

Dog-Ends

by lady_rhian

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Chapter 1 of 1

Astoria is required to take a class at the Ministry. She learns other things instead.

Things Pansy Parkinson does when exiting a classroom:

1. Flips her hair
2. Takes out a fag
3. Looks at no one

Other facts: Pansy Parkinson wears a leather jacket, skinny jeans, a black shirt, and high heeled black boots to every class.

Astoria has been watching Pansy Parkinson every Monday morning in their Ministry class. These observations are accurate.

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The instructor is boring, so Astoria watches Pansy instead. She's pretty sure Pansy doesn't remember her, but everyone knows who Pansy is. Pansy wrote an op-ed for the *Prophet* calling the Ministry's social justice classes "pureblood reeducation." That was three years ago. The classes are still going. And Pansy couldn't stay abroad forever.

While the instructor gloats, Pansy doodles in a notebook. This infuriates him, so he insults her more. Astoria doesn't think Pansy hears, but *she* does. The man is nasty. Must have been a Gryffindor. She can't think of why else he'd treat Pansy so poorly.

Perhaps it's because Pansy has pixie-short curly brown hair and eyes that could burn a hole in the floor. Or because she told him she preferred women, but Astoria isn't sure if this is true.

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They smoke together during every class break.

"You're Daphne's sister," Pansy says, looking Astoria in the eyes for the first time.

The class has been going for eight weeks.

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One day, the instructor asks Pansy if she thinks her pureblood cunt doesn't stink.

Pansy looks up at him and asks if he's ever read about Foucault's panopticon and if so, can he relate it to what the Ministry is doing to Slytherins? She rephrases: why is the Ministry so insistent on tracking recent Slytherin graduates? Why are purebloods always the "random" in "random" searches and seizures? She rephrases again: ever read *1984*?

Then she says fuck you.

Astoria licks her lips and flashes a subtle smile in Pansy's direction.

Pansy reciprocates.

Foucault was the assigned reading that day.

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They stand close to each other when they smoke.

Pansy talks about her time at an American university. Astoria listens.

Astoria talks about her pending engagement to Draco Malfoy. Pansy sympathizes. Astoria asks how Pansy avoided such an engagement. Pansy says she arranged to be caught with a woman.

And Astoria tells herself that her breath isn't coming any shorter. Not at all.

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Things Astoria notices about herself when observing Pansy:

1. She doesn't listen in class
2. She counts the stitches in Pansy's boots
3. Her breath comes shorter

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Pansy asks Astoria to coffee. Astoria stares at her cup most of the time, because Pansy's eyes are so fucking beautiful.

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Draco is calling on her father, but she has a text from Pansy.

"No, Mum, I can't come down. I have to finish replying."

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They sit in class the next day and pass notes, like schoolgirls.

Astoria writes, *Engaged*.

Pansy writes, *I understand*.

And Astoria thinks she does.

A/N: Many thanks to my readers: sshg316, Subversa, richardgloucester, and Juniperus. "Dog-ends" is a term for cigarette butts, also for bits of conversation overheard or observed.

Prompt: The first baby steps of a new relationship.