

Natural Predator

by ApollinaV

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Chapter 1 of 1

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He'd never seen those cold dispassionate eyes filled with such rage. Inches in front of him, they loomed, hard and threateningly. Peter cowered, pressing against the damask wallpaper, fear sweating through his pores.

All he'd said was, 'Hello Luce.'

It was friendly-like. Neighborly, even. The Dark Lord had moved them into these posh new digs, and Peter was *trying* to be civilized.

What else was a chap supposed to say at the breakfast table?

The tip of Malfoy's cane dug through the soft leather of his boot, jabbing his knobby toes as the grip on his throat tightened. Malfoy's lip curled, slowly baring perfect teeth. Peter stared at them, not able to look Malfoy in his eyes.

"I will never see you again. Is that clear?"

Peter nodded furiously, his meaty chin wobbling.

"Not in my house, not in my gardens, and not at my breakfast table. And if you sit in my chair again, I will geld you."

Oh gods, he was going to piss himself.

"Now you get out of my sight this instant."

Malfoy released him, and Peter fled, scurrying as fast as his legs would carry him.

Lucius watched the rat run away with very little satisfaction. The tightness in his jaw was going to cause a headache later. He was bound to have a headache later anyway. Every day was a new headache.

He threw himself into his chair. Pettigrew had left the seat disgustingly warm. Closing his eyes, Lucius blotted out the image of his soiled breakfast table. Crumbs littered the tablecloth. The jam pot was overturned, and his soft egg and toast had been bitten into. The rat had eaten at his table. He should have killed the wizard for such an offense.

"I'm going to have to burn everything," he muttered. "Possibly seal the room."

"Why not close the whole East Wing down while you're at it?" his companion said amicably.

Lucius rolled his head, meeting the emerald eyes of Reginald, his serpent cane. "I should. He's probably touched everything – who knows what he's infested with."

"True, true. But what's to stop him from nosing around the rest of the manor, hm?"

He was right of, course. The rat was going to get everywhere. That's what rats did. They infested and infected. The whole goddamned house was going to have to be rebuilt once the Dark Lord left – *if* the Dark Lord left.

Lucius grimaced.

There was an unpleasant thought. He reached for his teapot, belatedly realizing there was already tea in his cup. Lucius scowled at the gilt porcelain design. How disappointing. He'd have to have it destroyed. There was no way he'd ever drink from a vessel the rat had put its lips to.

To hell with it – he was just going to have to get to the office and take an early lunch.

"I'd kill him if I were you," Reginald said offhandedly. "I could do it, too. I'd sneak up on him, slithering quietly, you know... catch him unguarded while he's in his rat form... and BAM!"

Lucius twirled the cane around the back of his hand, a practiced motion that he found soothing and tended to shut Reginald up – for the moment at least.

As far as family heirlooms went, Reginald was better than most – he didn't have a curse attached to him. He could be counted upon to keep secrets, remember important dates and facts, and on occasion, mesmerize hapless fuckwits. There seemed to be an endless source of those available. That, and having a cane gave him a swagger to his step – Lucius liked the swagger.

"You know snakes are the natural predators of rats. Nobody would suspect a thing," Reginald asserted.

"Aren't you forgetting something, my dear friend?"

"No, I don't think so..."

"Your lack of a body, for instance."

"Bother. You just had to bring that up, didn't you?"

A/N:

Original prompt from Christev: You know how Mary Poppins' umbrella handle was the talking parrot? What if Lucius' pimp cane talked – or hissed – like that?

Many thank yous to Christev for the wonderful prompt and betaing this story. *schmootches!