

Don't Stop Me Now

by sunny33

Lucius and Severus have survived the war with finances and social standings intact, but they are bored. Come with them as they re-visit the guilty pleasures of their youth. However, they are found out by a certain young woman.

Chapter One: I Want to Break Free

Chapter 1 of 5

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Disclaimer: The characters and settings belong to JKR. I just borrowed them for a while.

Chapter One: I Want to Break Free

"You really are a bastard, Lucius," growled the dark-haired wizard as he sprawled in his favourite armchair in the library of Malfoy Manor.

"What have I done to offend your delicate sensibilities this time, my friend," asked the elegant blond as he poured his best elf-made wine into two glasses.

"I could have had a peaceful yet heroic death as a martyr. But no, you had to interfere and save me. For what? An excruciatingly slow demise by boredom!" Severus Snape took the glass from his old friend and peered gloomily into its depths.

Lucius Malfoy pondered the complaint. He could understand Severus's frustration. After twenty years dancing with death and torture at the hands of a crazed megalomaniac and a master manipulator had been ended by a simple *Expelliarmus*, peacetime had become safe, secure, and mind numbingly, bloody boring. Neither he nor Snape would admit they missed the adrenaline highs of the war; they were not familiar with the Muggle term, after all. Their gratitude in the face of absolution and restoration of their social standing remained firmly displayed for all to see; their every action, however, closely scrutinised by sceptics for signs that the public had been duped. But behind closed doors they craved a little excitement, a little relief from marking mediocre Potions' essays, doling out detentions, and shifting Galleons from one burgeoning Gringotts' vault to another.

Snape had returned to Hogwarts after his exoneration, leaving the bureaucracy of the headmaster's office to Minerva McGonagall, and immersing himself in the tediously comforting familiarity of trying to instil Potions knowledge into reluctant teenagers. He had been offered the Defence position again, but the relative lack of Potions experts and the abundance of well-trained, and now underemployed, tutors for Defence had found him back in his dungeons for the past year.

Lucius knew he had been fortunate. His father had instilled in him a deep belief in his own worthiness; being a Malfoy would always be his greatest asset. The early, heady days of Voldemort's first rise to power had affirmed all he had been taught about the superiority of Pureblood wizarding families, especially the wealthy. However, the innate instability of Tom Riddle had rapidly become evident, unfortunately not before Lucius had taken the Dark Mark and committed himself to the life of a Death Eater. By the time he had realised his error, he had a high maintenance, cold wife and a spoiled, demanding son to protect. Malfoys looked after their own, first and foremost.

Looking back, he wondered whether the years of prostrating himself before an increasingly deranged Voldemort; the time spent in Azkaban, which had left an indelible imprint on his psyche; and the increasing stain on his precious family name were worth it. He had long ago abandoned the belief that the Muggle-born were lesser creatures deserving only contempt. He had fought too many powerful Muggle-born witches and wizards over the years in his guise as a Death Eater to cling to that tenet.

Certainly, they were not Malfoys and generally not wealthy, and for that he felt a certain smugness, but he did not hate them. His overt disdain for all things Muggle over the years had been his armour against the discovery by Riddle of his loss of faith, the maintenance of his family's safety paramount. After all the dust of the final battle had settled, he had been left with a loveless marriage and a detached son determined to distance himself from his father's *sins*. So much for family loyalty. He regarded his half-blood friend, who was still meditating on the unfairness of survival. Surly, short-tempered, and sarcastic, but reassuringly present.

"This will not do at all, Severus. What are we if not wizards of the world? Sitting here moping about, awaiting our decrepitude with resigned pouting, does not improve matters," he declared as he poured yet another drink. Rhetoric and action did not necessarily walk hand in hand.

A loud crack startled the two wizards out of their self-pity. The senior Malfoy house-elf, Basil, bowed and presented his master with a roll of parchment. "The mistress insisted that this was delivered immediately, Master Lucius," he said as he handed over the missive. Lucius smiled, pleased at the cultured manner in which his elderly house-elf had spoken, despite his persistence in addressing his master as if he was still in short pants. Since the embarrassing debacle with Dobby some years earlier, he had learned to treat his house-elves with more respect and had reaped the benefits of a more contented domestic workforce.

"Thank you, Basil," he replied, breaking his wife's ostentatious seal.

"Whatever is it, Lucius?" Snape was concerned at the look of dismay which crossed his friend's face.

"She's finally done it. She's divorced me. With no warning." Lucius slumped heavily into a chair as his Malfoy confidence deserted him, albeit temporarily.

"But, I thought you and she had an understanding?"

"As did I. We had agreed that she would consult with me first if she desired a divorce. Not that I am displeased, that woman has been cold to me for far too long. I would simply have preferred a little input as to the timing." Lucius frowned at the offending parchment. "Oh, well. I suppose now is as good a time as any." He reached for a quill and signed the document. With a soft pop as it disappeared, bound for the Ministry archives, he became a free man. "A toast, Severus, to bachelorhood!"

"To bachelorhood... Lucius, is that even a word?"

After Severus had left, Lucius's formidable mind set to the task of their future. Over the past year, he had suffered an endless diatribe of complaints about dunderheads and cauldron explosions. Docking points and handing out detentions did not seem to give the dark wizard the satisfaction it had previously. Lucius himself had wearied of the endless social whirl of the rich and fabulous. Now he was deemed to be *good*, he just did not feel *interesting* any more. Supreme wealth and the Malfoy name were simply no longer fulfilling in this egalitarian society in which they now lived. Dammit. It was time for the Malfoy fortune to make itself useful. Reminiscing fondly of the secret, guilty pleasures that he and Snape had indulged in during the first reign of Voldemort gave him an idea. A brilliant idea. Narcissa would have *Avada*'ed him on the spot, had she still been his wife, but she wasn't...

The elegant, blond man dressed in a black dinner suit, pristine white shirt, and bow tie looked a little out of place in the middle of the afternoon in Muggle London. However, Muggles, being Muggles, had seen it all before and simply shrugged at the eccentricity of the very rich and continued on their merry way. Strolling over to the entirely glass-fronted sales room, Lucius surveyed the goods on display with a wealthy man's nonchalance. *This should sort him out*, he decided as he entered the building, prepared to do business.

Severus Snape looked up from his book as he heard a loud, throaty roar descend upon Spinner's End. Puzzled, and not a little anxious, he Disillusioned himself and peered out of the front living room window. The incongruous sight of Lucius Malfoy, dressed to impress in Muggle clothing, stepping out of an immaculate Aston Martin DB5, the 1964 model if he was not mistaken, was something he would never forget. When did his friend learn to drive? *Why* did his friend learn to drive? And what in the seventh hell was he doing here with a car like that?

"Well? What do you think?" Lucius proudly threw the car keys to Severus.

"This is a car."

"Yes."

"It's a Muggle transportation device."

"Yes."

"You drove it here."

"You do not know everything about me, my friend. I learned to drive many years ago." Lucius smirked at the other man's expression.

"But it is Muggle. You *hate* Muggle things."

"Not everything. Remember the good old days... well, the bad old days, really. How we used to sneak out of the Manor when Narcissa was holding court with her coven?"

"Oh. Those days." Severus's brain was too occupied studying the magnificent piece of engineering before him to process polysyllabic words.

"Yes. Those days. Queen concerts that night in Hanover in 1979. Bowie. James Bond..."

"You only enjoyed those concerts after you discovered Freddie Mercury and David Bowie were Pureblood wizards. Anything less and you would have looked down your aristocratic nose and ignored them as beneath your notice." Severus recalled Lucius's fascination with Muggle Bond movies in the seventies, once he had discovered Ian Fleming's true heritage. It had been obvious to anyone with half a brain that the only way James Bond could have escaped some of those scenarios was by judicious use of a wand. "Is this really...?"

Lucius grinned. "The very same model used in *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball*, and other movies. But they were the classics. That Muggle, Moore, was never as good as Connery. It took a bit of finding, but the dealer was able to procure it from a gentleman in Tennessee."

"I hope there were no *Imperios* involved. The last thing you need is the Ministry on your back," the darker wizard lectured.

"Maybe a little *Confundus* or two. But I paid him a fair price." Lucius was unrepentant.

"How did you pay for it? I don't imagine many classic car collectors take Galleons as payment." Severus glanced at the blond wizard with narrowed eyes.

"Don't be so bloody suspicious, Severus. If there is one thing we Malfoys know, it is money. Wizarding Galleons, Muggle pounds, US dollars, Swiss francs I'm particularly fond of *that* currency. My esteemed father, always one for covering all eventualities, opened a Muggle bank account in my name many years ago, deposited a substantial amount of cash, and left it to accrue interest. I daresay I have contributed to the Muggle tax system somewhere along the way." His distaste for that possibility was evident in his expression.

"I went into the bank earlier and obtained one of these little beauties." He waved a gold plastic card with glee. "Money is no object, my friend. The Muggle world is our lobster."

"Oyster, Lucius, I believe the word you want is oyster," Severus corrected.

"Oyster... lobster." Lucius shrugged. "It's all seafood."

Curiosity overcame Severus's misgivings as he peered into the car. "This isn't original. The Muggles didn't have compact disc players in 1964."

"A minor detail. How can we play *these* without one?" The blond pulled out a box of compact discs from the back seat. *Queen. David Bowie. Roxy Music. Pink Floyd.*

"Firstly you arrive in a car. Now, you are telling me you know how to operate one of these things?" Severus Snape sank down in the passenger seat of the sports car. Shaking his head as his perception of the Malfoy world rearranged itself, he watched his friend slip a CD into the player and flick the switch to operate the device. The opening vocals of *Bohemian Rhapsody* surrounded him, the words all too relevant.

Is this the real life?

Is this just fantasy?

Contemplating the question briefly, he was jolted back to awareness a few moments later by Freddie Mercury's plaintive lyrics.

... Mama, just killed a man...

Switching the music off, he glared at Lucius. "Are you trying to make my life even more miserable?"

Lucius sighed impatiently. "Don't take it so personally. It's just a song. It's your choice sit in that dingy place all summer and contemplate your riveting life or join me in a little fun. Remember that? We used to enjoy life once. We can drive somewhere..."

"Where exactly?" Severus still hadn't forgiven him for his choice of song.

"Doesn't matter *where*. It's a DB5. Who cares *where* we drive it, just that we do. In style. With Freddie and friends."

"You have been *Crucio'ed* once too often, my friend. Narcissa would have your balls if she knew what you were doing. The Ministry would have to re-examine all their files. Hell, I'm considering examining you for Polyjuice use myself."

"Narcissa divorced me, remember? The Ministry can go and *Avada* itself. And you *know* you want this." Lucius inserted the key and started the engine. The deep rumble of the six cylinder engine, the smell of well cared for leather, the music, all combined to bewitch the reluctant wizard, who found himself strapped into the passenger seat, ready for the complete DB5 experience before his volition caught up with his actions.

"Drive me, you seductive bastard. Drive me." He switched the stereo back on, leaned back in the luxurious, leather seat, and surrendered to his senses.

A/N: Lyrics are from Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody, 1976. According to Wikipedia, one of the original cars used for publicity tours for the movie *Goldfinger* in 1964 was bought in 1970 for £5,000 from the owner, Sir Anthony Bamford, by a Tennessee museum owner.

Chapter titles are all Queen songs.

This was a gift for the lovely PajamaPants in the recent LM/HG Exchange on LiveJournal. Thanks go to rdholmantx for the beta!

Chapter Two: You're My Best Friend

Chapter 2 of 5

Lucius and Severus head off to re-visit their youth. Guess who catches them at it?

Chapter Two: You're My Best Friend

"Slow down! You'll get us killed! Or worse, arrested. I spent years avoiding death at the hands of the Dark Bastard and narrowly escaped Azkaban, and now you are..." Severus's knuckles turned white as they barely missed a large lorry on a tight corner.

"Calm down, Severus. Trust me. This car is designed to be driven at speed. Besides, a few well-placed charms keep the car on the road and away from other vehicles. The Notice-Me-Not should prevent any police detection." Lucius's confidence in his spell-work was unshakeable.

"What about trees? Fences? Power poles?"

"Power poles?" asked the driver.

"You know, those bloody great concrete things at the side of the road. Does your spell include them? And a Notice-Me-Not will not avoid detection by speed cameras."

"What's a speed camera?"

Severus rolled his eyes and asked for guidance from whatever gods may listen to two supposedly respectable wizards bent on breaking various laws of Muggle, Wizarding, and Newtonian origin. He pointed to a box which had just flashed at them from a pole at the side of the road. "*That* was a speed camera. The police use them to catch fools who drive too fast. You, my dear friend, have just incurred a speeding fine."

"I'll worry about that later. For now, just enjoy." Lucius was unconcerned about Muggles and their petty fines. Why would the wealthiest wizard in Britain worry about fines when there were roads to explore, music to enjoy, and women to bed? He hadn't told his friend about the last plan yet; the man clearly needed a good shagging, and who

better to arrange one?

After their three-hour drive back to Malfoy Manor the previous evening, Severus had Floo'ed back to Spinner's End with instructions to return the next day ready for a Muggle adventure. With nothing better to do for the summer than stagnate at his uninviting dwelling, Severus had finally acquiesced, with the proviso that Lucius attire himself less ostentatiously. Casual shirts and jeans had sufficed, and the adventure had begun in a roar of the engine and a squeal of the tyres, much to the bewilderment of the house-elves who had lined up to see their master off.

"Put some music on, Sev!" shouted Lucius over the growl of the motor.

"Any preference, *Luce?*" asked Severus, rummaging around in the CD box.

"You choose."

Severus smirked as he found just the right song and sang along with gusto.

... You're the best friend that I ever had

I've been with you such a long time...

"Oh, I suppose you think that's funny, Snape. An hour on the road and suddenly he's turned into a fucking comedian," Lucius groaned as said comedian continued to sing to him extravagantly. At least the dark-haired wizard was finally allowing himself to relax and have a good time, even if it was at his expense.

As they sped along the M4 towards Bristol, Lucius fumbled in the glove box to find a packet of fine Havana cigars. Offering one to his friend, he used his wand to light both. The heavy smoke drifted around the interior of the car, mingling decadently with the leather and other purely masculine aromas therein. The two men grinned at each other. Life was good.

Don't stop me now ('cause I'm havin' a good time)

Don't stop me now (yes, I'm havin' a good time)

I don't want to stop at all...

"Do you feel like visiting Stonehenge, Sev?"

"Merlin, no. Didn't you specify that this trip was strictly Muggle? Too many witches and wizards lurking around Salisbury. Let's go south, down to the coast."

"Your wish is my command, master." Lucius performed a mock bow, causing the car to swerve wildly towards the centre line.

"Just concentrate on driving, Malfoy! You are not good enough at it yet to act the fool."

Lunch was eaten by the beach at Southbourne. A line of gaily-painted beach huts marched along the sand behind them as they sat enjoying the simplicity of the meal and the fresh, sea air. With no house-elves to cater for his exotic tastes, Lucius had settled for a loaf of fresh bread, a slab of cheese, various cold meats, and fruit, purchased from a Muggle shop. However, with a flourish, he produced the fine bottle of wine and appropriate glasses he had managed to stash in the boot before leaving.

"Only one glass, Lucius. *I'm* driving next, and I do not want to be thrown in a Muggle police cell for drinking and driving," Severus declared.

"All the more for me, old boy. All the more for me." He raised his glass in a toast. "To freedom. From Dark Bastards, wives, and headmistresses!"

"Freedom!"

There had never seemed a better time to simply lie back on the sand and watch the clouds drift past, birds swooping and squabbling over scraps of food left by untidy passers-by; the gentle swish of the waves against the shore hypnotic in its rhythm. Muggle life definitely had its benefits. A wand, however, was still useful when it came to getting rid of the pervasive sand that clung to their clothes when they decided to move on later in the afternoon.

"Where to now, Luce?" Severus asked as he strapped himself into the driver's seat, eager to test his mettle against the motor.

"No idea. Is Brighton anywhere near here? I hear the café on the pier makes the best fish and chips in England."

Severus did a few mental calculations. Travelling by road was a little less convenient than Apparation or Floo, but the trip was certainly more enjoyable. "It's only about eighty miles. We can get there well before dinnertime. Just sit back and relax."

Lucius did just that. He had to admit Severus's driving was more restful than his own, smoother and more controlled, and was soon lulled to sleep as the powerful car ate up the miles.

Hermione sighed as she watched the children playing on the pier. Seagulls squawked, waves lapped at the pier supports, and groups of chattering tourists swarmed the fairground. How did she ever think this would be a peaceful place to make decisions? She had always wanted to visit the famous pier, and, when her final year back at Hogwarts was over, she had decided to spend some time alone to sort out her future plans without anyone else pressuring her.

There were so many options, yet none seemed to appeal. Ron and Harry were intent on entering the Auror training program, but she had had quite enough of fighting dark wizards. Neville had suggested she work for the Ministry in the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures; after the dismal results she had had a few years ago with the house-elves, she rather thought she should stay clear of that occupation. Molly Weasley was pushing her to train to be a Healer; after all, a Healer in the family would be useful. As she wasn't actually planning on joining the Weasley family, not that Ron was aware of it yet, and had little patience with people when they were well, let alone sick, she did not give that idea a lot of credence. Teaching was possible, however years of frustration trying to encourage the boys to study had put her off that profession. One only had to see how much Professor Snape had really *enjoyed* teaching, even after he could drop the evil bat persona. She had even been approached by the Department of Mysteries and offered a position as an Unspeakable. Her lack of faith in the Ministry after the years of botch-ups preceding the final battle was, even under Kingsley Shacklebolt's leadership, too shaken to consider any position there. Which left her right back where she started. On Brighton Pier. Frustrated.

"Where's that fish and chip shop, Luce?"

Hermione startled as images of the Potions classroom flashed into her mind with that distinctive voice. *Fish and chips? Luce? Am I dreaming?* She looked up to see the rear view of two extremely well-defined arses clad in tight denim passing by. One was attached to a grey-shirted man with long, blond hair, the other to a dark man in a green shirt. She dragged her eyes away from their indecently attractive rear ends and shook her head. *Down, girl! Just because your sex life has been sadly lacking lately doesn't mean you get to ogle older men. Especially those two.* Her curiosity and libido getting the better of her, she silently followed the pair at a discreet distance, confirming their identities when they stopped and turned to each other briefly to argue about which food vendor to patronise.

Severus Snape and Lucius Malfoy. In Brighton, wearing jeans. What is the world coming to? This, I have to see. She seated herself at a nearby table to watch. Malfoy was sitting alone; Snape had disappeared while she was ordering coffee. Suddenly, she felt a prickle down the back of her neck as a warm breath glided over her skin, then a

low voice in her ear addled her thoughts.

"Care to join us, Miss Granger? It would be easier to observe us from over there."

She turned, to find herself face to prodigious nose with her erstwhile Potions professor, who was sporting a wicked grin. *Funny, I didn't know he could smile.* Swallowing hard, she managed to reply, "Er... yes. Thank you, sir."

Lucius stood as his friend settled the young witch at the table. Extending his hand, he caught hers and gallantly bestowed a kiss upon it. "Miss Granger. Delighted to renew our acquaintance under more pleasant circumstances."

Hermione snorted in a most unladylike fashion and looked him in the eye. "Considering the previous times we have met, Mr Malfoy, when you have been either insulting my parentage or trying to kill me, any circumstances could be deemed preferable." *Over your dead body, preferably.*

"Yes, but you still saw fit to testify on my behalf. I must have some hope of redemption in your eyes. And my companion here can vouch for me." Confident that his easy charm would win her over, Lucius smiled.

"I merely stated the facts. You were not seen to be involved in the final battle, and you did appear to be under some duress with regards to your family's safety. Loyalty to one's family is a start, Mr Malfoy. However, my experience of your friend's method of teaching is hardly conducive to my acceptance of *his* opinion on your character. Perhaps you need to convince me yourself?"

Hermione regarded both men with chin held high, no longer afraid of either. Seeing one near death and the other desperate to save his wife and son had altered her perception of both men, although she was not about to concede that to them. Snape had been his usual, obnoxious self in her final year, although he had been fairer. Obscene numbers of points had been deducted from *all* the houses, and detentions were likewise shared evenly. Seemingly, being proven to be one of the good guys after all had not improved his disposition one iota. An unlikely friendship had developed between herself and Draco Malfoy during their last year at Hogwarts, which had enlightened her somewhat as to his father's motivations and loyalties during the previous twenty years. She found herself somewhat intrigued by the more relaxed and surprisingly sexy Snape and Malfoy. Finding out what they were up to was infinitely more interesting than moping about the pier worrying about her lack of future direction.

The enticing smell of freshly cooked, battered fish as their food arrived conveniently forestalled any further discussion on the relative merits of Lucius Malfoy's character. Conversation was limited to requests for the salt or vinegar and various murmurs of appreciation. Brighton Pier fish and chips *were* the best.

A/N: Lyrics from Queen's *You're my Best Friend*, and *Don't Stop Me Now*.

Written for the LMHG Gift Exchange as a gift for PajamaPants.

Chapter Three: Good Old-fashioned Lover Boy

Chapter 3 of 5

Hermione wakes up with the hangover from hell.

Disclaimer: No, they are definitely not mine.

Chapter Three: Good Old-fashioned Lover Boy

With a stifled groan, Hermione rolled out of bed. Head thumping, stomach churning, she had but one thought in her mind. *What sort of fucking Potions master goes on a road trip without any Hangover Potion?* Said Potions master and arrogant friend being on the other side of the bedroom door right at that moment. *Hopefully, feeling like they have been run over by a hippogriff.*

After finishing her meal without hexing either of her companions, however tempting it had been, she had found herself accompanying Professor Snarky and Mr Pureblood Prick to various Brighton pubs. She had steadily become more intoxicated as she had attempted to keep up their cracking pace. The only point in her favour was that she had been drinking half to their full pints, and she had surreptitiously ditched a few in convenient pot plants when they weren't looking. Unfortunately, her subterfuge had left her in a difficult situation by the time they were all ready for bed. What to do with two totally inebriated wizards at three o'clock in the morning when there were no available rooms? Brighton was popular in the summer, and there appeared to be several conferences running which had left no rooms vacant, especially for such dodgy looking clientele as the two with her. As the soberest member of the three, she had reluctantly taken responsibility for the two men. She had not been prepared to be held culpable if they ran amok with their wands in their drunken state.

The only solution was to return to her hotel suite. Suffering the lascivious leers of the night porter, she had led the two miscreants into the sitting area of the suite, transfigured the two chairs into beds, and tucked them in. Not before fruitlessly searching Snape's pockets for Hangover potion. *Bloody idiot.* Now she had to go out there and face them, while feeling like shite. Some holiday.

Feeling marginally better after emptying the contents of her stomach into the toilet, cleaning her teeth, and showering, she opened the bedroom door in search of her newly acquired roommates.

"There she is, Lucius. I told you she would still be around," crowed Severus, looking disgustingly chipper for a wizard who had been incoherent a few hours earlier.

"So you did, Sev. We were just wondering how you were faring, my dear Miss Granger," added Lucius.

The force of her glare could have melted solid rock. "All right. Where is it? Hand it over. Now!"

The two men shared looks of surprised innocence. "Whatever can you mean, Miss Granger?" asked the blond.

"The Hangover Potion. Clearly you two have had some. You had better left some for me..." She dashed back to the bathroom to the sound of chuckling from both the evil men. Upon her return, Severus handed her a small vial.

"I do apologise. We did not for one moment consider that an intelligent witch like yourself would have indulged the way you did last night without a supply of this available."

She downed the potion in one swallow and sighed as the little men stopped hammering her skull. Focussing for the first time, she noted the room had been restored to its former state, and the two men were impeccably groomed. *Bastards*.

"So, a little breakfast, perhaps?" suggested Lucius, gesturing to the door. "I believe there is a pleasant café just across the road we could try."

"Your treat, Mr Malfoy?" Her inner bitch, who was not completely placated by the potion, needed to express herself.

"Why, of course, Miss Granger. After all, you did provide these charming accommodations for us. It is the least I can do."

Sitting at the small outdoor table a few minutes later, Hermione eyed her companions thoughtfully. "You two never did tell me what you were up to in Brighton." *Excuse me if I am suspicious*.

"Just on holiday, as you are yourself," replied Lucius off-handedly as his eyes tracked a sweet young thing walking past. "Ouch! What was that for?" he complained when Hermione slapped his arm.

"She's about fifteen, you middle-aged pervert!" she scolded.

"Well, she should wear more clothes if she doesn't want men to notice her," he retorted.

"It's not old prats she wishes to attract, you dolt." She pointed to the two teenage boys who had met up with the object of Lucius's attention.

"You wound me woman. Old, indeed. I am at my peak. And available." He winked and smiled suggestively.

Severus' snort into his coffee drew attention from his friend. "And you are no better, Snape. The way you were ogling everything in a skirt last night..."

"Jealous, much?" He smirked. "What happened to *professor* and *sir*?"

"Oh, I think I stopped seeing you as my professor somewhere between graduating and putting you to bed last night." It was her turn to smirk as his face dropped.

"You put me to bed?"

"Yes. You were certainly not capable." *Paralytic, more like*.

"Then it was you who removed my jeans?"

"Yes." *Oh, yes*.

"I don't wear anything under them."

"So I noticed."

"You couldn't have transfigured them into something suitable?" he groaned, cheeks flushed.

"You would have wanted me near that part of your body with a wand in the state I was in?"

"Oh."

Hermione smiled wickedly as she calmly picked up a piece of toast. "I can tell you now; it was somewhat disconcerting to find myself with an eyeful of my professor's floppy bits."

The professor nearly choked. "What *exactly* was your face doing down there?"

"Oh, I had forgotten to take off your boots. I was just unlacing them," she explained blithely. *I think he is going to have apoplexy in a minute*.

The wizard covered his face with his hands. "To think I was that close to Nirvana, and I don't even remember it... Wait a minute. What do you mean, *floppy*? The Professor is *not* floppy!"

She demonstrated with strip of omelette. "Floppy. Definitely floppy. Just as well, too. Any other state and it would have been smacked."

Severus cringed.

"Ooh. Can I play that game? I like a good smacking." Lucius chimed in.

"You two are hopeless. It's like the boys all over again," she complained as they left the café.

Severus graced her with the full Potions classroom glare. "I do *not* appreciate being compared to *those* two imbeciles."

"Oh, come on. Dark hair, rotten childhood, moody as hell. Ring any bells?" She turned to Lucius, "And you think you can get into the pants of anything remotely female just by turning on the charm. Boys. They never grow up! So, what's next on the agenda?"

"What do you mean?" asked Severus, casting her a suspicious glance.

"Well. It appears you two cannot be trusted out in the Muggle world alone, so I suppose I will have to accompany you. Merlin knows I have been bored witless by myself. Even you two should be an improvement on contemplating my complete lack of future direction."

"Why, Granger, I am surprised at you. I would have thought you would follow the rest of the Golden Trio into the Aurory. They will need you to get them through the course, in any case."

"Well, you thought wrong, Snape. I am done spoon-feeding those two. They are on their own."

"It appears our Miss Granger has developed an attitude, Severus. I believe we should take up her offer to supervise us. I am sure we are in need of her *expert* attention." Lucius's inference was not lost on their companion.

"In your dreams, Malfoy," she hissed. *Wet dreams, probably*.

He shrugged and gallantly held open the door of the car that was parked a few yards down the street.

"*This* is your car?" she asked, running her hands over the smooth lines in obvious appreciation. "Where... how... why?"

"I shall explain once we are underway, Miss Granger." And he did. He was a little put out when she laughed and called him a *007 Wannabe*, but nevertheless her mood

seemed to loosen up a little, which was promising.

"Put some music on, Sev. Perhaps the Bowie CD?"

"*Bowie?*" Hermione laughed.

"Why not? We were children of the seventies, you know." Severus grinned as he found the CD and inserted it into the player.

Oh, do that again, Snape. The sight of him so relaxed was somewhat... interesting.

After a few moments the music filled the car. Severus leaned back in the seat and sang along. Hermione shook her head and surrendered to the bizarre notion of her ex-professor actually enjoying himself without alcohol.

"*With your long, blonde hair and your eyes of blue, the only thing I ever got from you was sorrow, sorrow... You acted funny, tryin' to spend my money; you're out there playing your high class games of sorrow, sorrow...* Oh, for goodness sake, Lucius. Everyone knows you were pleased to see the back of her. Stop acting the pathetic, deserted husband; it doesn't become you. Besides, I have it on good authority that you had some damned good shagging in the early days, so it can't all have been bad." Severus flicked the CD onto another song.

"That was not very nice, Snape. He can't help it if he feels a little down about the end of his marriage." Hermione viewed Lucius's expression with mild irritation. He really had seemed distressed a moment earlier, but now he was grinning at his friend as if he hadn't a care in the world. *Pillock.*

"Don't concern yourself with me, my dear. I had a momentary lapse. I appreciate Severus reminding me of the circumstances of my divorce. The marriage was over years ago; it just took us a long time to agree to a settlement that was acceptable to all parties. This trip is our way of celebrating our new beginnings. What was the toast, Sev?"

"To freedom. From Dark Bastards, wives, and headmistresses," Severus replied, raising his hand in an imaginary toast.

"And well-meaning friends," added Hermione.

"Malfoy, where did you want to go for..." Hermione stopped short in the men's bedroom doorway at the sight of Lucius Malfoy, clad only in an unzipped pair of tight, leather pants. Her eyes glided slowly down his well-muscled chest, following the fine, blond trail of hair leading from his navel down to the thick, darker growth revealed by his complete lack of underwear, to the fine, soft leather of his trousers clinging lovingly to his thighs.

"See something you like?" The incorrigible blond posed.

"Hell, yes. I've always wanted some of those." She knelt before him and ran her hands over the leather encasing his calves. Where did you get them from?"

Lucius felt somewhat deflated. Well, not entirely deflated, one part of him was decidedly interested in the lovely young woman on her knees before him. "Ahem. If you aren't planning on doing something productive in that position, I suggest you move. These pants are not designed to have any room for... growth," he groaned.

She looked up, to find herself once again at eye-level with something unexpected. *Oh, my.* "Oops, s-sorry!" she managed to gasp before hastily leaving the room.

"Don't leave on my account," he whispered wistfully after the door had slammed.

The next moment, Severus burst into the room. "What the hell have you said to Granger? She... Damn you look good in those, you handsome bastard! You know, I would almost be tempted to shag you myself if I was that way inclined." He whistled and circled Lucius, eyeing the leather garment covetously. "Aren't they the same as the pair Freddie Mercury wore at that concert in Hanover?"

"Yes. I ordered them made especially. Don't worry. I have a pair for you, too."

Both men grinned as they checked out the mirror, then the argument started.

Hermione nearly dropped her coffee as two half-dressed wizards came into the sitting room, bickering like a pair of schoolboys. Settling herself into a chair to enjoy the view, she smiled into her cup as they continued to throw jibes back and forth.

"We will let Miss Granger decide," declared Lucius finally.

"Decide what?" she asked, curious.

"Which of us has the flattest stomach?" Lucius asked.

"Are you two serious? All that arguing and *that* was all it was about?" Her coffee was in grave danger of spillage as she shook with laughter.

Severus scowled. "Deadly serious. Now, decide!" He pointed at Lucius. "His, or mine?"

Both are pretty damn fine. Not telling them that. She stood and approached the two men. Poking Severus in the chest she lectured, "You do realise I am only just coming to terms with you not being the nasty, sarcastic, points-docking Potions professor. And, you," she said, turning to prod Lucius's chest in turn, "not trying to hex me, or worse, every time we meet. And now you are asking my opinion of your bodies?"

"Miss Granger. Thirty points from Gryffindor for impertinence!" snarled Severus in full classroom mode. At her look of shock, he turned to Lucius and grinned. "See, I've still got it!"

"You bastard! That's it! I am over being intimidated by you, *Severus*. As for you, *Lucius*, I could take you on in a duel any day. There was I thinking Ron and Harry were juvenile for comparing their biceps muscles, and you two want your treasure trails scored!"

"Treasure trails? What are treasure trails?" asked Lucius, lost with the Muggle terminology. Severus shrugged, none the wiser.

Stepping forward boldly, Hermione trailed her fingers slowly down each wizard's lower abdomen. "These, gentlemen, are treasure trails. The fine line of hair that leads down to..." She lightly cupped each wizard's genitals briefly. "The treasure." Spinning away to hide her blushes, she giggled at the dual gasps from the men behind her.

"Oh," they croaked in unison.

"Now, stop fooling around and get dressed. I'm hungry," she ordered.

"Yes, miss," they replied, thoroughly chastened.

Much later, after Hermione had retired to her bedroom, the two wizards looked at each other speculatively.

"Do you think she...?" Severus pondered.

"Well, you know her better than I. Didn't she spend months camping with Potter and Weasley? Surely she has...?"

"No. Not Hermione. She has always appeared to be disinterested, except for a few months in her sixth year, and I think that was only because she felt left out. She bosses those two idiots around like an older sister."

"You seem to have taken a great deal of notice. Is there something you are not telling me, Severus. Should I step aside?" Lucius offered gallantly.

"No, no. Nothing like that. It was just hard *not* to notice what the Golden Trio were up to. Even if I hadn't, Minerva's clucking would have surely informed me."

"So, you would be willing to test the waters for a little threesome?" the blond asked.

"I think you should make the first move, my friend. She still in part sees me as her teacher," Severus gloomily replied.

"Oh, I don't know. She seemed to be well aware of your role as a *man* earlier," Lucius chuckled.

A/N: Lyrics from David Bowie's *Sorrow*.

Chapter Four: Play the Game

Chapter 4 of 5

The threesome find a mission to undertake, but things get out of hand...

Chapter Four: Play the Game

"My turn to drive today, I think," announced Hermione as she grabbed the keys from the table.

The men turned to one another and raised equally incredulous eyebrows.

"You?" asked Lucius. "Are you sure you can handle it?"

"Yes, me. And if I can handle my father's Lotus, I'm sure the DB5 will be a piece of cake. It's twenty-five years older, after all."

"I'm around twenty-five years older than you are. Do you think you could handle me?" Lucius winked as he closed the door behind them.

"Oh, I'm sure I *could* handle you, Lucius. Just not sure I'd *want* to." *Fibber*.

Severus snorted at the dejected look on his friend's face as the witch strode off to the car. "Good try, old man. I'm sure she is wearing down."

"Wearing me down, you mean." Lucius sighed.

"Hey, you two! There's an owl on the car. It looks like it has a message," Hermione called.

"Damn. That can't be good. I left explicit instructions that I wasn't to be disturbed unless there was an emergency." Lucius frowned as he read the message. "Fuck!"

"What is it?" asked Severus, concerned. It was not often that his well-bred friend swore in front of a woman.

"Read it. It's from my chief accountant."

Dear Mr Malfoy,

It has come to my attention that the monthly accounts for your business interest in Guildford have significant discrepancies. There appears to have been a gradual loss over the last few months, rather than the healthy profit that had been hitherto gained. I suspect foul play.

I need instructions on how to proceed with the matter.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Bernard C. Witherspoon

Witherspoon, Merritt, and Sons.

"Surely all businesses have bad months?" Severus suggested.

"Not this one. We import wine from New Zealand. There is a huge market for their Sauvignon Blanc now and never enough to go around. This little venture has been steadily making a tidy profit for a few years. It makes no sense for it to suddenly lose ground. I think he is correct; there is foul play afoot." Lucius stroked a finger along his cheek pensively. "And I think I know just the way to find out what is going on." He shared his devious plan with his two companions as they turned the car in the direction of Guildford.

Hermione gaped. "You have got to be kidding. You really think you can pull that off?"

"And why not, with two such superb accomplices?"

For the rest of the journey they put aside their differences and plotted with the Machiavellian skill of Dumbledore himself.

"Right, everyone knows their role?" Lucius looked stunning in his dinner jacket ensemble. Severus was similarly attired, and with his hair pulled back into a neat queue even managed to look somewhat dashing. Hermione had stopped at a nearby Debenham's when they had arrived and acquired, with the help of Lucius's credit card, an expensive, black, cocktail dress. As instructed, it left little to the imagination, with shoestring straps, a low neckline, skin-tight fit, and a hem somewhat higher than she had ever worn before. Six-inch, black heels; glossy, red lipstick; and a new hairstyle completed the look.

Both men stared as she entered the living area of the suite they shared. Lucius wolf-whistled. "I think *that* should distract any red-blooded male in the vicinity," he declared.

"Bugger anyone else," murmured his friend. "How do you expect *me* to concentrate?"

Hermione blushed under their lascivious gazes. "Are you sure about this, Lucius?"

"Yes, my dear. While you and I are engaging their attention with our indubitable sex-appeal, Severus here will lurk around the offices and find out who dares to defraud a Malfoy."

"You didn't explain why we cannot use magic there." Hermione realised what had been bothering her about the plan.

"As I said, the business deals with Muggles often and has Muggle staff. For all intents and purposes, it is an ordinary Muggle company."

"But what if we are discreet?" she persisted.

"Unfortunately, some paranoid idiot insisted that there be wards set up to monitor any magical activity within the building. We cannot afford to set them off," he explained with a rueful smile.

"Hermione Granger, meet Paranoid Idiot." Severus performed the introduction with a perfectly straight face.

"And you have room to criticise? Who has his home warded more tightly than Gringotts?"

"Oh, shut it, you two! Lucius, how did you know there would be a company cocktail party tonight?" she asked.

"It's the first Friday of the month. Every Malfoy business has a cocktail party then. And if they know what is good for them, they ensure all the employees are present. I have been known to appear at random to inspect the business. They will no doubt fall over themselves to entertain me and my new lady friend."

Hermione rolled her eyes at Severus. "Is he always like this?" *Arrogant... confident... too damned sexy for comfort.*

"Unfortunately, yes. But you will learn to ignore him as I do in time."

"I'm not sure I want to spend that much time with him." *Fibber.*

Arriving at the party a few minutes later, Lucius's belief in his own importance was substantiated. Sycophantic managers and adoring secretaries vied for his attention from the moment they entered the building. As the glamorous couple was surrounded and plied with food and drink, Severus easily managed to slip into a quiet hall and make his way to the office suites upstairs. Spying for so many years had left him with some useful skills, after all. He eventually found the evidence he needed in the office of one Mr Barnaby Flistlepot and was about to leave the room when he felt something hard prodding him in his lower back.

"Turn around. Slowly." The threat implicit in the husky, feminine voice convinced him that his captor was serious. He turned slowly, to find himself looking down the barrel of a menacing-looking Muggle gun held by an extremely attractive woman in her early thirties. One who was eyeing him with a mixture of curiosity and appreciation. He could use that to his advantage.

"Ah. Now I have caught you," he murmured silkily. "I knew you couldn't resist finding out who was sneaking around. Please, be gentle with me." He smirked as her gun wavered. She was not quite as tough as she had thought. "Are there any... suitable rooms where we could... get to know each other better?" he asked, while unbuttoning his top few buttons. It was a dirty job, but somebody had to do it.

She smiled eagerly, dropping her gun-hand altogether. "Oh, I think I know just the place..."

Lucius took Hermione by the elbow and gracefully excused them from the conversation on the pretext of finding her a powder room. Leading her out into the hall, he pulled her into a side room near the back of the building. It appeared to be a bedroom, probably used to accommodate visiting clients. "Have you seen Severus?" he whispered urgently. "He should have been back downstairs by now."

"No, I've been too busy fending off the advances of that creepy manager," she hissed.

"Which one? I'll..."

"Shh," she interrupted as they heard someone at the door. "Quick, into the wardrobe." Hermione shoved Lucius into the small wardrobe in the corner of the room where there was barely room for him to sit, legs apart, with her between. A crack in the door allowed them to see.

"Merlin, woman. No need to manhandle me!" His breath warmed her ear.

"There was no time for a bloody vote... Oh, my. Is that Severus? And who is that woman?" *Tart!*

"I don't know, but it appears she wants to have her wicked way with him. He is *supposed* to be gathering information, not shagging some secretary. You'd better look away, Hermione." Lucius gallantly shielded her eyes.

"Oh, bugger off, Lucius. I'm not missing this. But I don't think he planned it. Did you see the look in his eyes? Mind you, there is one part of him that is not objecting. Mmm... impressive!" *Holy fuck. The man's a god.* She shifted slightly, not hearing the soft groan from the wizard behind her as she moved between his legs. She was far too entranced with the scene before her. Severus Snape certainly had a fine body. And he knew how to use it. Hermione squirmed again and this time noticed a rather hard lump pressing into her bottom. "Is that your wand in your pocket, or are you just pleased to see me?" she quipped.

"Very funny. Now, stop wriggling, or I shall not be responsible for the consequences," he growled in her ear, eyes fixed on the scene in the bedroom.

"What? Like this?" She deliberately gyrated her hips against his hardness, the sensuality of the activities she was witnessing rendering her inhibitions void. His breathing became uneven as she increased her movements in time with those on the bed.

"Don't... do... that. It's been too long. Ahhhhh... aaahhhh... mmmm." The wizard behind her grimaced as the dampness seeped through his pants. "Now, look what you've done, and it's not like I can use a wand to clean up." His eyes widened as she reached back and grabbed his hand, placing it firmly under her skirt. Not needing any further instruction, he quickly found just the right spot to relieve her frustration.

As she came down from her high, she covered her face with her hands. "What have I done?" she groaned. *Nothing you haven't fantasised about in the last couple of days.*

"What do you two think you are doing?" enquired an irritated and fully clad Severus as he pulled the wardrobe door open. "Do you realise how well I had to perform to cover the heavy breathing from in there?"

"You didn't seem to mind from what I could see," retorted Hermione, hauling her attitude firmly back into place.

"Yes, well, if you have quite finished getting yourselves off, I can tell you just what I had discovered before Miss Hotpants there found me. Luckily, I was able to... er... distract her."

"I can see that is a technique I must try," Lucius quipped. "Let's get out of here before too many questions are asked. You can show us what you have back at the hotel."

"Oh, I think we had an excellent view of what he has," Hermione purred. "Nice equipment, by the way, Snape."

"I'm never going to hear the end of this, am I?" He sighed.

"I just wish I'd had a camera. Could have preserved the sight of your bony, white arse bouncing up and down for posterity. I'm sure next year's Gryffindors would have paid well for copies." She giggled as they made their way out of the building.

"If I believed that for one minute, I would lock you up in the dungeons and throw away the key, young lady!" he snarled.

Promises, promises... did I really think that? "No, actually I don't think I would want to traumatise the poor Gryffindors so much. Perhaps the Hufflepuffs?"

"She's evil, Lucius. Can't you do anything about her?" Severus pleaded for assistance from his supposed friend.

"You had her as a student for seven years and look how well you succeeded. Don't ask me for help. I think I'm scared of her. Look what she did to me when I was unable to defend myself." He pointed down.

"Just what were you two doing in that wardrobe? I thought you didn't like him?" he asked the still chuckling witch.

"I don't. He's an arrogant prat with more money than is good for his moral well-being. I must have temporarily taken leave of my senses with that floorshow you were putting on. I plead insanity." She held her hands up in surrender.

"Just my luck. The first action I get for months, and she denies any involvement. There I was thinking she had finally succumbed to the Malfoy charm. I think I shall just stick with old faithful here in future." He regarded his right hand affectionately.

"Ew. Just, ew! I did *not* need that image in my head!" *Merlin, that's hot!*

"Can't say it does a lot for me, old man." For once, Severus and Hermione appeared to agree.

Back at the Mandolay Hotel, Severus pulled a sheaf of paper from inside his jacket. "Here it is, all the evidence you need. Flistletop is only selling a fraction of the wine purchased by the company to the regular clients. The rest I suspect he is selling for his own personal profit. He has tried to falsify the records to cover his activities, but see here... and here." He pointed out the discrepancies in the totals.

"Excellent. I shall send this to Witherspoon tomorrow morning. Now, I suggest a celebratory drink. Sauvignon, anyone?"

"But aren't you going to hex him or anything equally nasty?" asked Hermione, surprised by his apparently mild reaction. *A few rounds of Crucio, perhaps?*

He poured the wine and handed Severus his. "Never fear, my dear. He shall not go unpunished. The Malfoys do everything by the letter of the law now. Witherspoon is *very* skilled at dealing with those who try and defraud me. Now, I believe we may have some unfinished business, young lady?" The awareness between them crackled as their fingers brushed on the wine glass.

I don't think I like the look in his eye Lucius's scorching gaze was rapidly melting all of her previous objections. *Can I change my mind now and not look fickle?* "Unfinished business, Lucius?"

"Yes." He brushed his finger along her jaw, trailing it down her neck to the swell of her breasts. "Unfinished business."

Glancing at Severus, who was watching the exchange with an anticipatory smile, she licked her suddenly dry lips. Her former nemesis was doing unbelievably pleasant things with his fingertip along the low neckline of her dress, and all she wanted to do was to... *Oh, fuck it. I have needs too.*

A sudden armful of warm, willing witch took Lucius by surprise. His head was dragged down, and soft lips claimed his own. A hot tongue caressed his as hands rapidly unbuttoned his shirt. Looking over her head, he saw his friend flash a resigned smile and raise his glass in a silent toast.

Hermione felt the blond wizard pull away slightly. She raised her head and straightened her fallen shoulder strap. *That's it, I've blown it.* She briefly puzzled over his encouraging nod and the quirk of his eyebrow towards their companion until, with a wide grin, she turned to Severus and said, "Well. Are you planning on joining us any time soon, or are you waiting for a gold-embossed invitation?"

He needed no further encouragement.

Chapter Five: A Kind of Magic

Chapter 5 of 5

Hermione finally decides what she wants from life.

Hermione leaned against the bathroom sink as she contemplated the previous night's activities. Her body still ached delightfully from the ways the two men had pleased her, ways that she had barely dared imagine previously. The three had developed a rapport that had transcended their previous relationships. However, she had noticed that the two men, while ostensibly only interested in her body, were trying over hard to avoid touching each other's. She had decided they needed a little nudge in the right direction. Having made sure she woke them with her departure from the bed, she fully intended to stay in the bathroom long enough for nature to take its course.

As the door closed on Hermione, Lucius reclined against the pillows and glanced at the wizard beside him.

"You do realise, if it wasn't for that adorable witch in the bathroom there would be no way I would be here in bed naked with you, old man."

"Nor I, Lucius. I'm not the least interested in men," Severus drawled, unable to drag his gaze from the point where the sheet draped low over Lucius's hips.

"I've never been that way inclined, myself," the blond asserted firmly as a betraying finger strayed to the black locks on the pillow beside him. "All that muscle and hardness..." He gasped as the other man turned towards him, a knee brushing his inner thigh as they unaccountably drew nearer.

"I can't see the attraction myself." Severus's words were at odds with his wandering hand, which had somehow decided to examine the texture of his friend's chest and nipples.

Lucius's cheeks stained red as the sheet, which had barely concealed his burgeoning arousal, slipped further down his body. "No... not at all," the blond breathed as their lips met at last, defying their heterosexual sensibilities. Vying for dominance, each wizard suckled and thrust with his tongue, their bodies becoming inexorably closer until the heat and hardness of another male rubbing against his own erection became Lucius's undoing. Reaching down between their entwined bodies, he grasped the object of his interest. A low moan escaped Severus's lips as he returned the favour.

"Oh, Merlin, don't. Don't... don't stop!" Lucius groaned as his best friend took him in hand and did unspeakably pleasurable things to him.

"Gods, Lucius. You do know that is the most clichéd expression known to man?" Severus gasped, his mellifluous voice lost in arousal.

"Fuck it, man. WHY DID YOU STOP?" He flushed as he followed the line of Severus's gaze, transfixed on the witch who had just re-entered the room.

"Don't mind me, boys," she purred softly.

"Would you like to join us, my dear?" Lucius put on a good show of nonchalance despite his body clamouring for release.

"Oh, I think I will just watch for now. Carry on." She grinned wickedly as she settled herself into a nearby armchair, one hand drifting down her body to rest in her curls.

"Well, I suppose we could force ourselves, if that's what our lady desires," drawled Severus as he took Lucius in hand once more.

"If we must." Lucius smirked and succumbed to the dark-haired man's expert touch.

After a month spent with Lucius and Severus exploring Britain's lesser-known roads, listening to great music, and having fantastic sex, Hermione knew it was time to announce their relationship. She could hardly hide away with the two men for the rest of her life, not that it would be such a trial. She re-read the parchment that had been delivered by Hedwig. *Well, this is it. Time to dispel the good girl image, once and for all.*

"Are you sure this is a good idea, Hermione? I am not sure my presence would be welcome at Harry Potter's birthday party." For once, Lucius's confidence had deserted him.

"And why could we not change into our usual attire?" Severus glanced down at his jeans and partly unbuttoned shirt.

"My invitation specified *Miss Hermione Granger and Partner*. You are both my partners, and they will just have to get used to it. And let them see what fine specimens of wizards you are. I'll go in first, though. Don't you two dare run off!" She squeezed both wizards' hands and knocked on the door. Slipping in before her companions were seen by an exuberant Ginny, she was engulfed by the warmth and noise filling the previously austere Black house.

"Hermione!" Ron shouted from across the room, waving a half-eaten sandwich.

"Hi, Ron! Harry! Happy Birthday!" She hugged the birthday boy and his girlfriend as she made her way across the room.

"So, where is this mysterious man you met in Brighton?" asked Molly Weasley, somewhat miffed that Hermione had not given any more details when she had replied to the party invitation.

"Er... Outside. I just wanted to greet you all first to avoid overwhelming the poor..."

"Well, bring him in for Merlin's sake, woman!" George ordered. "We can't wait to see what brave soul has taken you on."

Hermione opened the front door and reached out to take Severus and Lucius by the hand. "I believe you all know Severus. And this is..."

"*Malfoy!*" A shattered glass silenced the din as Arthur Weasley realised who had just entered.

"Yes, Arthur. Lucius Malfoy. My partner, as invited. My partners, as a matter of fact." She held her chin high as she stood between her two men, one arm around each, her hands low on their denim-clad hips leaving no doubt as to the intimate nature of their relationship.

"Hermione! Both of them?" Ginny spent a moment checking out the two wizards. "*You. Lucky. Witch!*" she whispered, then giggled. "I want *all* the details!"

Hermione grinned back, then turned to the rest of the still silent crowd. "Well? Is this a party or not? Luce, can you find us a drink? Sev, I think the food is that way." She pointed toward the kitchen as they each smiled and left to please their witch.

"*Luce?*" Harry looked at Ron.

"*Sev?*" Ron shook his head.

Ginny just chuckled. The male members of the new trio had *no* idea what they had let themselves in for.

"Well, Hermione. Did you reach any conclusions about your future while you were on holiday?" inquired Molly as she served dinner a little later.

"Actually, I have," she replied with an excited smile.

"And you are going to tell us sometime this week?" Harry teased.

"Yes, Harry. These two reprobates here and I are planning to work together as sort of Wizarding Private Investigators. With my research skills, Severus's talent as a spy, and Lucius's charm, we will be able to offer our services as trouble-shooters and investigators for all sorts of problems. The biggest advantage will be complete independence from the Ministry of Magic. We even have a name. B.P.K. Investigations." She smiled at the two men in question. "And we *know* we work well together..."

Several hours later, everyone had finally had enough alcohol and food to ignore the fact that the erstwhile goody-two-shoes Granger was comfortably ensconced on the sofa of the sitting room, head resting in Lucius Malfoy's lap as he ran his fingers through her hair, feet being massaged by a slightly tipsy Severus Snape. Most of the couples were participating in similar activities in various corners around the house, even Arthur and Molly had found an excuse to disappear for a while. The few unattached witches and wizards were steadily becoming loudly intoxicated in the kitchen, where various drinking games were in progress.

"Er... Hermione? Could I have a word?" Harry interrupted as the three were passing around their shared glass of somewhat dubious punch.

"Sure, Harry. What is it?"

"Were you planning to stay tonight?"

"We will stay. If you have a room for us," she replied, smiling wickedly at his discomfiture.

"Um... I guess we can find one suitable."

"We can always enlarge the bed," she suggested innocently.

"Hermione, dearest. Don't torment the poor boy; it's his birthday," Lucius chided.

"Spoilsport." She poked her tongue out at him.

"Save that for later, witch." Severus could not resist deepening the younger man's blush.

"So, Hermione. Where are you planning to live?" Harry elected for a safer topic.

"Good question. I'm not sure yet. Lucius has suggested the Manor, but I have some reservations, given the events that transpired the last time I was there." She glared at Lucius, who spread his hands in silent apology. "However, I have been considering it, and I think with some stipulations it should be acceptable."

"Anything, my sweet harridan, anything," Lucius soothed.

"Prat. I want that drawing room stripped bare and redecorated. Red and gold, I think. And the dungeons will need cleaning out and refurbishing. I'm sure we can find a more pleasant use for them." She smirked at his fleeting look of horror before he managed to compose himself.

"Certainly, darling."

"And I want complete control of the décor," she demanded while gently caressing the blond's inner thigh.

"Anything. Anything at all," he groaned.

"Just a moment. If we are to live at the Manor, I would like some input also." Severus joined in the negotiations with a wink in Hermione's direction.

Lucius sighed. "What exactly do you want, Severus?"

"The master bedroom. I shall choose the décor for that room. After all, we shall be spending an inordinate amount of time in there..." He ran his hand up the back of Hermione's calf, well aware of the stare of the Boy Who Did the Deed.

Hermione sat up suddenly and poked the dark wizard in the chest. "No snakes. No chains. No black! Got it, Bat?"

"You wound me, woman. Do you not trust me?"

"Oh, I don't trust you boys any further than I could hex you when it comes to interior decorating. However, I am prepared to give you a chance. Don't disappoint me, Snape."

"Have I ever disappointed you, witch?" he asked, his mouth bare inches from hers.

"Mmm. No. Not recently, anyway. You have been performing quite nicely, thank you," she replied as she closed the gap and met him for a scorching kiss. "Harry. I think we would like you to show us our room now." She turned to meet the stunned gaze of her host. "Harry. Harry!"

"Oh. Sorry. A room. Sure." He led them up the stairs to an unoccupied bedroom and left hurriedly as clothes began finding their way to the floor before his eyes.

"So, Harry. What exactly do you think B.P.K. stands for?" Ron asked curiously.

"I'm not sure I want to know," Harry replied weakly, reaching for a stiff drink.

10 years later

Hermione sat at her desk, contemplating the two wizards playing chess in front of the fireplace. She smiled indulgently as she noted the occasional hand straying beneath the table to caress the other's thigh, contrary to their appearance of concentrating solely on the board. Despite their close friendship for so many years, it had taken a long time for the two men to become comfortable expressing intimacy outside of the bedroom. They had remained reserved in front of others, preferring to express their devotion to their witch rather than each other, but in their own home even the taciturn ex-Potions master had relaxed and learned to enjoy a close, loving relationship. After ten years, she still felt privileged to share a side of these two powerful wizards that no-one else saw.

Minerva McGonagall had long since forgiven her ex-student for seducing Severus away from teaching; her delight at his newfound happiness easily overcame the inconvenience of finding a new Potions professor. The Weasleys and other friends had eventually stopped blushing whenever they saw the three together, and regular invitations to the Burrow or Grimmauld Place had ensued.

Draco's opinion on his father's relationship was swiftly revised after he and Harry became an item. He still blamed heredity for his proclivity towards a same-sex partner.

B.P.K. Investigations had flourished, mostly by word-of-mouth from satisfied clients. After the trio had solved the perplexing case of the disappearing interdepartmental memos in the Ministry of Magic, their renown had had them turning cases away by the dozen. It would not have done to allow work to interfere with their regular road trips in the DB5.

Hermione sighed as she realised the time had come. She could not keep her news from her lovers for any longer. Moving to the sofa closest to the chess table, she interrupted their game. "Er, boys. I have something I need to talk to you about."

Lucius reached over and pulled her to sit on his lap while Severus listened attentively. "Yes, my sweet. What is it?"

"I... er... that is... I'm..." She couldn't voice the words.

Severus came to her rescue. "I knew it, Luce. She's pregnant! I *told* you there was a reason she was spending so much time in the bathroom in the mornings!"

"Really? You are carrying our child?" Lucius caressed her lower abdomen while kissing her tenderly, eyes moist. "I never thought I would have the opportunity again." He looked at Severus. "Congratulations, old man! We are going to be fathers!"

The dark wizard sobered. He looked at his witch and wizard, and slowly a smile crept over his face. Embracing and kissing them both, he placed his hand over Lucius's and squeezed. "Finally, a real family of my own."

Hermione frowned, confused by their reaction. "But, aren't you worried about which one of you two is the father? I was terrified it would change everything between us."

Lucius kissed her frown away. "It doesn't matter whose seed impregnated you, love. It could have been either of us. The important thing is we are all together in this, and whether this baby is blond or brunette, or anything in between, he or she will be a part of all three of us. Isn't that right, Severus?"

"Absolutely, Lucius. Absolutely."

Their daughter turned out to be the spitting image of her mother, with masses of curly brown hair and eyes to match. Her fathers did not know which of them was her biological parent and were never inclined to find out. She was their beloved little girl, and that was all that mattered.

The End

A/N: House points for anyone who can guess what B.P.K stands for. Many thanks go to my beta, rdholmantx. This was written for the lovely PajamaPants for the first ever LM/HG Exchange on LiveJournal.