

Strange Bedfellows

by *linlawless*

Lucius tries to persuade Kingsley of the merits of his latest scheme.

A One-Shot

Chapter 1 of 1

Lucius tries to persuade Kingsley of the merits of his latest scheme.

Inspired by Saturday Night Drabble Prompt #3 from MuseAmusant: The *Daily Prophet* makes a big stink about a little-known law that requires England's Minister of Magic to be married, forcing Kingsley to quickly find a wife... or else.

"What can I do for you, Mr Malfoy?" Kingsley asked as Lucius strolled into the room. *Does he look even more smug than usual?* Kingsley wondered silently.

"It's not what *you* can do for *me*, my dear Minister; it's what *I* can do for *you*."

Sighing mentally, Kingsley kept his expression as impassive as he could manage. "Whatever you think you can do for me, Mr Malfoy, the answer is 'no'."

Frowning, Lucius replied, "Tut, tut, Minister! Is that any way to speak to a citizen? And a very generous citizen, at that?"

"I'm quite certain that whatever you're planning to propose will benefit *you* far more than it will me, Lucius."

Kingsley was tempted to applaud the man's acting ability as Lucius said, "Really, Minister, so cynical! I truly have the best interests of wizarding Britain at heart." Contenting himself with a raised eyebrow in response, Kingsley waited. His patience was rewarded a moment later. "If I happen to benefit indirectly, is that such a bad thing? It doesn't negate the main benefits to everyone else, surely?"

Sighing, Kingsley said, "That remains to be seen. I don't suppose I'll get any peace without hearing you out, so do get to the point *quickly*, please, will you?"

"You need a wife. I have the perfect candidate."

"I can find my own wife, thank you very much. Now, if that's all—"

"Don't you even want to know who I have in mind?"

"No, not particularly." Kingsley stood, but Lucius didn't take the hint.

"Come now, old chap. Whatever my faults, I wouldn't steer you wrong on this topic. We used to be chums, after all!"

"We weren't ever 'chums', Lucius."

"We were in the same House."

"And we were *always* on opposite sides of some rather significant issues. Why would you want to help me now?"

"I've seen the light, as they say. And I think you'd enjoy each other. Surely you're at least a little bit curious..."

Kingsley almost smiled at the way Lucius let his voice trail off tantalisingly. Deciding to let the man off the hook, he said, "In the interest of time, I'll pretend I am. Who do you have in mind?"

"Narcissa, of course! She'd make an excellent Minister's wife. She's charming, refined, intelligent—"

"—your ex-wife," Kingsley interjected dryly.

"Well, obviously she's my ex-wife. I certainly wouldn't try to marry her off to you—or anyone—if she were my *current* wife."

"Does she have any idea you're here? What makes you think she'd even be interested?"

"She's always found you attractive, you know," Lucius said in a confiding tone.

Kingsley almost rolled his eyes. "Of course she has. That's why she divorced you, I'm sure: because she wanted to be free just in case an archaic law happened to be discovered that required me to be married in order to be eligible to keep my low-paid public service job."

"Don't be ridiculous, Kingsley!" Lucius snapped, then quickly regained his usual cool demeanour. "That is, she had many reasons for divorcing me, I'm sure, and some of them were even valid—probably." Kingsley barely managed to contain a snort. "In any event, the fact that her remarriage would mean I could stop paying her exorbitant maintenance allowance does not in any way overshadow her absolute suitability as the wife of the Minister of Magic. She's even considered a war hero!"

Sighing, Kingsley said, "If I agree to consider this ridiculous idea as seriously as I can manage, will you go away now?"

Smirking, Lucius stood. "Of course, Minister. I know how busy you are."

When the door had clicked shut behind the other man, Kingsley allowed the smile he had been containing to stretch across his face. Reaching for some parchment and a quill, he began to write.

My dear Narcissa,

Your plan was brilliant, love! He just left my office after making a number of very persuasive arguments as to why I should consider his idea as to whom I should marry...

A/N: Many thanks to karelia for the beta read and to gingertart and Proulxes for the Britpicks. As usual, I fiddled with it after I got it back, so any mistakes are mine.