

The Wandbag

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The Worst of the Best

Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's Notes::: *It's July 17, and thus my birthday. I was inspired by someone that I love very much to write a fic about how one might react to a present they hated. The way that it went, well I think I might be trying to make up for the darkness of She Would Not Deny Him. Hope you enjoy this little bit of fluff. Leave me lots of reviews, think of them as birthday presents I'm sure to love!*

Hermione greedily tore at the silver and green wrapping paper. There were only two times a year when she could open presents, and though she wasn't a material-obsessed person, she had always enjoyed her birthday.

Her eyes almost bugged out of her head at what she had just unwrapped.

At first she thought it was a handbag that simply wouldn't hold more than a few tubes of lipstick (which she never wore).

"It's a wand carrier," Draco said. Her look of confusion didn't disappear. "For your wand," he finished, lamely.

"Oh," she said, still gaping at the monstrosity.

Yes, the question of *what* the object was no longer remained a mystery, but the question of *why* still lingered. *Why* would her boyfriend of two years give her something so awful? Didn't he know her at all? This atrocity was just plain *wrong*, in every way possible.

The bag was long and thin, striped like a candy cane in green and purple. It was covered in gems – Emerald and Amethyst, probably. Its strap was long enough that, hung over one shoulder, the bag would rest at her hip. The strap had the same color scheme as the bag, luckily in thread rather than more gems, but had diamonds separating each color.

"It's so..." she choked back words like ugly, awful and horrible, "...beautiful."

"It was my mother's," he told her proudly.

That would explain it, she thought. *Narcissa Malfoy had awful taste, loved to waste and flaunt her money. Nothing that woman ever owned had any worth that wasn't measured in Galleons. Her life, and everything in it, was flashy, showy, and shallow. Even Draco was, at least for the first twenty years of his life.*

Though the existence of such a travesty was now explained, Hermione still couldn't comprehend why it had just been given to her. The thought that Draco was not the man she thought him to be sprang, unbidden, to her mind.

She thought that he had changed; he no longer cared only for material objects. Wealth, like blood, no longer stood as primary factors in how much he cared for a person. He still liked nice things, she would not begrudge him that, but he also understood that those things didn't matter to her. But how could he think that giving her this eyesore would be what she wanted?

Her eyes filled with tears as her mind reeled. He did not know her; he could not, then, love her.

"What's wrong?" he asked sincerely.

"Nothing," she squeaked. "I just love it so much." She choked back a sob.

"Oh, Hermione. I knew you'd react like this."

She looked up to see him smiling and could almost feel her heart break. She looked back down as a tear splashed on Narcissa's dreadful wandbag.

"You really are a terrible liar."

Her head snapped up to look at him.

"You must think I'm an idiot." Before she could deny it he laughed. "Like I don't know that something of my mother's would appall you. And that!" He pointed at the jeweled wandbag in her lap. "Not only is it gaudy, with all those jewels, but it's just plain ugly! Even my mother thought the colors repulsive. Luckily for Father, who bought it for some anniversary, Mother's love of anything expensive and sparkly overrode her gag reflex."

Hermione swatted below her eyes, where the tears were no longer being produced.

"And even if I had honestly thought you wouldn't absolutely hate it, how clueless would I have to be to believe you? I might as well have given you a bucket of cold sick. What kind of idiot wouldn't see you were lying through your teeth?"

Suddenly defensive of her lying abilities, she retorted, "Harry and Ron never noticed." His smirk told her he took that as an answer to his question.

She thought about arguing with him in defense of her friends, but her relief at his knowing *he better than that* left her able only to smile adoringly at him.

But her earlier question returned.

"If you knew I'd hate it, why did you give it to me, then?"

He smiled enigmatically and replied, "I didn't."

"What do you mean?"

"That's not your present. That thing is the wrapping." Before she could ask what he meant, again, he nodded at the wandbag. "Look inside."

Her eyebrows knit together as she lifted the bag and emptied its contents into the palm of her hand.

She gasped.

Tears sprang to her eyes and her heart beat rapidly against her ribcage.

It was... perfect. Absolutely perfect. She couldn't breathe.

In her hand was a diamond ring. Though beautiful, the diamond was not huge. Big enough to snag on a wool jumper, but not so big that washing her hands would cause injury. It was exactly the ring she would have picked out.

It was plucked from her hand and she almost yelped in dismay at the loss. But when she looked at him to protest, she saw that he was on one knee before her. He slipped the ring onto her finger and it felt *right*, like it belonged with her.

"Hermione Granger, will you marry me?"

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She never did answer him, she thought a few hours later. She was curled up against him, his fingers drawing lazy patterns on her bare back.

"Draco?"

"Hm?"

She propped herself up on an elbow to look him in the eye.

"This means I don't have to keep the wandbag, right?"

He never answered her, but she assumed his response was as affirmative as hers.