

# A Most Unusual Tea Party

by Pennfana

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Chapter 1 of 1

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**Disclaimer:** You mean I'm *still* not J. K. Rowling? Damn. Then that means that I don't own any of these characters, their backgrounds or their locations. I've just borrowed them for a bit, and I'm not making any money through the use of them. I don't own anything that came out of Nanny Ogg's Cookbook, either, though I've cooked most of the recipes I've referred to in this fic, and I can vouch for the fact that they're actually surprisingly tasty. :)

**Preliminary Notes:** This was written as a prize for The Petulant Poetess' Every Flavour Auction this year. The prompt, given to me by evenstar132, was "The Dark Lord, Draco, Lucius, Severus and Hermione are all having tea at the Manor. Wait, what? Must include a handkerchief, scones, losing pants and a rare book."

I think it goes without saying that this fic is *very* Alternate Universe past a certain point (I'm choosing "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" as a cut-off point) and necessarily out-of-character enough to warrant the use of a warning...after all, Voldemort, Draco, Lucius and Severus are all being relatively civil to Hermione, which I suspect would never happen in canon. I've also messed around with the timeline a little.

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*Somewhere in Wiltshire...*

The tension in the room was so thick that you couldn't cut it with a knife. If you tried, it would probably either bend or bounce right off. Hermione, being of an inquiring mind, was about to try to see if this cliché could actually be tested; she surely wouldn't get the chance again. Unfortunately, all attempts at scientific inquiry were put to an end when Lucius Malfoy asked her, "Miss Granger, precisely *what* do you think you're doing with that butter knife?"

"Erm, it's just a particularly artistic way of putting clotted cream on my scone," she said, trying to hide her embarrassment. "I learned it from a ballet dancer who used to live next door when I was a child."

"You might as well tell the truth, Miss Granger," grumbled Severus Snape, who was sitting beside her. "Either you were trying to figure out a way to heroically sword-fight your way out of this room using a butter knife, or you were trying to see if tension actually *could* be cut with a knife. I've tried, by the way. It can't be done. It's an overdone figure of speech. That's all."

"Erm, yes, sir," she said, sitting back down.

"You know this can't possibly be any easier for us than it is for you," said Voldemort, "Particularly me. What do you say in a social situation in which you're expected to interact *pleasantly* with someone who is living proof that your political philosophy is as useful as a broken broomstick? Particularly when you're supposed to either kill or be killed by that person's best friend. They never teach you about things like that at Dark Lord School."

"Dark Lord School?"

"What, did you think that I was *born* knowing how to be a Dark Lord? At any given time, young Mr. Malfoy, there are at least seven fantastically powerful witches and wizards who want to take over their part of the world, and all of us have to learn how to do it. Right now, incidentally, it's Lady Nikita in Russia, Lord Akhilesh in India, Lord Flavio in Peru, Lord Kwaku in Ghana, Lord Fiammalocchio in Italy, Madame Chatquipète in Canada, and me over here. Oh, and I think there's some young upstart in Argentina, but nobody's paying much attention to him at the moment because the worst thing he's done is break into people's houses and redecorate them with images of Barney the Purple Dinosaur."

"That's awful enough," Draco shuddered. "Wait...there's a Dark Lord in *Canada*?"

"Who'd expect a Dark Lord in Canada?" Voldemort shrugged. "I suppose she thinks she can surprise people into following her. The first thing she wants to accomplish is the complete abolition of the use of any language but French in the country...which is rather surprising, as it would mean that everyone would know that her name translates to 'Lady Cat-Who-Breaks-Wind'. And believe me, you do not want to know how she acquired that particular name."

"As you say, Mr. Flight From Death," Severus muttered.

"Flight of Death! OF DEATH!" Voldemort nearly knocked the table over in his haste to stand up and attempt to intimidate his most sarcastic minion. "It's supposed to be poetic!"

"Not to mention that when you introduce yourself, you get to use all the letters from your birth name with the anagram 'I am Lord Voldemort,'" Draco chimed in, seemingly unaware of the danger he'd just put himself into. "I must give you credit for that, Master. It's more creative than I'd be able to be with my name."

"Yes, well, 'Draco Lucius Malfoy' doesn't lend itself to many sensible rearrangements," Voldemort noted as he sat back down, apparently somewhat placated. "The best you could possibly hope for is 'I am Lord Foul Cacyus.' What on Earth *is* a 'cacyus,' anyway?"

"Possibly it's a misspelling of 'cactus,'" Lucius said, idly removing his handkerchief from his pocket and re-folding it. There may or may not have been a sneeze involved; as all Malfoys throughout recorded history have always been, Lucius was an expert at doing unrefined things such as sneezing with such grace and elegance that nobody could really tell that they'd actually happened. Or at least, anyone in his general vicinity tended to pretend that they hadn't noticed the deafening "*AH-CHOO!!!!*" that had nearly thrown him out of his chair.

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Shortly after the Sneeze That Wasn't, the house-elves had sent up the tea and Hermione, largely due to a lack of trust in the other four people at the table, volunteered to pour each of them a cup. As she poured the tea, she noticed that the cups themselves seemed to add however much cream or sugar each individual liked to take in their tea. Mentally shrugging, she decided that it was just another one of the wizarding world's strange little shortcuts and idly took a sip from her cup.

*Earl Grey*, she thought. *As much as I dislike being a guest of Lucius Malfoy because of that whole "Pure-blood supremacy" thing, at least he has good taste in tea!* Out loud she asked, "How long do you think she expects us to stay here, anyway?"

"Hard to say," said Voldemort. "That Weasley woman can be absolutely frightening when she puts her mind to it. I'm not even sure how she managed to get us all in the same place without instantly causing a flurry of curses, hexes and jinxes." He paused. "Incidentally, gentlemen, not *all* of them would have been aimed at the Mudblood here. Nonetheless, even I must admit that Molly Weasley performed a miracle in forcing us all down to a 'respectable, civilized teatime' today."

Lucius nodded. "Never underestimate the organizational abilities of a housewife, that's what I always say."

Draco stared at his father. "No, Father, that's not right. What you always say is, 'Draco, when it comes down to it, we've got a lot of money and the Weasleys don't, so that makes us better Pure-bloods than they are.' I've heard that speech more times than I can count."

"Er...that, too," Lucius said sheepishly.

"Wealthy or not, Molly Weasley really is a force to be reckoned with. She put the whammy on us," Voldemort grumbled.

Hermione stared at him. "Please explain to me the magical or scientific nature of the whammy. And what on Earth *is* a 'whammy,' anyway?"

"I don't know," he admitted. "I just thought it would sound good."

"You might want to work on the phrasing, My Lord," Draco advised him. "It lacks a certain amount of dignity. It sounds a little out of place."

Voldemort glared at him. "You may be right, Malfoy, but if you want to get any older and wiser, you should soon learn that it is a Very Bad Idea to insult your superiors, particularly *me*. Which reminds me, Severus...why are *you* here? Mrs. Weasley doesn't normally have a problem with you."

Snape muttered something unintelligible.

"What was that? I couldn't quite hear you," Lucius said, looking a little suspicious. Hermione, who *had* heard him, tried to stifle a giggle.

"*Enough*, Miss Granger," Snape growled. "And I said, 'I suspect that she heard me referring to our Lord as 'The Dark Wanker.'"

"Really, Severus?" asked Voldemort curiously. He shifted his hand to his wand, just in case a corrective Cruciatus Curse was in order.

"Yes, really, my Lord," he sighed. "But I said it with no offence intended to your good self, of course. It was just after you'd sent me on that mission to the giants. As you will recall, they were singularly unimpressed by my attempt to deliver your message to them, and they made absolutely certain that I knew it. Sometime after Poppy Pomfrey had managed to piece my jaw back together and mend all the other bones they'd broken, I was still in so much pain that a number of epithets did cross my lips. Incidentally, my Lord, I suspect that future messages to them ought to be more polite than 'join me or die, you stupid clumsy gits.' Even you might regret it if you offend a giant."

"Oh, I know that, Severus," Voldemort said, giving him a terrifying grin. "That's why I send my minions instead. Incidentally, for future reference, I am *not* a wanker. I lack the required equipment; it fell off when I made my fourth horcrux."

"**FELL OFF?!**" exclaimed Draco, Lucius and Severus in horror.

"Well, there go my grand plans to become the next Dark Lord if Potter kills you," Snape sighed.

"You wouldn't actually do that, would you, sir?" Hermione raised an eyebrow.

"Of course I would, you stupid girl!" he snapped. "Why else would I cultivate an image like mine, with billowing black robes, an extremely unpleasant demeanour, and a compelling voice? Do you think I'd do it for the women?"

"Why not?" she asked him, oblivious to how close she was to becoming very well-acquainted with some of the Half-Blood Prince's stranger and more unpleasant spells. "Tall, dark, mysterious and sarcastic can be surprisingly attractive to some women. 'Handsome' is more of a fringe benefit than anything else. As long as you stay away from anybody you've taught in the past five years or so, you might not have much trouble finding a girlfriend...though if you're as awful to her as you are to your non-Slytherin students, you may find that you won't have a girlfriend for long."

"Twenty-five points from Gryffindor, Miss Granger."

"You can't do that," she said smugly. "I left Hogwarts five years ago."

He gave her a smirk that was scary for more than one reason. "In that case, would you care to go to dinner sometime?"

"I hardly see why I should want to go to dinner with someone who not five minutes ago threatened to become the next Dark Lord."

"Ah, but as you may recall, I decided against it when the Dark Lord mentioned that he lost his 'meat and two veg' while making his fourth horcrux," he reminded her. "Besides, which..." He leaned over and whispered something in her ear.

She blushed. "Really, Professor Snape? You'd like to stick a fork into a first-edition copy of *Moste Potente Potions* and use it as dragon bait? What about the potential consequences? I hardly think that you would normally condone such a use for such a rare and valuable tome."

He scowled. "Not *that!* I said..." He whispered into her ear again.

She blushed again and grinned. "Now, that's a relief. What you really said sounds quite fascinating, actually."

"Honestly, Miss Granger, I don't see why I should bother with you if you will insist on being so bloody dense." The slightly-widened smirk on his face discredited the harshness of his words.

"I'm not dense, just a little hard-of-hearing," she smiled back at him. "Being so close to so many of Neville's exploding potions will do that. If that Herbology thing doesn't work out for him, perhaps he should set up shop as a maker of magical fireworks. Oh, by the way, I would much prefer that you called me 'Hermione' if you're going to keep propositioning me like that."

"I'll keep that in mind," he sniffed, turning back to the others, who were looking at him and Hermione with a mixture of revulsion and curiosity on their faces. Wishing to quickly change the subject, he asked her, "Miss Granger, how did you end up being part of this enforced tea party? I thought that Molly Weasley was quite fond of you."

"Ha!" she exclaimed, a faint sneer on her face. "Molly's fond of me when it suits her to be. I've ended up on her 'naughty list' several times, whether or not I've deserved to be there. This time, I believe the infraction was 'refusing to go out with Percy after he asked so nicely,' completely disregarding the fact that Percy's invitation to dinner consisted solely of a speech about the importance of proper cauldron thickness and a suggestion that I might as well settle for him, since nobody else would want a homely frizzy-haired know-it-all bookworm anyway."

"Well, he was right about one thing, which is more than I thought I'd ever be able to give him credit for," Snape smirked.

She glared at him. "I suppose you count as *nobody*, Professor Snape?"

"Severus, please," he replied. "And I was talking about cauldron thicknesses, not *you*. Merlin's various-body-parts-that-are-supposed-to-be-amusing-and-a-little-vulgar, do you *realize* what could happen if the bottom of a cauldron was too thick or too thin?"

"I see your point," she said dryly. "I've always wondered if Neville's cauldron was a bit too thick. That might've explained why so many of his potions went wrong...they never managed to reach the correct temperature."

Draco snorted. "Face it, Granger, Longbottom's about as good at Potions as you are at flying. The best cauldron in the world would never have helped that nitwit."

"Might I remind you that he earned better marks than you in Herbology and Care of Magical Creatures by a significant margin?" she asked him sweetly.

"Shut up, Granger," he glowered at her.

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After a period of strained silence, Lucius sighed. "Well, we're obviously going to have to be here for some time yet. We might as well do something to keep ourselves occupied besides sit around and try not to curse each other."

"How about a game of strip poker?" Severus asked, trying not to smirk.

"Oh, no, Severus...I am *not* making that mistake again. I lost my trousers *and* my pants to you the last time we played strip poker," Lucius grumbled.

"Oh, so *that's* why you came home with your robes wrapped around you like that last week!" Draco exclaimed. "Mother was decidedly unimpressed, I remember that. She said you looked like a flasher."

"Thank you, Draco," Lucius sighed. For a Slytherin, the boy was woefully subtle.

"Incidentally, where *is* Narcissa?" asked Severus. "I've been meaning to ask her to give Wormtail the recipes involved in that absolutely decadent dinner that your house-elves served last month. His cooking, while reasonably palatable, truly leaves something to be desired in regard to imagination."

"Ah, yes...I believe that the Carrot and Oyster Pie and Strawberry Wobbler were your favourite dishes that night, were they not?"

"Indeed. I was also quite fond of the Celery Astonishment, Banana Soup Surprise and...what was that chocolate thing? I remember feeling quite...warm...after I finished mine. It was a very *memorable* dessert."

"Ah, yes...the Chocolate Delight with Special Secret Sauce," Lucius chuckled. "Yes, it was particularly good that night, wasn't it? Narcissa and I enjoyed a bit more of it after you left."

Draco snorted. "I could hear you two 'enjoying' it clear across the Manor," he grumbled.

Lucius ignored that. "Sadly, Narcissa is in Paris for the next week," he said. "I believe her exact words were, '*If you're going to insist on holding a tea party with a Mudblood, the Dark Lord and a man who stinks of sulphur as your guests, then I don't want to be anywhere near the house until the stench clears up!*'" He paused. "No offence, Miss Granger."

"None taken, Mr. Malfoy," she replied. "I'm already well aware of what your wife thinks of me. But why should she object to Draco being here for tea? He *lives* here, after all. Surely she'd be accustomed to the smell by now."

Draco glared at her. "I think she meant *Severus*," he ground out. "Honestly, Granger, just because I work with dragons all day, it doesn't necessarily mean that I smell like sulphur..."

"Got you," she grinned.

"Ooh, you're going to regret that one!"

"I'll believe that when I see it, Mister Ferret Boy."

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Finally, about three hours after Molly had trapped them all inside that room, each felt the wards holding them in the room drop. "Oh, thank goodness...I thought the time would *never* come!" Hermione exclaimed in relief. Standing up, she made ready to leave. "Well, gentlemen...and Dark Lord, of course...I fear it's time for me to go home. It's been rather unexpectedly pleasant, but I doubt we'll ever do this again...unless, of course, we all manage to end up in Molly Weasley's bad books again, which is not entirely outside the realm of possibility."

"I doubt I'm ever off of her...what did you call it...oh, yes, her 'naughty list', Miss Granger," said an uncharacteristically polite Voldemort. "I look forward to our next meeting. Well, if it doesn't involve your little Potter friend killing me, that is. That sort of thing can be ever so hard on one's personal life."

"No doubt," she murmured. Then, taking hold of her Portkey home...and grabbing her former Potions teacher in an *extremely* unorthodox spot, prompting him to make a most undignified squawk just as her Portkey activated...she disappeared.

"Bloody hell!" Draco exclaimed, his mouth dropping open like a fish's. "Did she just do what I think she did?"

"Perhaps she wanted them both to be able to make a report to that Phoenix group," Lucius said mildly. "After all, everybody's likely to be curious about the outcome of today's little gathering. They're probably wondering whether Miss Granger survived the ordeal."

"But she grabbed him by his..."

"I must admit that it's highly unusual to grab somebody by their nose when you're travelling with them, but *if*s one of his more prominent features," he replied. "Come, Draco; I have some business to attend to and I could use your help. My Lord, I take it that you can show yourself out?"

"Watch yourself, Lucius, or I might decide to take up residence here."

"With all due respect, My Lord, I doubt you'd be able to put up with the peacocks for long. You *know* what happened the last time you came too close to one. Very well; if you can wait as my son and I get ready to leave, we shall see you out, and then we shall see to our business. Does that suit you?"

"It is not inconvenient," Voldemort said, satisfied.

And so all was well.

Or at least, all was well until Voldemort, deciding to sit while he waited for the Malfoys to get ready to go, sat down on the whoopee cushion that Hermione had subtly slipped onto the seat she had occupied.

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**Author's Notes:** Once again, I thank evenstar132 for the prompt and for supporting the archive.

"She put the whammy on us"/"Please explain to me the magical or scientific nature of the whammy" was lifted from "Pusher", a third-season episode of The X-Files. Mulder, when trying to explain how their suspect convinces his victims to do things to themselves and others, says, "He put the whammy on them." Scully replies, "Please explain to me the scientific nature of the whammy."

"Lord Fiammalocchio" is a rather poorly-constructed reference to Sauron that I put together in Italian. Fiamma=flame, malocchio=the evil eye. And while I'm quite aware that the "malocchio" has nothing to do with anything that Tolkien ever wrote, I couldn't resist using the word anyway. :)

"Madame Chatquipète" was taken from from a film called "House of D". The French teacher's name was Madame Chatquipète..."Mrs. Farting Cat" in translation. Unfortunately, this was the only name that would occur to me for the name of the Dark Lord from my home country at first, and by the time I came up with something better I'd already written a joke for that name anyway, so "Madame Chatquipète" she is.

Ghanaian Dark Lord...According to what I've read, frequently named after day of the week on which they were born. Kwaku is Wednesday, which signifies control of all situations, someone who does not like to be told what to do, a know-it-all who is spontaneous, vibrant & cordial...but DO NOT CROSS THIS PERSON or you'll regret it.

Akhilesh...a name from India which means "Lord of All" (<http://www.indiaexpress.com/specials/babynames/boy-a.html>)

"Bananana Soup Surprise", "Celery Astonishment", "Carrot and Oyster Pie", "Strawberry Wobbler" and "Chocolate Delight with Special Secret Sauce" are five of the more notorious recipes from Nanny Ogg's *The Joye of Snacks*, as described in Terry Pratchett's book *Maskerade*. Real-life versions of these dishes were created for Nanny Ogg's Cookbook. Because crossovers are not permitted on this archive, the Malfoy house-elves served the recipes as outlined in Nanny Ogg's Cookbook, though I should note that the real-life recipes do not have the same properties that the fictional ones do...for which, I must add, we might all be thankful. ;)