

Secret

by Aling

A clandestine meeting takes place inside Malfoy Manor. Written for the sortinghatdrabs week 44 challenge. The prompt was "string of pearls" with the characters Astoria Greengrass Malfoy & a Gryffindor of the writer's choosing.

One

Chapter 1 of 1

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A/N: *Harry Potter* is decidedly not mine. Thanks to the lovely tonksinger for the beta.

The soft melody of a string quartet, the high-pitched clinking of champagne glasses, and the steady, collective buzz of conversation drifted from the Malfoys' ballroom and up the curving stairwell. Hermione slid one hand along the bronze balustrade as she ascended, the other lifting up the thick petticoats of her claret gown.

Discovery was of no concern to her—Draco and his parents were otherwise occupied entertaining their guests—yet her nerves buzzed with anxiety and anticipation.

The third door on the right had been left ajar, a soft amber glow leaking through the cracks and beckoning Hermione to come closer. She paused outside, pushing up her bodice and lightly passing her hands over her pinned curls. Satisfied with her appearance, she pushed open the door and quietly entered the boudoir.

Astoria was sitting, back straight, in front of her vanity, rifling through an antique rosewood jewelry box. She looked up into the mirror when she heard the door click shut and appraised Hermione as she cast several locking and silencing charms.

"Enjoying the ball?" Astoria asked, picking out a gold chain threaded with rubies and contrasting it against her pale skin and the sapphire blue of her dress. She narrowed her eyes, nose upturned, and laid it back in its compartment.

Hermione exhaled sharply in a derisive snort, gliding towards the former Slytherin.

"Yes, because my idea of a good time is mingling with every sycophant ever to set foot inside the Ministry, all whilst combating Zabini's lascivious advances."

Hermione lifted Astoria's long blonde hair, inhaling the uniquely intoxicating scent of apple blossoms and ylang ylang that she had come to associate with the younger woman, and gently began tracing the spider veins on the back of her neck. Astoria shivered, and her pupils dilated, the pale of her irises appearing to darken.

"He always was a persistent bastard," Astoria murmured, leaning back into Hermione's touch.

Hermione hummed noncommittally and bent down, her breasts pushing up against their confines in protest, to pepper kisses along Astoria's bare shoulder. Astoria's breath quickened as Hermione worked her way up her throat.

"I have something for you," Hermione whispered as she sucked on Astoria's earlobe. Astoria opened her lidded eyes, her lust-filled gaze questioning.

Hermione reached in between her shadowed cleavage and pulled out a string of pearls, small and luminescent and imperfect. She wrapped the pearls around Astoria's avian neck and secured the fastenings.

"Beautiful..."

Watching Hermione's reflection with a secret smile to which even her husband had never been privy, Astoria concurred.