

The Trouble With Time-Turners

by Keppiehed

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Warning(s): slash innuendo, chan innuendo, language, AU.

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A/N: This was written for the Glompfest, for Charcoalcat from her list of prompts. You had a wide and varied bunch of things to choose from, and I really tried my best to honor the list as a whole. My muse took me in a zany direction, so I hope you forgive me for the lack of smut. You know, you start with the best of intentions, and these guys grab on and write the story themselves sometimes, implausible as it might end up. I worked to dovetail into canon, and I relied on the "Novokov self-consistency principle" of time-travel theory. Also, I am aware of the plothole problem involving "Finite Incantatem", but that was the best I could do. So I thank you for allowing me to play with your prompt, to have fun and bring your vision to life. I don't know if I did it justice (I am wincing at some extra swearing), but here is what came of your idea.

"So, what do we have here? Potty and the bushy-haired freak."

Harry lost his balance from where he had been precariously balanced on the balls of his feet behind some monstrosously-sized pumpkins. The feeling of damp earth seeping into the seat of his robes...undoubtedly leaving a wet patch...did nothing to improve his mood. "Shut up, Malfoy!" he hissed. Leave it to Draco to ruin the best-laid plans!

"You're not in any position to tell me to shut up, Potter." Draco's voice carried alarmingly. "In fact, if I didn't know better, I'd think you were up to something, lurking about they way you are." He folded his arms over his thin chest, a crafty look in his eye. "What are you doing here?"

Harry thought fast. If Draco knew that they were here to try and save Buckbeak, he'd surely try and stop them. As much as it killed him, he had to try and placate the git. Before he could get a word out, however, Hermione jumped into the conversation. "None of your business, you overblown peacock! What's the matter, come back for another slap in the face?"

Draco's eyes narrowed, and Harry wanted to groan. Now they were sure to be discovered. Draco was going to make enough noise to ruin the whole operation! He shot a glance at Hermione, pantomiming as well as he could that he wanted to re-do the scene, but she only looked helplessly at the time-turner. "We don't have enough to do it again. We're sure to see ourselves if we do it over, Harry!"

Draco caught sight of the slender gold chain dangling from Hermione's fist. "What's that?"

She tucked it into her robe. "Nothing. An heirloom. A *Muggle* one."

"Bollocks." Draco might be mean, but he wasn't stupid. "Let me see it!" He strode over, his hand out.

The two of them froze. If they jumped up or made too much of a distraction, they were going to endanger Buckbeak without any way to make amends. Harry felt panic closing in. "Draco! You can't have it."

"Like hell I can't!" Draco pushed his way past Harry and leaned over to grab Hermione. "Give it to me."

Harry grabbed Draco around the knees from his vantage point crouched below. "Don't touch her, you arse!"

"Sh!" pleaded Hermione, who was trying to shake free of Draco's grasp and keep an eye on the proceedings, which were just starting to take place past the pumpkin patch.

Draco managed to loop his finger around the long chain and pull it loose. "Let me see!" He gave a yank, and the filigree broke; the chain slid free of Hermione's neck.

The trio stared at the time-turner in Draco's hands.

"Stop!" Harry yelled. He didn't care now whether or not anyone heard. Draco didn't know what damage he could do with one of those.

"Jealous, Potter?" Draco smirked. "I always get what I want in the end. And don't you forg..."

Harry lunged at him and knocked him down, but Draco had a grip on the charm. "Merlin, Potter, quit being so desperate. It isn't a good look on you." Draco held the gold charm just out of reach.

Harry could feel the situation spiraling out of control. "Just give it back, Malfoy!"

"This? You want this?" He held it up. "Say pretty please. Maybe if you beg me."

Harry could hear the sounds of the execution starting, but even that wasn't as important as what could happen if Malfoy inadvertently bungled time. He could swallow his pride now, and then make Malfoy eat his later. "Please, Malfoy."

"What? I couldn't hear you." Draco laughed.

"Please." Harry swallowed, his eyes never leaving the prize. "Give it to me."

"Well, why didn't you just say so?" Draco sat up and made to hand it over, but he gave it a quick spin just as he handed it to Harry. Both of their fingers were on it, touching, as it reeled. "How does your pride taste, Potter?"

Harry froze. The whole world blurred around them. The two of them were caught in a bubble of time on the ground, Harry sprawled atop Draco, as the images spun too fast to be comprehended.

"What's going on?" Draco sounded afraid. "Potter...knock it off!"

"It isn't me, you prat! It was you! When you invoked the time-turner." Harry's stomach rolled over and settled somewhere near his feet.

"The time ... turner?" Draco's voice wavered. "But I didn't know!"

"It doesn't matter now! You still spun it." Harry closed his eyes. The indistinct whisper around them was making him nauseous.

"Well, make it stop!" Draco was panicking.

"Just ... sit still, will you?" Harry tried to breathe through his nose. Apparently Draco had really given that thing a twirl. "I don't know how it works. It was Hermione's thing."

Draco jumped up. The slashes of time didn't seem to mind, but accommodated the stretch. "You don't know how it works?" he repeated, incredulous. "*Someone* is going to have to fix it. Oh, Merlin, are we going to end up as babies? What if we de-age right out of existence?"

"This isn't *my* fault. I tried to tell you not to grab it. But you 'always get what you want in the end', isn't that right, you fucking idiot?" Harry realized he was shouting.

"What if we're old, instead? What if we go the other way and we're ancient old men? It's too much to bear. The world shouldn't be deprived of my looks...I never even got a chance to live!" Draco wailed.

Harry sighed. They were both distraught, and laying blame would do no good to either of them. "Look, it's slowing down. Just...stay calm. Er, calmer. Than you are. And maybe we can think. I have no idea about how this works."

"I don't want to die, Potter! Or be old!" Draco lamented.

"I know. Shut up a sec, will you? Look," Harry said. Draco's dramatics were giving him a headache. The whirling mist was slowing. They were standing ...

In an old garden, next to a run-down hut. Right where they had started. Only it was the middle of the night.

Harry breathed a sigh of relief. "Right. So, we haven't *gone* anywhere. We're still at Hogwarts." He turned to face Draco and saw...

He jumped. Where Draco had stood was now a tall, blond demigod. Harry blushed, grateful for the cover of night. He wasn't given to waxing poetic, and certainly not over *Malfoy*, of all people. It seemed that they had gone through time into mid-adulthood, and who knew that Malfoy would have turned out to be such a spectacular specimen? Harry did a double-take. Or that he would care? He frowned, working it out. Oh dear Merlin. He was gay. In the future. With Draco Malfoy, who was really *hot*.

"*Potter!*" Draco was staring at him in horror. "What's*happened* to you?"

Harry sighed. It was too much to hope that he'd had a similar transformation, maybe grown a foot and become irresistible? "I think we went forward in time."

"But you're so ... so ... *old!*"

"Thanks. So are you." Harry couldn't keep the smirk off his face.

"*What?*" Draco panicked and dropped the time-turner. "Shit!"

"You did *not* just ... ?" Harry sucked in his breath. Apparently age did not bring wisdom. Er, especially when you fast-forwarded past that whole learning part.

"Yes! I was thinking of my poor, haggard face. If I look like *you*...Merlin, it's dark out here! Do you think Hagrid left a mirror in his hut?" Draco whined.

"Don't move," Harry cautioned. "If we can find it, we can just spin it back the other way, no problem."

"But how will we *know* which is the other way? It isn't as if I checked..." Draco gesticulated and took a step. There was the distinct sound of breaking glass in the darkness.

Harry's temper exploded. "Malfoy, you berk! Now look what you've done!"

"I couldn't bloody well help it, could I? I *said* it's dark out here!"

"And I said not to move!"

"Well, since when are you in charge?"

"Since you made the great whalloping mistake of sending us oh ... *twenty years* into our future!" Harry fumed.

Draco whirled to face him. "This is really *your* fault, Potter. If you hadn't been acting so suspiciously with your friends..."

"Wait!" A light dawned on Harry. "You were following us!"

Draco looked nervous. "No, I wasn't."

"Yes! Yes, you were. Admit it." Harry crowed, triumphant.

"I was *not*!" Draco's nostrils flared.

"Fine." Harry had to keep in mind that they were probably in their thirties now, not thirteen anymore. They had to act like it. "But it isn't my fault. It's yours." Having the last word felt satisfying, at any age. That was good to know.

A look of intense irritation crossed Draco's features, which only served to highlight them, not detract from them, Harry noted uncomfortably. "Fine. Then I'll fix it." Draco marched off into the darkness without another word.

"Draco?" Harry asked, alarmed. As much as he couldn't stand the guy, they were in this mess together. They shouldn't get separated. Harry jumped after him and caught up. It seemed Draco was heading for Hogwarts, which was, presumably, still standing. "Slow down! Do you have a plan?"

Draco clenched his jaw...an admirably firm jaw, at that...and kept up his pace. "I don't have to talk to you."

Harry rolled his eyes. Not that Draco could see it, being in front and in the dark. "That's really mature of you. What are you going to do...not talk until we find our way back to our thirteen-year-old selves?"

"Not to you. Not if I can help it," Draco said mutinously.

"Oh, come off it, Malfoy. Let's just work together, all right?" Harry didn't want to say the words, but he didn't see a choice.

They were coming up to the castle. Draco didn't break his stride. "Whatever, Potter. You can come along if you want, but stay out of my way. I'm going to see Professor Snape. He'll know what to do."

"Snape?" Harry asked. "He's the worst person to ask! He's working for Voldemort, can't you see that?"

"What, you and your little friends have that all worked out?" Draco sneered.

"Yes, actually," Harry said in defense. It wasn't much of a comeback, but it was true, after all. They had a lot of proof...well, they had a lot of strong ideas that had to be true, and the proof was the last thing to fall into place...that Snape was a traitor. Anyway, it was common knowledge that Snape was a sneaky character. Trust Draco to want to contact him!

"Well, he's my godfather, and I'm going to find him whether you give your *permission* or not, Potter. If you had half a brain, you'd see that he's the only one here who can help us. I suppose you want us to go see Dumbledore."

Harry didn't say anything. Of course Dumbledore was a better choice for advice, but he wasn't about to give Draco the satisfaction of knowing he could read Harry so easily. So instead, he stayed silent and kept up with the taller man...he wasn't about to follow him like his lapdog. He wished his adult self had longer legs. Harry decided that Draco would get into trouble alone, so they would go visit Snape, and when that turned out to be a bust, they could go to Dumbledore together. Not only did the idea of seeing a decrepit Snape give him satisfaction, but the knowledge that Draco would have to follow Harry to the headmaster was enough to make it bearable.

The grin died on Harry's face when they entered Hogwarts. There was nothing immediately wrong, but there were enough things out of place to make it obvious that he hadn't stepped out of this door just a moment ago. It was a disconcerting feeling. He had always considered Hogwarts his home, and he had a rather proprietary feel about it. As such, he knew every nook and cranny. The times he had spent here on holiday had given him a chance to discover the school in a way that perhaps others weren't able, and he felt as if a part of himself was in the brick and mortar of the foundation. It was a foolish fancy, perhaps, but Harry couldn't help but feel it just the same. To have only just stepped outside these walls, and now to re-enter some twenty years hence was disorienting.

Little things were changed: the arrangements of tapestries and end-tables. He and Draco fell silent as they made their way through the still corridors. The layout was the same, of course, but there was a subtle air of change about the place that subdued them both. Harry didn't like it.

Draco picked up his already quick pace and turned towards the Potions classroom. Harry was forced to jog to keep up, but with the anxiety starting to flood his system, he was glad for an outlet and didn't complain. He was pleased to note that his adult form, while more compact, was in good shape and could handle the new pace easily.

They made their way to the Potions classroom and Draco burst in with his usual assumption of ready admittance, but Harry was more cautious. He knew that Snape had never favored him, and that they might have some explaining to do about their sudden presence.

Then the thought hit him: *What if Snape was no longer the Potions professor?*

"Uh, Malfoy ... ?" Harry wanted to alert Draco to the possibility before they ran into someone else.

"Shut up, Potter! Can't you see I'm busy?" Draco was running around the empty room, which looked deserted. "He isn't here!" Draco murmured to himself.

An idea began that wouldn't leave Harry alone. He stood, stock-still, in the middle of the room, as he thought through the ramifications of their time-travel. If it was possible for Snape to be retired, then wasn't anything possible? What if Voldemort had won the war? What if Death Eaters had taken over Hogwarts? The hair raised on the back of Harry's neck and he realized the enormity of their error. They had no idea what future they were in. "Malfoy ..."

"Maybe he's in the storeroom?" Draco asked. He was still fluttering about the room, unwilling to believe that Snape wasn't here.

"Malfoy!" Harry hissed. "Don't!"

"What's your problem, Potter? I mean, besides all of the obvious ones?" Draco taunted.

As Harry opened his mouth to volley a comeback, his eyes fell on a portrait. It was shrouded in the gloom of the far wall, which was why they hadn't seen it before. Harry shut his mouth and felt the net descend around him. They should never have come here!

"That's right, you can't even ..." Draco trailed off when he saw Snape's picture. He made a strangled sound.

"Listen, Malfoy, here is what we're going to do: we are going to back out of here very quietly and pretend we never came. Then we'll think about what to do outside. No one knows we're here." Harry couldn't take his eyes off of the portrait. Snape was dead!

"Professor ...? How? It can't be." Draco took a few steps towards the picture, and both boys watched Snape cross his arms petulantly. There was no denying that it was the Potions professor in the frame. Draco shook himself. "I'm no coward, Potter! You can go running back to your giant's hut if you want, but I'm staying here." The tremor in his voice belied his brave words. "I heard that the Ministry has a stock of time-turners in their storeroom. We can just Floo there and get some." Draco's eyes darted, reminding Harry of a nervous hippogriff.

"That's madness, Malfoy! Stop and think a minute. What if the Ministry is no longer in control? If Snape is dead, maybe Voldemort won the war! We don't know anything. We're just lucky that no one saw us come in here. Let's just calm down and stop panicking. We aren't going to Floo into the Ministry anyway; they have all sorts of wards in place, and the time-turner thing was just a rumor. We'd never find it in the clutter there," Harry reasoned.

Draco turned on him, his eyes wild. "Listen, Potter. You don't seem to get it. We aren't a *team*. I don't have to clear my decisions with you. I am going to the Ministry, and you can just sod off if you don't like it!" Draco pushed past him on his mad dash to the storeroom, presumably in a search for Floo powder.

Harry frowned. He would like nothing better than to leave that stupid bugger to his own bad decisions, but like it or not, they were in this together. He couldn't imagine leaving Draco here and making it back to himself in the past. How could he look Draco in the face, knowing he'd abandoned him in the future? Would he even *be* back in the past with him? The implications of messing up time made Harry's head spin. He didn't know how it all worked, but he had a pretty good idea that they'd better get back to their own time without incident...fast. And that meant staying far away from the Ministry, which may or may not be the seat of evil incarnate.

Harry stormed after his arch-nemesis, intent on stopping Draco from getting them into more of a mess. He saw Draco picking up several bottles and peering at the labels.

"Don't you know how to do *anything*?" Harry yelled. With the way Draco was juggling several bottles at once, he was sure to drop one and cause an accident. Who knew what unstable elements were stoppered within?

"Hands *off*, Potter!" Draco jerked his arm away. When he did, his elbow caught some of the vials perched on the shelf behind him. Harry could only watch in horror as a chain reaction started, first with some Dragon's Bane that crashed and burned, quickly incinerating every flagon in its vicinity. The resulting explosion happened in slow motion, and Harry was frozen in shock, watching the explosion trigger with Draco trapped at the heart of the action.

Jars and decanters melted under the heat of the Dragon's Bane, releasing their contents into the close air of the storeroom. Various elements mixed together, creating a noxious fume that was by far more unstable as a group than they ever could have been singly. Harry watched, transfixed, as Draco was obscured in a sparking purple cloud of magic that roiled and grew as each bottle tipped and added to the stew. The shelves shook and rained down their contents until Harry couldn't see or breathe.

Going on instinct alone, he withdrew his wand and charged into the mess. "*Protego!*" he shouted, hoping the simple shield charm would be enough to protect them from what was surely the biggest magical disaster Hogwarts had ever seen.

Just as Harry reached Draco through the morass of magic, he heard Draco casting a spell, as well. *Good*, he thought. *It will take both of us to clean up this mess.*

Until his brain caught up with his ears, and he realized what spell Draco had cast.

Tempus Excorio

The combination of Harry's shield charm, Draco's incantation to peel away time, and the excess of extra magic in the air created an effect that neither boy could have predicted. It hurled them both backwards, violently wrenching them through time.

Harry's stomach plummeted to his feet, the force of the travel making him feel nauseous. He could barely look at Draco, but a quick peek assured him that the other man's face was a sickly shade of green, as well. Harry clutched at the bubbled sides of the shield charm, hoping that it would stop soon. When it did, it crashed and burst open, throwing them down into sand.

Harry sprawled, facedown, in the fine white sands of a beach he knew he'd never seen before. His eyes burned from the sudden bright sun. He was disoriented, shaken...both physically and emotionally...but most of all, he was *furious*. "What the fuck, Draco? What have you done?"

Draco was lying on his back. He didn't even open his eyes. "I didn't think that would happen."

"*Tempus Excorcio*? What did you think would happen, exactly?" Harry was flabbergasted.

Draco put an arm over his eyes. "I thought we could peel back a few minutes, before the Dragon's Bane broke. That's what it is supposed to do."

Harry scanned the distance, where there was nothing but blue-green water for miles in every direction. On the horizon was the silhouette of an old-fashioned tall ship. "It did a lot more than that. Get up, Malfoy."

Draco peered testily. When he caught sight of the vessel he scrambled to his feet. "Merlin! Is that a corsair?"

"It looks like it." Harry tilted his head to see better through his glasses, which had gotten smudged in all the chaos. "We must have gone way back. Way to overshoot, Malfoy."

"It isn't *my* fault!" Draco huffed.

"Well, it sure isn't mine!" Harry shouted. His anger was bubbling up and over, and he just wanted to punch Malfoy ... or something ...

"You know, you're insufferable sometimes!" Draco complained. "The Boy Who Lived? They should have called you The Boy Who Thinks He Knows It All..."

As Draco was yelling at Harry, he was leaning forward, pressing closer, involved in his rant. Harry's mind slipped away from the insults and his eyes focused, instead, on those gorgeous gray eyes framed by winged brows, and those full lips, a perfect Cupid's bow. Harry was mesmerized in a way he never had been before. A wave of pure lust hit him and almost brought him to his knees. It would be so easy to just reach over and kiss Draco ... and before he knew it, he was doing just that.

Draco's tirade was cut off by Harry's mouth on his. Harry had never kissed anyone before, so he just went on instinct; he tilted his head and let the seam of their lips align. He was grateful for the advantage of surprise...surely as soon as Draco realized what was happening, he was bound to pull away.

Yet Harry felt an answering pressure, and he opened his mouth to allow Draco's tongue admittance to his mouth. His head spun when he recognized that Draco was taking control...he must like it! Harry savored the feel of the other man's tongue in his mouth, and he fought to keep up with the kiss. It was more arousing than anything he had ever dreamed, standing here on a deserted island, kissing his enemy. He felt himself swaying, and there were arms there to hold him up. He grabbed on, savoring the feel of an embrace.

All too soon, Draco pulled away, leaving them both dazed and panting. "Potter...you're eyes are really green."

Harry nodded. It seemed the most natural thing in the world to hear.

In the meantime, the ship had gotten much closer. Harry cocked his head. Their snogging session must have lasted longer than he had realized. That or there had been a stiff wind. At any rate, the ship was nearly upon them. "Malfoy, do you see that?"

Draco nodded. "Get out your wand. They're most likely hostile."

As much as Harry hated to follow orders from Draco...a little kiss didn't make up for thirteen years of animosity, after all...he had to agree. He unsheathed his wand and held it in the defensive stance.

A burly-chested bunch of fellows made their way to the island. It was right out of one of Harry's pirate books from his childhood in Little Whinging. He watched, incredulous, as he and Draco were swarmed and surrounded by men who looked like they had come straight off the pages of a buccaneer novel.

"And what be you doing on this here piece of Godforsaken land?" the one with a ponytail asked.

"Look, Will, they be waving about little sticks!" the one with rotted teeth laughed.

"Maybe they be soft in the head!" said the one with a red and white striped shirt.

Draco drew himself up to his full height. "That's it! *Furnunculus!*" Draco cast the hex at Striped Shirt, who had so offended him.

The boils sprouted and grew over the man's face at an alarming rate, blossoming and bursting, more flourishing and springing forth in the pus that ran down his face.

Draco smirked. "Take that, you lackwits. Who's soft in the head now?"

The one called Will shrugged. "Robbie be having a breakout again. The prisoner be thinking he has magical powers! Be ye a witch or warlock? A heretic, I say! String him up, boys! Let's give him the keelhaul test. Then we'll know fer certain."

The crowd closed in.

Harry could see Draco panicking. It wasn't often that they were faced with a bunch of sturdy Muggles ready for a fight. Draco threw out as many curses as he could manage, "*Impedimenta! Langlock!*" But in his nervousness, he was choosing ones that only made the men pause. They were nearly upon them. "A little help, Potter?" Draco shouted.

An idea was percolating and tickling Harry's brain. He was trying to concentrate, but the sight of Draco getting grabbed and his wand taken away was almost enough to distract him. The pirates were almost upon Harry, too, before the thought jarred loose in a brilliant wash of force from his brain to his tongue, and he held out his wand. In a sure and clear voice, he said "*Finite Incantatem.*"

Those words were enough to grind the scene to a halt. Draco had been on his knees, his head forced down, his fall of blond hair obscuring his face as the men tied him up for a trial he'd never survive. At the sound of those words, everything fell away. Draco and Harry were suspended, falling through time, until they fell right back into place, some twenty-odd years earlier.

The world was bleary and spinning. All Harry could feel was a knee in his gut.

"I'll take that, thank you very much!"

Hermione plucked the time-turner from his fingers.

Harry blinked. They were back to themselves. He was lying on Malfoy, in a damp garden behind Hagrid's hut. But that wasn't a *knee* in his gut! Harry blushed and sat up, unable to look at Draco, now that they were in their own bodies again.

"Malfoy, you insufferable prat!" Hermione hissed. "You have no idea what damage you could have done with this!"

Draco just cleared his throat. "Mm- hm," he murmured.

Hermione clenched his fists. "Is that all you have to say for yourself, you wanker? You could have ruined *everything!*"

Draco looked up then, eyes flashing, but Harry jumped in. "But he didn't, Hermione."

Hermione frowned, confusion written on her face as she tried to work out the dynamic change.

Harry held his hand out to Draco. "What if Draco and I go back to the castle, and you finish up here?" Harry asked. He still couldn't believe that they were back, that the spell had worked. He hoped that Hermione couldn't see his knees trembling or hear the waver in his voice.

Harry's use of Draco's first name did not go unnoticed by Hermione, if her meaningful look in his direction was any indication. "Sure," she said. "Just, go that way," she pointed, "so you don't run across us."

Harry hauled Draco up off the ground. "See you in a bit," he said.

Hermione cocked an eyebrow, but Harry didn't give her time to ask another question before he and Draco were off.

"So, Draco, *were* you following us?" Harry asked after they had gotten far enough away that they had time to catch their breath.

Draco paused by the covered bridge. He kicked a rock off and both boys watched it fall into the mist. "Of course you'd think everyone is following you, right? Because you're so important." But his words lacked the typical venom.

Harry turned to face him. "Look, I don't know what we just went through, but I think it was real, don't you?"

Draco said nothing, but he nodded.

"So, maybe we could just ... be friends from now on? Because, well ... I think I could like you." Harry blushed. That felt too intimate an admission. It was a lot harder talking to this Draco.

Draco didn't scoff, like he had expected. "What will our friends think, if we suddenly start hanging out? I have a reputation to uphold, you know."

"Thanks so much." Harry's face was still red. "I don't know. I don't have any answers. Maybe we can just start with not fighting now. Since we know how it turns out in the end ... with us together? We can just let it work itself out in the in-between?" Harry held his breath. *Had he said too much?*

Draco let another stone drop. It fell into forever, and they stood without saying a word to break the tension.

Harry couldn't hear it hit the bottom. He waited.

Draco let the smallest smile touch his lips. It transformed his face. "That's a plan, then ... Harry."

They walked back to the castle in silence, but this time Harry had a glow about him. When he sneaked a glance at the boy beside him, he saw that Draco did, too. And for the first time, Harry didn't cringe when he thought of the future. He rather thought it would turn out just fine.