyed.

Angelina gave George a look. "Truly, Ange, I promised you I wouldn't interfere, and I haven't. All I did was give them a clue as to why I agreed to help to begin with."

"And?"

"Scorpius figured it out, and Rose ... well, she didn't."

"And you didn't think giving them a clue was interfering? Why didn't you just tell them outright what the evidence was?"

"Now, Ange, what fun would there be in that?" George smirked. "Besides, as you so eloquently put it, they need to figure this out on their own if it's going to last."

Rose went to Lily's flat. She thought to herself that she should really move out of her parents' house. She was nearly thirty, making enough money that she could easily afford her own place, and given the amount of parental involvement in her private life, the privacy it would afford would be welcome.

"What's wrong?" Lily said as soon as she closed the door.

"I wish I knew. Scorp and I went to Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes today to talk to Uncle George. Next thing I know, he's giving us a clue about the next plan, and Scorp is saying we are fucked and Apparating away."

"What was the clue?"

"Have you smelled anything interesting lately?' I'm a healer, I smell things every day: good things, bad things, very, *very* bad things. I don't think I would classify those as interesting, but heck, I don't know."

"And Scorpius' reaction to this was to say you were fucked and to Apparate away?"

"More or less."

"Well, he obviously figured it out."

"Thank you, Captain Obvious." Lily rolled her eyes at Rose and walked over to the Floo, grabbed a handful of powder, threw it into the fire and yelled, "Scorpius' room!" She knelt over and stuck her head into the flames.

"Scorpius, are you there?"

"What do you want, Lily?"

"Rose is here; she's worried about you. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, go away."

"What does the clue mean? What do you mean that you're fucked?"

Scorpius got out of bed and sat down in front of the fire. "No offense, Lily, but this is none of your business."

"Well, if you won't tell me, tell Rose. I'll get her."

"No! I really don't want to talk to Rose right now. I just need some time to think."

"Think about what? I'm no slouch, Malfoy, and I have to say Uncle George's clue is pretty meaningless."

"It is NOT meaningless. It was actually pretty damn good. Look, Lily, I don't imagine you would get it, but trust me when I tell you the answer to his clue changes fucking everything. I need think about it."

"Merlin! Suck it up, Malfoy; we are coming through."

"The hell you are! Tell Rose to get her head out of her arse and to figure the clue out on her own." With that, he pushed Lily's head out of his fireplace and warded his Floo.

"Hmm, Scorpius isn't in the mood for company at the moment," Lily said, fixing her hair while trying to buy time.

"What did he say?"

"That the answer to the clue changes everything and that you needed to figure it out by yourself."

"What. Did. He. Say. Exactly."

"To get your head out of your arse and figure it out on your own," Lily said with a sigh.

"Oh," Rose said with a bit of maniacal gleam in her eye, "May I borrow your owl, Lily?"

"No. Now, Rose, you need to calm down. Use your head."

"I'm sorry, Lily; apparently, I can't use my head because IT IS SHOVED UP MY ARSE!" Rose shouted as she grabbed some Floo powder, threw it in the fireplace, shouted for her room and stepped into the flames.

"Shit!" Lily penned a quick note to Scorpius, tied it to her owl Evan, and sent him on its way.

Scorpius opened the window and let Evan in. The owl flew off as soon as the letter was off his leg, seeming to sense Scorpius' mood. Lily's note was simple *Howler coming, move to America, you've been warned*. Scorpius didn't doubt that Rose was upset with him. He wasn't sure that she knew how to make a Howler, but he warded his windows just in case.

He really did love her, temperament and all. The signs had been there for a while. How her smile made him feel lighter. How she was the first person he wanted to talk to in the morning, and the last one at night. How she smelled, the damn smell, like sensuality incarnate. His physical reaction to her had been strong since he first discovered that there were more interesting things to do with girls than pull their hair. Merlin, don't even get him started on her hair! Holding her in his arms while they had been trapped had felt so right, almost as if he were home. So the question now was what to do about it.

Scorpius opened the door to great Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. Unfortunately, Anastasia, Rose's owl, was with them, and as it turned out, Rose did indeed know how to make a Howler. The second Anastasia saw Scorpius she dropped the envelope and flew as fast as she could away from the Malfoy summer home.

"You'd better open it, son. She sent that owl about two hours ago," Ron said with a sympathetic look.

Scorpius opened the letter, and Rose's voice came out at the level of shriek.

"MY HEAD IS SHOVED UP MY ARSE, IS IT? HOW DARE YOU TELL ME WE ARE FUCKED AND THEN FUCK OFF? AS IF YOU COULD KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FUCKING ANYWAY, WITH THAT TINY EXCUSE FOR A PRICK! I'M FAIRLY SURE THE ONLY THING IT IS FIT FOR IS BUGGERING A FLOBBERWORM! AND DON'T THINK I FORGOT ABOUT THE 'SEXY' COMMENT, EITHER!"

At this point, Draco cast *Silencio* on the Howler which continued to shout for a few more seconds before exploding. "I take it that those were the dulcet tones of your daughter, Weasley?" Draco quipped.

"Dad, before you say anything to disparage your future daughter-in-law, I did somewhat deserve that. Well, not the disparaging my pr ... umm ... personal parts, but I did desert her and tell her to pull her head out of her arse, so I guess a little insulting back can be expected. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll see if I can't calm her down some."

With that, he stepped out the door and Apparated, leaving four very confused people in his wake.

A/N: Sorry for the long wait between updates, they should be a little faster now. Thank you to julymorning for betaing and making my insults more British! Finally, thank you

to my reviewers, you make doing this worthwhile.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of 5

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

A/N: Thank you again to julymorning for her wonderful beta skills, to drcjsnider for coming up with the prompt, and to the reviewers who make doing this so much fun!

"Well, that was interesting," Astoria said with a smirk.

"Quite," Hermione agreed.

"What! Our son just indicated that he was going to MARRY Rose, and your reaction is 'Well, that was interesting'," Draco mimicked.

"Ut-oh," Ron said, having learned at a very young age that mimicking a woman never ended well, particularly mimicking her while she was within earshot.

Astoria merely smiled, turned to Hermione and said, "Shall we retire to the dining room?" Hermione offered Astoria her arm, which she took, and they headed off to the dining room.

"Not a good move, mate. You're done for and we didn't even fight," Ron said with a chuckle.

"Maybe you could say something disparaging, and I would have to protect her honor, and she will forget the whole thing?"

"Yes, but then we will have been fighting, and we'd both be done for."

"Male solidarity. We can suffer together."

"Screw that. You can suffer on your own."

With that, Draco stalked into the dining room. "So, what do you propose we do about this new predicament, love?"

"I don't think we should do anything." Astoria grinned. Draco looked confused, so she continued, "Why do you think he said that, darling?"

"Well, if it were me, I'd do it to throw my parents off. Confuse them."

"Really after just receiving a Howler insulting your manly bits?"

"I suppose not, but it could have been staged."

"Oh, I don't think so," Ron piped in. "Rose was in quite a snit for a good hour this afternoon, slamming things and mumbling to herself. I've learned to steer clear when she's in one of those moods."

"I have to agree with Ron on this one," Hermione added. "As much as I love my daughter, she can't act worth a darn, and her temper is quite legendary."

"So, are you suggesting that we drop our plans for the party?" Draco asked.

"Not entirely," Astoria stated. "I think we should go forward as if we were going to complete the plan. We just won't *actually* go through with it. In addition, I think we should start acting suspicious around them."

"Now I'm confused. What is that going to accomplish?" asked Ron.

Hermione, though, just smiled and said, "Well, Ron, that's sort of the point, isn't it. To confuse them and get them so paranoid that they won't know what is coming at them. Actually, it's partially inspired by your plan. I imagine that they will be spending quite a bit of time with each other trying to figure out what we are up to and how to stop it."

"Brilliant," Draco said. "You have again reminded me of one of the many reasons for which I married you, my dear." Ron made a coughing noise that sounded suspiciously like 'suck up', for which Hermione kicked him under the table.

"Rose, let me in!"

"No."

"Please? I really need to talk to you."

"Sure, NOW you need to talk to me. Well, now *I* don't want to talk to *you*."

"Rosie, please, love, I just needed some time to think. I told Lily that. Come on, open the door."

"Not until you apologize."

"I'm sorry I said you had your head up your arse, and I'm sorry I left you so suddenly at your uncles' shop. Now will you please let me in?"

"Will you tell me what the clue means?"

"No, but I'll help you reason it out for yourself. Come on, Rose. Open the door. You know you can't stay mad at me forever."

"Oh, alright, but I don't understand why you just can't tell me what the clue means. That way we could both work together at coming up with a counter-plan." She opened

the door and let him into the living room.

"Rose, the clue isn't about the plan, it's about the evidence."

"What?"

"I don't know any better now than before we went to your uncles' as to what the other plan is. The clue was about the evidence that your dad must have shared with your uncle to convince him to help trap us."

"Oh."

"Listen, let's talk through what we know, and hopefully that will give you enough information. Then you can tell me what you want to do next."

"Okay. So we know there are three plans, and that two of them have been executed without success, assuming making us as a couple is the goal of the plans."

"Agreed. We also know that your father and my mother were the brains, so to speak, behind those two plans."

"Leaving my mother and your father to work together on the remaining plan... ."

"Exactly, this is part of why I said earlier that we are fucked. Because your mum is brilliant, and my dad isn't too shabby in the brains department; but add his cunning, and you have a formidable pair. Let's review what we know about the plans so far."

"This is where I get confused. Uncle George said we foiled plots one and three, leaving plot two incomplete or at least not foiled yet. However, we haven't seen any indication of a second plot."

"Which brings us back to the first part of the 'we are fucked' statement. They managed to initiate something without our knowing about it *and* they are not done yet."

"Alright, but what does any of this have to do with smelling something interesting?"

"I think that was the first part of their plan."

"To have us smell something? What would that achieve? As far as I know, there aren't any potions that are dosed via scent."

"Come on, Rose, think about what the clue was for. I swear I will never know how you got higher marks than I did in Arithmancy; logic isn't your strongest skill."

Rose scowled at Scorpius, but replied, "Evidence. So, the purpose of the first part of their plan was to get evidence that we would work well as a couple. So, I repeat my question: how does smelling something provide evidence?"

"Rose, are you being purposefully dense? You are a fucking Healer! You use potions everyday. You got an O in it for fuck's sake. *You* know the answer to that question."

"Scorpius, I *am* a Healer. I smell thousands of things every day. While I have an excellent nose, I have a hard time remembering what my shampoo smells like, so forgive me if I can't remember the significance of what a potion smells like."

"Lilac and vanilla. Okay, let's take a different approach, shall we? Give me a hug."

"WHAT?"

"Rose, this isn't anything pervy, I swear, and there is a point." He held out his arms. "Come on, I won't bite... much."

Rose rolled her eyes and went into his embrace.

"Alright, smell me," Scorpius said.

"I thought you said this wasn't anything pervy?"

"Just do it, Rose." After hearing her take a whiff, he put her back at arms' length. "Now, how do I smell?"

"Gee, that was a lot of work for a compliment. You smell very nice. I've told you that before. I love your cologne; it suits you perfectly."

"Thank you, but that wasn't really the point. Now think; has your *mum* asked you to smell anything that smells like me?"

"I don't know." Rose paced. "She has had me sniffing stuff everyday for weeks! She's trying to make cologne for Hugo. Nothing is standing out."

Scorpius sat down on the couch, defeated. Maybe he was wrong. Maybe he was the only one who smelled her with the Amortentia, but she smelled something different. If that was the case, though, why did her uncle George ask her if she had smelled it?

"Dirty socks and baking bread!" Rose announced.

"What?"

"The first day she was testing out the colognes, she asked me what the difference was between the scent she was trying to mimic and the one she had created. That was the difference between the two scents. They both smelled a lot like your cologne, except for the dirty socks and baking bread. She hasn't made anything else like that. I assumed the dirty socks were an accident, but why anyone would put the smell of baking bread in cologne, I don't know."

"Bacon. For me it was bacon. Lilac, vanilla, and bacon; it was a very interesting scent," Scorpius said with a huge grin.

"Why are you smiling? I'm no closer to figuring it out!"

"You gave me a bit of a scare. I thought maybe it had only worked one way, but your memory jog fixed that. I'm sure you will figure it out now. Just let it simmer around in that brain of yours for a little while. In the meantime, you should know I've confused our parents thoroughly thanks to your little Howler."

"Your parents heard my Howler?" Rose's face started to turn red. She hadn't thought of that.

"No, *our* parents heard your Howler. It was up to full shriek by the time I actually received it. I'd be surprised if half the county didn't hear it."

"Oh, shit. Mum is going to kill me. Did they hear the whole thing?"

"Most of it. My dad Silenced it after you insulted my privates and said something about a sexy comment. What did the rest of it say?"

"I believe I may have called you a spoilt know-it-all git."

"It's nice to know that the tried and true insults still come to mind when you are furious with me. The Flobberworm part was inspired, though, even if it was completely

unfounded."

"You are right; it wasn't very kind to the Flobberworms. I'll have to send the Society for the Better Treatment of Flobberworms an apology letter."

"That's it!" Scorpius said and was up chasing after Rose in a flash. He caught her just as she reached her bedroom and tackled her to the floor. "Take it back, or I will tickle you until you are singing the praises of how well endowed I am to the heavens."

"I take it back; you would need to find something smaller than a Flobberworm to bugger."

With that, Scorpius growled and started tickling Rose furiously. This time, he didn't mind having a wiggling sexy witch in his arms and did nothing to hide his reaction to her. It took Rose a few minutes to notice that Scorpius was reacting to their proximity again. She realized that she wasn't all that concerned about it and continued to squirm around for a few more minutes, trying to get away.

"Okay, I give! Hippogriffs fly away in fear when they see you coming, knowing they have nothing to compare!"

"Much better. What is it with you and the anatomy of magical creatures? Anything I should know about?"

"Merlin, you have a dirty mind. Get off me, will you, you weigh a ton," Rose said and gave him a push. Instead of getting off her, Scorpius rolled them over so she was on top of him, and he was on his back. He decided he liked this position almost as much as the other one and wrapped a leg around hers to keep her from getting up for a few more moments.

"Better?"

"Yes, but not really what I had in mind."

"Tough. You might hex me still."

"If I promise not to hex you, will you release me?" Rose said, but instead of trying to get away from him, she just snuggled in closer.

"I suppose," he said, starting to rub small circles on her back.

She could get away from him now if she wanted but instead, she asked, "Do you really think I'm sexy?"

"Rose, you are one of the smartest, most beautiful, and sexiest witches I know."

"Why didn't you ever tell me this before?"

"You are my best friend. That's just not something you say to your best friend."

"You have told me plenty of times that I'm smart and beautiful. When did sexy happen?"

"About the age of fifteen."

"You've thought I was sexy since we were fifteen?"

"I've known that you are sexy since we were fifteen. I'm a man; we notice these things about everything with tits within a five-mile vicinity of us. It's what we do. I've tried not to think about you that way since about five minutes after I realized it. Seriously, how would we stay friends if I got a hard-on every time you sucked on your bottom lip or wore white knee-highs with your school uniform? That worked for the most part, as long as we kept the physical contact to a minimum, anyway."

Rose got off Scorpius with that confession and moved to sit looking at him with her back against the wall. The sign of his reaction to her was still there but growing less evident.

"I always thought you were sexy in your Quidditch robes, particularly after practice or a game, with your hair all windblown and breathing hard. You were a sight to behold."

Scorpius laughed at that admission. "Too bad I didn't know that. I was always in a hurry to hit the showers. Who would want a panting, sweaty, wizard?"

"Indeed," Rose said, laughing too. "What was the other reason you said we were fucked?"

"Figure out the clue, and you will know the answer to that one. I'm going to shove off before your parents get home. Let's get together tomorrow, and we'll start counter-planning."

Rose nodded in agreement and watched Scorpius get to his feet and cross the room. She gave him a half wave, thinking about the clue again. He dropped a quick kiss on the top of her head, then headed down the stairs. Rose got up and went to her window to watch Scorpius go. She laughed as she saw him do a funny little dance step before he turned and Disappeared.

So their parents had tricked them into smelling something that smelled like the other person. One of the potions was obvious, as her mother was still toying with the scent synthesizing solution. So, that first time, the time her mother had said she was trying to recreate a scent, the other bottle had held a potion and not cologne. She crossed over to her bookcase and took out her volume of *Moste Potente Potions* and started reading. Fortunately, she started with the A's and not the S's, or she might have been at it awhile. She closed the volume and carefully put it away. She wrote a quick note to Scorpius, apologized to Anastasia, and sent her on the way.

Scorpius removed the parchment from Anastasia's leg. The poor bird was exhausted from making the trip for the second time that day. Morty sensed this as well and made room for the smaller bird right away, instead of putting on his typical show. Scorpius unrolled the parchment and laughed when he read Rose's note.

Amortentia. You are right; we ARE totally fucked. Talk to you tomorrow. Rose.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 of 5

Their parents are scheming to bring them together. Can they avoid the traps?

A/N: Well down to the end now. I'm sorry for such a long time between updates, unfortunately RL messed with my schedule and julymorning's enough to make the wait longer than I would have liked.

One last huge thank you to julymorning for betaing, to drojsnider for the challenge, and to my reviewers. Lastly, thank you to The Petulant Poetess staff, for running a top notch site and working through the queue as quickly as you do.

Rose Floo'd Lily and asked if she could come through.

"So, what is going on now?" Lily asked.

Rose replied, "I figured out the clue. It was Amortentia. They somehow had a vial containing my smell for Scorp, and his smell for me. Then they asked us to compare it to Amortentia."

"Shit. Did they smell the same? For both of you?"

"Enough alike to prove to them that we are attracted to each other."

"So that is why you are fucked: because they aren't going to give this up."

"Pretty much."

"So, how do you feel about Scorp?"

"I love him. You know that. He's my best friend."

"Rose, you know what I'm asking."

"I can't think about that right now, Lily. I just can't. What if he doesn't feel the same?"

"What if he does?"

"But what if he doesn't? His friendship means too much to me. I can't lose that."

"No one says you have to."

"Really? And how many of your ex-boyfriends do you speak to?"

"That is beside the point. We aren't talking about me. We are talking about you and Scorp. Oh, and for the record, I know for a fact that you and Scorp are both on very good terms with just about everyone you've ever dated. Heck, half the time you end up hooking them up with someone else. Usually one of Scorp's exes, so don't give me that excuse."

"Only one time... Okay, twice, and they were perfect for each other!"

"Rose, focus! Let me ask you this, and I want you to think about this before you answer me how does Scorpius make you feel, when he isn't pissing you off, that is?" Lily smirked.

Rose contemplated Lily's question. "He makes me feel happy, safe, calm, passionate, and loved."

"So, I'll go back to my first question: how do you feel about Scorp, and what do you want to do about it? Don't answer me. Go home and think about it. I'll talk to you tomorrow."

"All right, I will. But no matter what I decide, I don't want it to be influenced by my parents' scheming. Scorpius and I are getting together tomorrow to counter-plan. Why don't you join us?"

"Okay. Sounds like fun."

"Great. See you tomorrow, then."

The next day, Rose, Scorpius, Lily and Hugo met up at Fortescue's to begin counter-planning.

Rose started: "Right, so, I filled in Lily and Hugo last night on what we have figured out to date."

"Excellent, and you are going to help us steer clear of any traps, trips, or hazards set down in front of us by our parents," Scorpius said to Lily and Hugo.

Lily replied, "Will do, and should you get trapped, tripped, or tied up in any fashion, we agree to set you loose. Don't we, Hugo?"

"With or without photographic evidence?" Hugo asked and was promptly swatted by Rose and Lily. "Kidding, only kidding. So, what do you think the rest of Mum and Mr. Malfoy's plan is?"

"Well, they still have the Amortentia. They might use that," Rose said.

"I don't think so. Mum would never dose you with anything that strong," replied Hugo.

"I agree, I don't think they would risk dosing us with that. Besides it's too risky. We would have to take it while looking at each other for it to work. There is too much chance for error. I could see them dosing us with something less potent, like something from Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes that you have to say a charm over or put a hair in or something so that the correct person is targeted," Scorpius said.

"So, how do we protect against that? It's not like we can only eat or drink things that we fix for ourselves for the rest of our days!" Rose exclaimed.

"I don't think we need to worry about the rest of our days. I figure they are going to strike at your birthday party."

"Well, I guess that makes sense, but still, it will be hard to keep control of what we eat or drink during the party."

"Fortunate for you, then, that Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes also sells counter-measures for most love-inducing items."

"I guess it's a good thing we didn't buy anything yesterday, then."

"So what if it isn't some type of love potion?"

"I think that is our best bet, but we should keep our eyes open for anything unusual."

"Agreed."

As the day of the party got closer, Rose and Scorpius noticed that their parents were acting more and more bizarre whenever they were in vicinity. For people who had been quite adept at hiding their original intent, they now seemed to be flaunting the fact that they were planning something in front of Rose and Scorpius.

"I don't like this at all. What are they up to?" Rose said to Scorpius.

"They are just trying to throw us off."

"Well, they are doing a good job of it. I swear, I jump whenever I walk into a room and my parents are there, even if they aren't huddled over 'nothing.'"

"I know what you mean. But your party is only a day away now. Chin up, it's almost over."

"But it won't be over, will it? When whatever they have planned fails, they will just come up with something new."

"Well, there is bound to be a lull, and when they start up again, we'll face it together. Please don't worry, love. I want you to enjoy your birthday, not be stressed out over some unknown plot. Everything will be fine, I promise you."

"When you say it like that, I find it hard not to believe you. Thanks, Scorpius, for everything. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't my friend."

"Your welcome, and that is something you will *never* have to worry about. No matter what happens, Rose, I *will*/*ways* be your friend."

Scorpius spotted Rose sitting on a bench in the garden. He sat down next to her, intentionally budging her in the shoulder. Rose moved over, giving Scorpius more room.

"Taking a breather?"

"Yeah, too many Weasleys in a small area. I needed some room to breathe. Your mum sure knows how to organize a beautiful party."

"So why do I get the impression you aren't enjoying yourself?"

"I'm just feeling somewhat melancholy. I'm thirty. I haven't had a decent relationship in ages, if ever. Everyone knows it, proof of which is the plot to get us together, whatever the plot may be." Rose expelled a frustrated breath.

They sat for a few moments in silence, then Scorpius heard the music coming from the house. Mum had planned for everything; apparently, it was time for dancing.

"May I have this dance?" Scorpius asked while nudging Rose again with his shoulder.

"Of course," Rose said, smiling back at Scorpius.

As Rose moved into Scorpius' arms, she thought over the events of the last few weeks. She realized that the times she was the happiest were when she was with Scorp. If she were honest with herself, the same was true for the last few years. Finally, things clicked into place, and she realized she was in love with him. "Scorpius?" Rose said, looking at his shoulder.

"Hmm?"

"I love you."

"I love you, too," he said, giving her a little squeeze, his tone casual.

Rose tipped her head away from his shoulder and looked him in the eye. He was looking at her intently, as if he was trying to convey a million thoughts at once. Rose looked back at him and, with all the emotion in her heart, said it again. "I love you."

"I love you, too," he said, pouring all the intensity she had seen in his face into his words. Slowly, Scorpius closed the distance between them and lowered his mouth to hers. The kiss was tender, giving, and so soft that Rose could have gotten lost in it forever. Scorpius broke the kiss in an attempt to gather his wits, but one look at her lips and he was undone. Their second kiss conveyed all of his passion and hunger for her. Rose was consumed by the kiss. She couldn't think. All she could do was respond with all the passion in her being.

Hugo chose that moment to come into the garden looking for Rose. He spotted Scorpius and, before he processed the scene in front of him, said, "Oi! Scorp. Did you find Rose yet? Oops, apparently you did. I guess I'll leave you alone, then, shall I? Right." Scorpius and Rose were so caught up in each other they didn't even notice him. Hugo went back into the house beaming madly.

"So, did you find them?" Hermione asked.

"Yep."

"Are they coming in?"

"Nope."

"And why not?"

"They were otherwise engaged." So as not to embarrass Rose in front of the whole Weasley crowd, he cut off his mother's next question by whispering ~~now~~ they were otherwise engaged in Hermione's ear.

Hermione, at hearing this, gave out a loud whoop and ran to hug Astoria.

"Let's get out of here," Scorpius said to Rose. "I need to get you somewhere private, now."

"Can't... party... family... can't leave," Rose said gaspingly, trying to recoup her bearings.

"Fuck the party."

"I'm fairly certain that isn't what's on your mind at the moment."

"Leave with me, and I'll show you exactly what's on my mind, right now," he growled.

"Ehm, Rose, I believe your mother is looking for you." Rose looked over Scorpius' shoulder to see her Uncle George with his back to them, looking up at the sky.

"Thank you, Uncle George," Rose said, taking a few more fortifying breaths. Rose moved away from Scorpius and headed towards the door. When she realized that Scorpius wasn't beside her, she turned around, looking for him. He was standing where she had left him with his back to her. "Scorpius, are you coming in?"

"He'll be with you in a few minutes, love," George said.

George walked over to Scorpius and gave him a small bottle. "Here, take a swig of this, not more than a mouthful."

"What is it?" Scorpius asked.

"Wood-Be-Gone. It's something I've been working on for young men with overactive... imaginations."

"Any side effects?"

"None that you or my niece will be unhappy about, I assure you, which is why it's not on the market yet. If I can't eliminate the side effect, then I'm going to have to market the product differently. Actually, I'm hoping I can isolate what is causing the side effect so I can market a different product."

"What's the side effect?" Scorpius asked, trying to determine for himself if the side effect was worth what he thought the potion would do.

"Well, let's just say that once the potion wears off, nothing will happen... prematurely," George quickly added, seeing the gleam in Scorpius' eye. "Take too much, though, and 'nothing' will happen for several hours, which can be quite uncomfortable."

Scorpius decided that George hadn't steered him wrong yet; as far as it came to Rose, and took a small swig. He immediately felt the tightness in his pants lessen.

"That should wear off in about forty-five minutes. Oh, and Scorpius? If you hurt my niece, I'll hex you in a way that it will shrivel and fall off, are we clear?"

"Crystal, sir."

"Good boy. Head back to the party. Your mum is going to smother you to death, but I believe she and Hermione have come up with an exit strategy for you both. They should have you out of here quick enough."

Rose woke up to Scorpius holding her arms over her head with one hand while nibbling on her ear. The hitch in her breathing alerted him to her wakeful state, and he shifted his focus to her mouth. After what seemed like an eternity to Rose, Scorpius moved his hands down her flesh and began exploring her body again in earnest. Rose tried to bring her hands down to tangle them in his hair but quickly discovered that her index fingers were attached to something. Rose turned her face away from Scorpius giving him ample opportunity to attack her neck, while she twisted her head around to confirm her suspicions. Indeed, her index fingers were attached to each other by fuchsia and gold Chinese finger-cuffs; however, the set now attached to her was about three feet long and wrapped around one of the slats in Scorpius' headboard.

"Scorpius?" Rose said in a breathy moan as he had now moved his oral exploration of her body down to her breasts. "Why do you have me tied up in a way that I can easily escape?"

"Well, love, two reasons," he said as he changed his focus yet again. "Firstly, I know how much of a control freak you are, so you are completely in control of your bondage. Secondly, I want to see if I can distract you so completely that you will be unable to focus the small amount of attention required to release yourself from your confines." And with that, he set about distracting her quite thoroughly.

Fin