

Bottlecaps

by Ugly Kitten

A brief conversation between Luna and Lucius at a Christmas party. Nargles, bottlecaps, and Luna being... Luna.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Written for callywaggy for her prompt: Not too dark and not sugary either. Just something nice and fun like maybe he thinks he's losing his mind by being attracted to her.

I think it got a little more sugary than it should have, but my mind latched onto things and wouldn't let go.

Disclaimer: I do not own the wonderful Harry Potter books. That is Jo Rowling's delight.

Bottlecaps

Too much time groveling at the heels of a madman. Yes. That must be it. That must explain why he was attracted to the bloody girl. Prattling on and on about those endearing little creatures found in mistletoe. No, he must have been insane to think she was adorable the night he fell from the Dark Lord's grace.

He was not jealous of her hair. Not at all.

Lucius sighed, using the sharp snout of his cane's carving to knead at his temple. Two years since the Dark Lord's death, and he still couldn't get the little brat out of his head. She was barely out of Hogwarts, damn it!

"You're going to hurt yourself, doing that, Mr. Malfoy." Her soft voice trickled into his mind, ensnaring him no matter how much the rational portion screamed at the more errant portions. A small, gentle hand pulled the cane away from his brow. She spoke again after the cane rested safely on the ground again. "Why are you here?"

"I was invited," he said shortly.

"Yes," she said patiently. "But it is more than obvious you would rather be elsewhere."

A delicate curl fell into her eyes. She blew at it, revealing the bottle-cap earrings she had chosen for the event – the annual Christmas ball.

"Why are you wearing those?" he asked, a little irritated. "Surely you can afford better with the Order of Merlin stipend, Miss Lovegood."

"I can," she said, her eyes – beautiful, tremulous blue, like the Hogwarts ceiling on a good day – drifted back to the crowd. "I choose to wear things people made for me. They hold more meaning that way."

Lucius couldn't help but stare at the young woman. "Meaning?"

"Yes," she said, glancing up at him. The single glance pinned him in place. There was more power there than he had ever known – the spells cast upon his person two and

four years prior notwithstanding. "Don't you have anything like that, Mr. Malfoy? A toy from when Draco was young, the wedding band your wife gave you, the cane that has held you aloft for years?"

Now that she mentioned it, Lucius did have an object of petty meaning with little actual value. He would never admit it aloud, of course, but there was a tea towel that his nanny house-elf had worn when he was a child. Not even Narcissa had known of the tea towel's origins.

With a tremble in his hand, he touched the bottle-cap earrings gently. She gasped softly at the touch, but there was no fear in her eyes – curious. "And the meaning, Miss Lovegood?"

"My mother loved butterbeer," she said quietly. "She made several sets of jewelry from the caps."

Lucius couldn't help his smile – this little woman held more compassion in the most mundane of daily affairs than he had felt in all his years. For once in his nearly fifty years, he was at a loss for words.

"Oh, and Mr. Malfoy?" she said. "You're standing under the mistletoe. Best be on the watch for the Nargles."

"Of course," he said, humoring her. He tapped his cane on the floor and prepared to head off.

He didn't belong here.

"A moment, Mr. Malfoy," Luna said, her voice so quiet he turned to inquire if he'd heard her properly. He was surprised instead to feel her lips on his, soft, gentle, not at all like the heated kisses his wife had given him years ago. This felt content, practiced, and subtle.

She was gone before he could properly assure himself that the kiss had really happened. He straightened his elegant cloak out and headed for Minerva McGonagall on the other side of the room.

Damn it, he really was insane.