

Curious

by *la_dissonance*

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: I own the gayness, JKR owns all the rest.

Many thanks to the lovely and wonderful Sigo for looking over this so thoroughly and putting up with all my excessively long-winded ramblings. Lovies!

Also, many, *many* thanks to the admin who ended up getting this story - she was immensely helpful and patient with my utter noob-ness. (And with my tendency to argue about grammar rules that I don't even properly know. Eep.)

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It might strike one as curious that Pansy Parkinson and Millicent Bulstrode were friends, if anyone ever stopped to think about it. Millicent stopped to think of it, occasionally, and she never could quite understand it when she did. Pansy was popular, and pretty, and very girly, and one of the 'in' crowd. Millicent was not particularly pretty, and *not* girly, and almost as far from the in crowd as it was possible to get.

So people's opinions of her hadn't really been able to fall much lower when she had come out in her third year. She was the type who *would* do something like that, after all.

Pansy had, inexplicably, stayed friends with Millicent through it all, and in lieu of understanding it, Millicent just accepted it that's just the way things were; Pansy was just a friendly person. A bit *too* friendly, sometimes.

Millicent wondered what could be going through someone's head to act like that, but whatever it was, Pansy had it. She acted that way toward *everyone*. The playing-with-hair while she was talking to you, the disarming compliments, the "dears" and "loves" that popped out with thoughtless ease, the constant undercurrent of innuendo in every conversation, which Millicent was never quite sure that she hadn't made up herself. It was a side of Pansy that only her fellow Slytherins got to see, but undeniably there.

And the thing was, none of Pansy's other friends even batted an eye. It was normal. Millicent supposed that that was just the way they acted with each other and Pansy was just a friendly, touchy person. There was nothing more to it.

The fact that Millicent knew, in her head, how things were didn't stop her from questioning them every time something happened like the time on the Hogwarts Express.

Millicent had already changed into her school robes, and everyone else in the compartment, including Pansy, were still in the Muggle clothing they had worn to the station. They had fallen into some private conversation while Millicent was out, and none of them looked up when she reclaimed her seat next to Pansy.

Apropos of nothing, Pansy turned to her and "Do those go all the way up?" she asked, reaching for the bottom of Millicent's robe to reveal Millicent's Slytherin-green sock, which, being a knee sock, did continue to go up under the hem of her robes.

"Um, no, they're just regular knee socks, so they only go up to the knee "

But Pansy was already experimentally bunching up the hem of Millicent's robes, exposing inch after inch of green-clad leg. Millicent let her for a moment or two, but then when the robe's progress up her leg showed no sign of slowing, she snatched it out of Pansy's hand.

"Ak, quit undressing me in public, Pansy!" she yelled in what she hoped was a light, teasing tone. "And see? They only go up to my knee." She twitched her robes up to show that this was, indeed, true, and then smoothed them back down.

Pansy pouted. "I was just *exploring*..."

Millicent sighed and said nothing. She never knew quite how Pansy expected her to react to things like this.

Presently, Pansy went over to the other seat and "explored" Draco's lap (to much greater success), so Millicent didn't have to worry about it anymore.

But something would always happen again, like that other time, again with Millicent's robes, in the common room just a few weeks ago...

Millicent had stopped by Pansy's couch (or rather, the one Pansy was currently occupying but she had a very proprietary way of occupying furniture) to chat about inconsequential things while they waited for Blaise to show up to work on their joint Charms project.

"Hey, you've got a little something there "

Millicent looked down, and Pansy was touching Millicent's thigh, where there was indeed a small stain on her robes. It wasn't a lingering touch, and honestly, Millicent didn't even feel it through her robes, but it was not somewhere Millicent was even used to being touched a couple inches over and up, and Pansy's finger would have landed *there*. But Pansy clearly hadn't thought twice about it. The girl had no boundaries.

"Oh yeah," Millicent said lightly, fingering the spot, as though she didn't have to think twice about what she did either. "Suppose I should have taken care of that before... must have happened in Potions..." She reached for her wand to spell the stain away, and then went over to join Pansy waiting on the couch.

Millicent knew that she shouldn't read anything into things like this; it was just the way Pansy was. Millicent knew that by now. But still Pansy was a smart girl, she *had* to know that Millicent wouldn't see these things as all her straight girl friends must.

Millicent wondered, sometimes, what it felt like to be on the receiving end of such attention as a straight girl. She couldn't know, of course, but she could guess pretty well that a straight Millicent wouldn't have gotten suspicious of Pansy's true motives every time. What if on the off chance Pansy did actually mean something by it?

Millicent wasn't omniscient; she couldn't *know* this wasn't the case.

"Oh my god! Don't look now, but he's *right behind* you," Pansy whisper-squealed, startling Millicent out of her thoughts.

Millicent craned around in reckless disregard of the warning and scanned the room. "Who? Blaise?"

"No, *him*," Pansy said, in reverent tones. "And he's wearing *blue*! Isn't blue such a good color on him? It goes so well with his eyes..."

Millicent rolled her eyes. The boy in blue had to be Pansy's latest crush, then, a seventh-year prefect who Pansy had described as "agonizingly unattainable" because he was just so perfect, and perfectly out of her league (so she said).

This was another thing about Pansy. She was utterly and entirely boy crazy, but despite Millicent's awkward advice and encouragement whenever the topic came up, she never pursued any of them. Unless you counted Draco, that was, but according to Pansy herself, they were "just friends."

Millicent had never before encountered such confusing evidence for straightness on the one hand, Pansy said she was straight, and certainly acted like it. But on the other hand and Millicent chided herself for even thinking it surely Pansy could have got a boyfriend by now if she wanted one so badly. She was pretty, and popular, and outgoing, and pureblooded, and she should be able to find a way to get anything she wanted. So therefore, maybe she didn't want it, and therefore, maybe she was But Millicent stopped herself from supposing too far into the realm where answers were impossible.

She was content to just let Pansy be confusing, and not think too hard about it, except there was always something to start her thinking again, just as soon as she had given it a rest. Like the time that Daphne had gotten a camera for her birthday and insisted on getting everyone she even remotely knew in front of her lens. Almost worse than that Creevey boy, and that was saying a lot.

Pansy and Millicent's turn had come unexpectedly when they were walking down to Hogsmeade together. Daphne had detached herself from her group of Slytherin girls and jogged up to arrest them, claiming that she didn't have any pictures of either of them yet, and could they just stop for a minute to pose for her?

Pansy had generously obliged, and the two of them had shuffled together until they stood shoulder-to-shoulder by the side of the road, smiling for the camera.

"Hey, Pansy, watch where you put your hand, or people will think you're touching my arse," Millicent muttered to Pansy, whose arm was dangling inert between them. Millicent wished she had kept silent the moment the words were spoken. Her mouth got away from her occasionally; it had sounded like a funny thing to say in her head. The kind of thing Pansy would have said, maybe.

"Like this?" Pansy laughed, and playfully slapped Millicent's arse before her hand returned to where it had been casually hanging behind them. It hadn't even really looked like she was touching Millicent's arse in the first place.

"Haha, yeah." Millicent giggled, trying to go along with whatever it was she had unwittingly started.

When the picture came out, it showed the picture-Millicent saying something to the picture-Pansy that made picture-Millicent jump a bit and then giggle nervously while the picture-Pansy rolled her eyes indulgently, and the picture looped back to the beginning. Millicent sort of wished she had a copy of the picture; it was the only memory she would have of the time Pansy had actually touched her arse. It had been so short, and so unexpected, that she couldn't even remember what it had felt like. She didn't know if it had even felt like anything while it was happening.

But she didn't ask for a copy; that would have been silly. Pansy hadn't meant anything by it, and Millicent hadn't meant anything by it; they had just been playing around. Only Millicent didn't know what game they were playing, or who had started it. Or why.

All she knew was that it had never changed and that she should just get used to it already. Pansy was a good friend, even when she was being confusing, and honestly, she wouldn't want to give up the confusing parts either if she had a choice. They were nice, or something like that. She would take the attention wherever she could get it.

And then things did change sort of. And Millicent was sure that it was Pansy's fault this time.

"Millicent?"

"Mmm?" They were alone in a tiny courtyard that Pansy had found one time on her prefect rounds, eating cakes that Millicent had stolen from the kitchen and reading witches' magazines. It was rare that they spent time together like this; Pansy was usually busy with her groups of other, cooler friends. Millicent didn't come as part of a group and when Pansy spent time with her, she always felt like she was being granted some special favor.

"Do you know what it's like to kiss a girl? I was thinking, and I really have no idea..."

Millicent suddenly felt very out of place. "What?!" she exclaimed, incredulous. She was sure she was blushing, too, and wished she wouldn't. Her face wasn't one that blushed well; it got all red and splotchy.

Pansy continued, apparently oblivious to Millicent's discomfort. "It can't be much like kissing a boy, can it? I mean, girls are like, different... softer..." She trailed off, looking expectantly at Millicent. Her expression was one of completely innocent curiosity; there was no trace of an ulterior motive.

Millicent snorted. "What, as though I would know. The next time hordes of girls decide to throw themselves at me, I'll let you know what it's like." She rolled her eyes widely to communicate what she thought of the probability of *that* event ever occurring.

"You mean, you've never ? But I figured, because you're, you know..."

Millicent blushed still harder and turned, as usual, to sarcasm to hide her embarrassment. "Well, it doesn't quite work that way. I don't even know that many people, full stop, in case you've noticed - much less ones who'd want to kiss me. Just because I happen to *be* gay doesn't mean I've had any opportunity to run around doing tons of gay things. It kind of sucks here," she added, desultorily.

"Oh," said Pansy, actually looking sorry for her. "I never thought of it that way. I guess it does suck for you..."

"Yeah," agreed Millicent. "You didn't want this, did you?" She reached for the last cake, and Pansy shook her head.

The topic changed, and they had a lovely time making fun of the horoscopes in the magazines and poring over the clothing ads though for slightly different reasons, Millicent supposed and Pansy seemed to have gotten over the earlier awkwardness quite easily. It probably hadn't even been awkward for her.

Millicent wasn't so sure about it, herself. She had a giggling feeling that if she had done something slightly different, anticipated Pansy slightly better, played along the right way, that Pansy would have well, that Pansy would have kissed her. It sounded improbably absurd spelled out like that, though, and Millicent had a hard time imagining a reality in which Pansy would actually end up kissing her.

Millicent tried not to let the episode of the kiss conversation bother her too much over the ensuing weeks, but like everything that one wishes would go away, it kept coming back. She was plagued by thoughts of what-if and by half-baked futile ideas of ways to have a second chance at not messing it up, and of course her whole inner debate about Pansy's sexuality was spiked up a couple of notches by this new piece of completely ambiguous evidence. She was in the process of again trying to resolve herself to never knowing the truth when Pansy cornered her in the hall between classes one afternoon.

"Hi, Millicent," Pansy said, smiling, while at the same time she practically backed Millicent bodily into a largish niche behind a suit of armor.

"What's up?"

"Uh, nothing much," said Millicent, her stomach giving a flip. "What's up with you?" If only she could figure out what on earth was going on she knew what she *wanted* to be going on, but realistically, she had no idea. This was so unlike Pansy.

"I was thinking about our conversation " Pansy didn't have to say which conversation. "- and I thought, there actually is a way you can help answer my question." This was the first time Pansy had brought that up since it had happened; one could forgive Millicent for being a bit surprised.

"There is?" Millicent's voice came out slightly squeaky. The space behind the armor was very small, and Pansy was standing very close.

"Oh yes," said Pansy, in a voice Millicent had never heard her use before, even to Draco. "There is. I'm a girl, aren't I?" She moved in a little closer. "And you like girls, right?" Millicent nodded, dumbly, as Pansy moved still closer. Their bodies were practically touching now. "So I don't think it would be that much trouble for you to just..." She batted her eyelashes that sickeningly obvious way she usually used on Draco, and Millicent had to admit that it wasn't quite so sickening when one was on the receiving end.

"Pansy, wait where is this *coming* from? You can't just - this isn't at all like you - are you *sure*?" Millicent didn't know why she was still babbling and not kissing Pansy already, but something felt wrong here. She still didn't know what exactly was going on.

"Sure about what?" asked Pansy, flippantly. "I'm not sure about anything; I'm *curious*, and that's why I want you to kiss me. So I can see what it's like." Misjudging Millicent's hesitation, she continued, "And don't be a bloody Hufflepuff about it, Mills." She advanced until Millicent's back was pressed up against the wall and Pansy was pressed up against Millicent's front. "I don't want to hear some noble 'I won't be anyone's experiment' nonsense from you; this is just a bit of fun... no harm in it..."

"Hey!" said Millicent, throwing up her hands in protest. "I wasn't going to say anything like that!" And really, she wasn't. That was a *Hufflepuff* thing to be worried about, and they were the both of them Slytherins. And besides, to be honest, Millicent was a bit curious too.

"Alright then." Pansy was using that tone of voice again. "Good." She quirked an eyebrow, and Millicent realized that she was expecting Millicent to make the first move. Not bloody fair of her, since Pansy was the one with all the experience, but then again, they *were* Slytherins. Fairness was not their strong suit.

Millicent, being a bit taller, had to lean her head down and was relieved when Pansy tilted hers up. It seemed like an eternity where they were moving inexorably toward one another and then, oh, dear *lord*, Pansy was kissing her. Or she was kissing Pansy, or something, but there it was, real and *now*, and she could really feel it. It was all warm lips and hungry mashings-together, and very good even if there was too much of Millicent not knowing quite what to do with her hands. Pansy was resting her hands on the wall behind them, but Millicent had nowhere near as to convenient to put hers, and she didn't know if Pansy would want Millicent to put her hands on her body or where, if she did so Millicent settled for letting them hang rather uselessly at her sides.

Millicent was glad when Pansy ended the kiss, if only because she was beginning to worry that she didn't know quite how to do it herself, but she immediately regretted that it was over. She had no excuse not to remember this one well, at least.

"Hmm. I didn't know that girls didn't kiss each other properly," Pansy lamented, looking disappointed. "I guess it's not as interesting as boys, anyway."

"We'll be late to class," Millicent said, over her sinking stomach. So Pansy hadn't liked it, and it whatever 'it' had been would be all over now.

"Fuck class," said Pansy, the disappointment on her face being replaced with something akin to frustration as she put her hands on her hips. "Aren't you going to ask me what 'kissing properly' means?"

Millicent felt like she had been handed the secret script that she had been missing all those times before. "Uh, yeah... what *do* you mean?"

Pansy's eyes glinted devilishly, and she grinned. "Well, let me show you." And she proceeded to attack Millicent's face, but Millicent didn't care at all because this time Pansy wasn't just kissing her, she was using *teeth*, and then something velvet came out that must have been her tongue, and then it was in Millicent's mouth, somehow,

sweeping over teeth and gums and her own tongue, kindling little fires in Millicent's gut and making her breath come short. After a moment of just soaking it up, it occurred to her that she was letting Pansy do all the work, so she reached up to cradle Pansy's neck in her hand, making the kiss firmer, and deeper, so she could just slant her mouth against Pansy's supple lips and drink her up. She hadn't let herself admit how much she wanted this until it was actually happening, but *gods*, it was good. She was glad she was leaning against the wall, now, because if she hadn't, she honestly might have fallen. Her legs seemed to have no strength left in them.

When they stopped at last, Millicent diving in for one last chaste peck before they parted entirely, Millicent could only slump back against the wall and let out a sigh that rose from her deepest reaches and washed her in a rush of shiver-tingle in its wake. She stroked Pansy's skin in small circles where her thumb lay in the hollow just under her ear, and smiled. "So? What's the verdict? Girls still not as interesting?"

Pansy smiled as well and took Millicent's hand, disengaging it from her neck and placing it back down by Millicent's side in an almost motherly fashion, and stepped back. "Yes, that was definitely interesting, Millicent. You could use some improvement, but don't give up. I wonder what Daphne would be like..." Her eyes slid out to the corridor, as if Daphne might be passing at that very moment, ready to be pulled into a niche.

Millicent suddenly felt very empty again, as though the script had been snatched back without explanation. "What was this for?" she tried. "I mean, why now?" *Why me?* "You could have pulled me aside and snogged me any time, or you could've just asked me like a normal person... This is just so random." She hated how her voice rose up so hopefully.

Pansy sighed. "Look, I told you, I just got curious. It wasn't like something that I planned out. And so now I know. It doesn't mean anything." She was looking Millicent in the eyes, but her face was closed. "You're *not* going all Hufflepuff on me now, are you?"

Millicent winced, but it wasn't from being called a Hufflepuff. It had more to do with the way her stomach seemed to have sunk down into her ridiculous green knee socks, leaving her feeling slightly dizzy (not in a good way, though) and more than a little ill. She managed to shake her head in response to Pansy's question, and Pansy looked relieved.

"Great. I knew you'd be a good sport." She flashed a smile and patted Millicent's shoulder and casually ran a lock of her hair through her fingers in that way she had, and was gone. Millicent didn't quite know what had happened, but for once, she truly didn't want to know. She didn't think she would have liked the answer.