

Drunken Madness

by Miss

What comes out of your mouth during a drunken conversation?

Part One

Chapter 1 of 3

What comes out of your mouth during a drunken conversation?

Not mine, as you know.

Part One.

I'm drunk, of this I'm sure. My thoughts have split in two, or maybe it is just that I notice now that my brain is literally made up of two halves. Anyway this feeling is always a good sign that I'm pretty far gone. *That*, and the fact that I will feel my legs as separate parts of my body when I stand up.

But, back to my brain, one part is still my old rational self. This part will tell me everything I should and shouldn't do, and normally, I and the other half of my brain obey, but the other part is up to something else. It is the rebellious and drunken one that is at the forefront right now, and no matter how much control I want to have over my own actions, I cannot achieve that control. My drunken part is too interested in the glass I have in front of me to let the rational part take over.

My still sober part has just informed me that, *'Yes, that is indeed a Cosmopolitan standing in front of you.'* My drunken half is telling me that for a drink, it is a very pretty pink colour. The dichotomy between the two of them makes me giggle, and the two thoughts that I normally never giggle and that giggling is fun makes me giggle even more. Alcohol does interesting things with people, don't you think?!

My rational part is telling me that with this behaviour, trouble is going to be just around the corner. When I look up, the giggling stops, and my drunken mind agrees with its counterpart for the first time in two hours.

Stepping into my line of vision is the one man that I know will always quieten a room upon entering, will always make the room's occupants shiver, but once again my drunken mind is reminding me of something. *'Why does he make me shiver, because I'm damn sure that I'm not scared of this man; I haven't been for years.'* Yet I do shiver when Severus Snape picks up the whisky and, *'Is that mineral water?' he ordered from the bar and slowly walks over to my table.* The way he moves, he just exudes such a sexual sensuality. *'Sexual... sex... hmm, shouldn't be thinking that.'*

For the first time this evening, I'm regretting my drunken state. I know I constantly go around with my mouth open, even when people don't want me to, but for me, being drunk is pretty much the same as administering Veritaserum to someone keeping secrets. The only thing that will come out is the painful truth; whether I want it to or not. And believe me, it is always painful. I don't want to know what this man can do with the truths I will soon be spilling.

"Professor Granger, you seem to be drinking alone tonight. Care for a companion?"

Professor Granger. That is me; and Professor Snape asked me a question, so I should answer. My rational mind is screaming at me; I'm no longer a student, no longer ~~this~~ student. I don't want him to be here; I want to tell him no, he can't sit here. It is telling me that I should down the rest of my drink and make my excuses. However, the drunken part wants him there, and of course tells the truth that my rational mind doesn't want to acknowledge: I really do want him there.

"The table has two seats, and only one seat is taken. Please, be my guest." Wow, a full sentence, and I even managed to keep the drunken slur down to a minimum!

In thanks, he nods and acknowledges me by picking up his glass and drinking with me.

I can't help but blurt out, "What in Merlin's name are you drinking?" The sting in my eyes has alerted me to the fact that there is some seriously potent alcohol in his glass. That at least explains the mineral water.

He smirks and takes another small sip. "This is whisky, Professor Granger."

"I know *that*. The question is what kind of whisky, it is bloody well stinging my eyes. I can't believe you're drinking it."

His eyes sparkle, and I think he is amused by my indignant behaviour, but he answers me nonetheless. "That might be because this is Ardbeg Uigeadail and it is over 50 percent alcohol. The mineral water is to make sure the alcohol doesn't overpower the flavour of the whisky."

"Uigeadail? Like the Loch?" It seems that even in my drunken state, my rational, thinking brain can come up with an answer.

"Still the Know-it-All, I see. Yes, Professor, just like the Loch."

My brain switches to a totally different topic when it finally registers what the other Professor has been calling me. "Yeah. Professor," I muse. "Now that is an interesting story."

Indeed, how I became a Professor at Hogwarts is a very interesting story. Well maybe it is only interesting because I'm drunk, because my rational mind is telling me it wasn't all that interesting, *at all*; and weren't we discussing whisky? I guess not, because my drunken mind continues.

You see, I had to do something when Voldemort was gone. I had all these opportunities in front of me, and I just picked one; just made a list of them, closed my eyes and picked the thing where it landed, uhm, my finger that is. It wasn't the option of becoming a teacher, though.

That day, my finger landed on further study, and funny enough, that was what everyone expected of me. The really funny thing, though, was that it didn't land on the option of doing this under the tutelage of a Master of Potions or Transfiguration. No, my finger wanted me to go to a Muggle University, so I did just that. I picked up my wand, forged the credentials I needed, and enrolled in a history course at a University of my choice. I left the wizarding world behind, "Just like that." I snap my fingers to accentuate that fact.

But then I finished the course, did really well of course, and got all kinds of job offers; and again, I didn't know what to do. So out came that list again, this time with all these new options, and my finger decided that this time I had to go back into the magical world. My finger landed on Hogwarts. Though to this day, I still don't know how that option got on the list in the first place. Maybe Albus had something to do with it; the old man is always trying to steer things so they will go his way, but I digress.

My finger had decided to send me to Hogwarts, but I didn't really want to pursue another full-time education. So trying to figure out something I could do, I contacted Albus. I thought that maybe I could do a bit of teaching and exploration of the Restricted Section simultaneously. Of course the old man seemed to be expecting me and instantly offered me a position as the new History professor. I don't know how or why he got rid of Binns.

Before I really knew what was happening, it was the first of September. I was watching the first years being sorted and was waiting for Albus to introduce me as the History of Magic professor.

"So, your leaving the magical world had nothing to do with the end of the war? Or better yet, the end of your... was it ever a relationship, with Mr. Weasley?"

My rational mind starts screaming at me again. Apparently I told Professor Snape everything I thought was just... well... a thought! But my drunken mind is still at the forefront, and it is answering his question. The painful truth is coming out. "No, it was because of my list." However, my mouth doesn't stop there. "Of course, every single option on the list was Muggle."

"And why was that?"

His voice makes me shiver again. "Why?"

He nods and takes another sip. Ugh, I can't believe he is actually drinking that stuff. It smells awful.

"Why? Why, why, why did I go Muggle?" Hmm, I'm dreaming again. "The best magical option, or I should say the option I loved the most, was to stay at Hogwarts, study under a master. But whether it was going to be Potions, Transfigurations or Charms, there was one master I didn't want to be close to. I didn't want him to see the process of me growing from a child into a woman; if I stayed at Hogwarts he wouldn't see the transformation. Am I still talking or am I just doing this all in my head?"

Severus smirks. "Yes, I can hear every word." It seems he is enjoying my drunken truth telling, and he points at my own drink as if to make me drink more. I take a sip. "You were explaining why you didn't want one of the masters at Hogwarts to keep seeing you as a child."

"Yes, yes I was." My rational mind keeps urging me to keep quiet, scared that my drunken part will disclose not just one carefully kept secret tonight. "You see, this master didn't...I should say doesn't...particularly like children. Do you know who I'm talking about?" There goes my rational mind again, screeching that, 'of course he knows who I'm talking about,' but the drunken side is just curious, so I keep on talking, even though he smirks knowingly.

"I was sure that if I stayed at Hogwarts I couldn't study under him, because I didn't want to stay in that unequal relationship with him. If I studied under one of the other masters, he would slowly see me growing into a woman; but I was sure he would ignore that growth, keep me under the child label. So I left and came back a few years later, completely grown up, and I just knew he would notice the woman instead of the child."

"I think he did notice, but I wonder. Why you would want him to notice?"

My mind shuts down for a moment. *'Did he really say what I think he said?'* I don't think my drunken haze will allow me to recognize all the hidden things that could be imbedded in that one sentence; so after taking another careful sip, I stick to the second part of the question. "I saw him."

"You saw him?" His whole face is one big question mark.

I grin; not just a drunken grin, but one that makes him shift in his chair because he recognizes the lust in it.

He tries for nonchalance. "He taught you for seven years; don't you think it is kind of obvious that you saw him?"

If I hadn't been drunk, I'm sure my mind would have registered his uneasiness. Though thinking about this makes me realize that I do register it. Ugh, I hate it when my mind splits itself in two, though my rational part isn't coming through anymore, now that the last of several Cosmopolitans is gone, except for a constant rhythm of 'no, no, no, no...' I ignore the rational part.

"Yes, I saw him, but not just in class or at meals. No, I saw him. I don't think I remember the first time I saw him. No, actually, I do; but mostly I remember how I felt when seeing him. You see, I saw him with Lucius Malfoy. It was hot to see him, looking at them." My mind closes off for a moment to remember those two bodies together.

"Yeah, I saw *them*."

"You saw Lucius and him together." This time, there is no drunken registration of his uneasiness. It is blatantly obvious to me and everybody else who would look in his direction. I want to reassure him.

"Oh, I know it was a secret, and I never told anybody about it." I shake my head in emphasis. "But whenever I could, I would watch them because that master seemed to be a master in several fields." I giggle and put my finger on my lips to silence myself. "It was a really hot secret, but do you want to hear an even bigger secret?"

He looks at me in total shock, but seems to want to know the other secret as well. Maybe he wants to know how much he will need to Obliviate me.

"I wanted to play, too." I nod enthusiastically to myself and continue. "I still want to play with that sex master."

I clap my hand in front of my mouth, and I can feel my eyes going wide; it seems that for the first time since I got completely drunk...because Severus Snape didn't return my affections...I'm sober again. Finally, my rational mind takes over again, and I know now that, again, the painful truth has come out. Not only does Severus Snape know that his sexual relationship with Lucius Malfoy was something I knew about, but that I loved watching them whenever I could.

I groan when finally the last piece of information becomes known to my rational self. He knows, not just that I know, but that it turned me on; that he still turns me on, that I want him, desperately.

I'm just glad for one thing: that my rational sober mind took over before the entire secret came out.

AN: Ardbeg Uigeadail is cask strength, Scotch single malt whisky. As Hermione guesses, it is named after the Loch the Ardbeg distillery takes its water from, and it is a very strong (54.2%) and smoky tasting whisky. It has a very dark flavour and I find it a very fitting whisky for our dark Professor.

I hardly ever drink whisky anymore, it is something my love can appreciate more, but I can appreciate a nice drink every now and then, and cosmopolitans sit with me just fine. There are different versions of this drink, but usually it is vodka, Cointreau, cranberry juice and a bit of lime juice.

Thank you to my beta, Jen, for helping me with this.

Part Two

Chapter 2 of 3

What comes out of your mouth during a drunken conversation?

Not mine, as you know.

Part Two.

I'm not sure that the Uigeadail I've been carefully sipping is enough anymore. I know Professor Granger, Hermione, has been drinking for a while. Ha, even if I hadn't known when I walked into the bar, I would have known she was drunk the moment she started talking.

I had heard that it could be both funny and mortifying to find Hermione Granger in a drunken stupor; even her best friends avoided her when she was in this state. Nevertheless, I had never thought it could be a mortifying experience for me. What could she say to me that would leave me in a position where I would want the earth to swallow me whole? I guard my secrets, so nobody will ever find them out. At least, I thought I did.

I knew that she knew a lot of damaging things about me. Nonetheless, since the end of the war many of those things have become common knowledge. Nothing she could say would surprise me. I guess I didn't take the warnings seriously enough. I now know that I should have. I throw back the rest of my whisky and change to the wizard version, Ogden's. I need the alcohol and the Uigeadail is too expensive and exquisite to just pound back.

Maybe I should explain the fact that I came to the Three Broomsticks with the sole purpose of finding my colleague in this famous drunken stupor of hers. I wanted to find the truth about why she left the Wizarding world, why she came back. What her intentions were when it came to the love interest, of not just the youngest Weasley male, but the dragon tamer as well. What misdeeds of hers acted out while still a student at Hogwarts should she still be punished for? What... well, anything I could get out of her really; I wanted to collect some blackmail material on her, as I had done with all of my other colleagues.

Merlin, I now find myself wishing I had never had this urge to gain a position of power over her. I wanted power and control; instead, I find I have lost the little power I had. The only thing I found out is she has excellent blackmail material over me. Sure, it seems that she wants me, and I can make use of that. Her body is delectable enough, and her mind is something to admire; but I can't get over the fact that she knows.

Throwing back another glass of Firewhisky and ordering another round of drinks for us, I try to get Hermione out of the shock that I guess we are both in. "How much did you see?" It should have been funny to see her in this state of speechlessness, but to be honest, it scares the hell out of me. I don't care about her personal affairs right now. I care about Lucius Malfoy.

Lucius Malfoy, sweet dear Merlin, Lucius Malfoy. My first, not just when it comes to the sex that she knows about, but also the first man I ever loved. To be honest, I haven't loved another man or woman since I found him. Perhaps, since he found me in my fifth year. He is dead now, just like my former Master. The rational part of me is glad that he is. I may have been the one to dominate our relationship, but I couldn't just end it with the Dark Lord still out there, somewhere.

I wonder what would happen if certain people found this out? People who would still like to take the former Death Eater down a peg or two. My relationship with him would be just the excuse they needed to have *proof* of my *true allegiance*.

My mind is getting slightly hazy with the alcohol, but I'm still sober enough to realize that Hermione hasn't answered my question yet. She has lowered her hand and is looking at me rather shrewdly, probably wondering why I haven't run screaming or tried to intimidate her into not telling anybody. Even when I think this, I realize that she will not tell anybody, but I nonetheless need to know. *If only for my own peace of mind.*

"What did you see? How much did you see?" *That slow smile is definitely not a good sign.*

"You two provided my sexual education. At least as much as two men together can educate a woman. I think the first time I saw was in my second year. I was probably too young to fully understand, but the library has never been the same for me, the smell of old books, and the smell of sex... It is still my favourite spot though, and I know it is yours."

Oh Merlin, I need more alcohol to deal with this. The library, of all the places she could have seen us, it had to be the library. And she is right too, the library is my favourite place in the whole of Hogwarts. It was the reason Lucius and I were there that night. It is where he successfully seduced me for the first time, the place we were always the

toughest with each other. And if I remember the night in question correctly, it had been a particularly frustrating night.

The night after that stupid duelling club... Draco had told his father about the spectacular fall Lockhart had made and everything that had happened afterwards. Lucius knew just what state he would find me in; the adrenaline was surging through my system, while at the same time I was trying to keep control over myself, with no real outlet. I was so ready for him...

"Severus."

"Lucius."

"Join me tonight, Severus."

Just as Lucius had known, Severus was frustrated enough where he didn't even put up his usual protests about being in a school and needing to work the next day. "Where? I've seen enough of my private chambers for today."

"It depends on what you want. Where do you want to go, love?"

"The library. I want to see you holding on for dear life."

A small smirk formed on Lucius' face. One hand was stroking Severus' side, while the other hand slowly came up to cup his face, pulling the younger man to him; Lucius brushed a careful kiss on Severus' lips. "The library it is. Come." Lucius knew it would be the last moment this night where he would be telling his lover what to do.

Walking through the halls towards the library, both men seemed to ignore each other, but they knew that the other was there and looking. Lucius had once called it the ultimate form of foreplay, or mindplay as he called it, the way he could just feel Severus' eyes roving over his body. It might be a cliché, but it was as if those eyes were undressing him. Knowing that Severus knew exactly what lay underneath the clothes, and how to work that warm flesh into a frenzy, always left him feeling that much harder, anticipating that much more.

This time was nothing different, but Severus always had his reasons for looking, for imagining. Their relationship being a secret one always left them with a small amount of time reaching a secure location, leaving him with time to wonder and imagine. What would he do to Lucius this time? Even though Lucius had started this so many years ago and had dominated their first encounter, he had found out quickly that it was much better when Severus dominated. Since then, Lucius always did whatever Severus demanded, but what would he be demanding tonight?

Reaching the library doors, Severus pushed them open and directed Lucius straight to the back, into the Restricted Section. Upon reaching their destination, the frustration was gone, the arousal was there, and the master was paying a visit, pushing Lucius into the shelves.

Hermione is grinning at me, and it isn't a drunken *I don't know what I'm doing, because I'm happily drunk* grin. I realise I have been so quiet and distant; she has guessed where my thoughts have taken me. I'm not for idle conversation, but I find I want to say something, even if it does acknowledge where my thoughts have been drifting. I comment on something I should have realised back then.

"You know, I should have known something was wrong, that someone was inside already." She looks at me with a question in her eyes, though that damn grin isn't leaving. I decide to answer her question and ignore the grin. "The doors weren't locked, I should have noticed that."

"Yes, well, from what I saw I think you were a bit too, shall we say... frustrated to notice. Though not by the end of it, and I can't say you left me feeling very frustrated, either."

That statement needs another shot of whisky, allowing me to sink into my thoughts again. I wonder what it would have been like to watch us from the sidelines. I know what it was like for me.

Lucius knew Severus was frustrated, that he was too pent up to wait very long, so why was he still looking and not doing anything?

Lucius slowly pushed himself away from the shelves full of old tomes, intending to make his way over to his lover and at least get a kiss out of him.

Severus saw him coming and knew what would happen if he let Lucius touch him; he would lose the precious control he still had and go for their more standard, softer, fucks. No, that wasn't what he wanted right now. He had said that he wanted for Lucius to hold on for dear life, and that was exactly what would happen. He made his decision.

"Stop right there. Strip."

This was what Lucius wanted, what they both wanted. One of the things that had always come natural to them was the ability to read the other. When Lucius got Draco's letter, he knew what state he would find his lover in, what his lover would want and need; he needed something short and hard. With that simple push away from the shelf, he knew that would force a decision in Severus.

By the way that he was shedding his robes, Severus could tell Lucius was just as desperate for this as he was. It told him that Lucius had wanted to come see him long before he was able to get away. Probably Narcissa, nagging him about one thing or another, had held him back.

Severus smirked; Lucius wouldn't have to wait much longer. Moving his hand in front of the rows of buttons, they opened and he let his robes, coat and shirt fall to the floor. Walking up to his naked lover, he snaked his hand up into the long silvery blond hair and pulled his head roughly to him.

Lucius let out a soft moan, revelling in the malicious and brutal assault on his mouth. Severus knew he liked it rough, liked to be able to feel what they had done when he went home.

There wasn't much clothing on his person left, but he issued his next order nonetheless. "Undress me. Oh, and Lucius? Do make it... interesting."

The grin on Lucius' face was enough. Interesting for Severus in this state didn't mean soft caresses or loving kisses. Opening the trousers and pushing them down roughly, Lucius was greeted by a hot and leaking erection. Placing his hands on Severus' hips, he took that cock in as deep as he could and pulled back, sucking hard. Severus' groan was all the reward he needed.

Severus let Lucius suck him a while longer, before pulling him up by his blond locks again. "I don't have time for this. Prepare yourself for me." Leaning back against the shelves, he lazily watched as Lucius prepared himself minimally; he knew that, most likely, Lucius had come as prepared as he wanted to be. Usually, it was next to nothing.

His patience wearing thin, Severus knew he could not wait any longer. He pushed Lucius against the shelves and roughly turned him around. Taking a last moment to lubricate himself, he steadily pushed in. Setting a relentless pace, he was finally able to let his frustrations of the day out.

"Touch yourself." It was all he could say, and Lucius carefully reached down, using his other hand to keep himself upright from the brutal assault. The pressure needed to keep him upright was already leaving his hand bruised. It didn't take long before Lucius was screaming and his knees buckled. Holding himself up by pressing Lucius completely against the shelves, a few thrusts later and Severus was there too.

After a moment, they both got dressed and walked out of the library. There was nothing more to it. Looking at his lover one more time, Severus turned away.

"Go home, Lucius. Go fuck your wife."

Lucius' laughter rang through the library.

She is still grinning, and I have a feeling there are precious few ways to make her stop. I have an idea though. Where will it lead to? I have no idea, but I'm drunk enough to suggest it. And I know she is drunk enough to accept, though she probably would have without being drunk.

"Why don't we continue this conversation somewhere where nobody can hear us? Your chambers? Or mine?"

One word is her answer.

"Yours."

Part Three

Chapter 3 of 3

What comes out of your mouth during a drunken conversation?

Not mine, as you know.

Part Three.

I should have got drunk on my own sooner; maybe I would have been in his bed sooner then. Then again, is just being in his bed what I want? No, I still need to figure plenty of things out before that will happen. It seems my rational mind is speaking up again, and the drunken haze is slipping away.

It is time for some plotting, but first I need to get Severus out of the memories he seems to be stuck in... Hmm, no response.

Ah, well, the memories are pretty good for me, so they should be damn good for him. I think I'll do a little reminiscing of my own, as that scene in the library is definitely not my favourite, not by a long shot. I still had quite a few problems with both Severus and Lucius back then. And even though I never really stopped hating Lucius, I was too shocked, and probably young, back then to appreciate a fine male specimen without looking at the personality I knew. No, that took maybe three more encounters.

I remember that fourth encounter the best, and it is by far my favourite. It was the first time I was able to look beyond the brutal personality of Lucius and, for the lack of a better description, the evilness of Severus. For the first time I could see two men, who for all intents and purposes, were day and night, who were so different and yet both beautiful to me. I could look at their bodies and listen to the story their moans told me. They told their very own love story, though no common love story by far.

It was my third year by then, also known as the year of the Time-Turner. I saw Lucius leaving the castle one night while I should have been asleep, in my bed, in the tower. Don't ask me why I wasn't nor what I was doing out of the tower that night, for I do not remember. All I remember is using my Time-Turner to go back so I could find and watch them.

I found them near the Great Hall, of all places, and watched them make slow sensual love with each other. I had never before, and would never again, see the two make love like that, worshipping each other. Caressing and kissing as if they would never be together again. As always, Lucius was in a submissive position, but they were facing each other. Severus had placed his cloak on the floor, and Lucius was lying upon it.

Oh wait, a response seems to be needed. Ah, we are leaving. Yes, we are definitely going to your place tonight. Though I know you don't have sex ~~with~~ on your mind right now. That's okay because neither do I.

We pay and walk out together. You are once again lost in your own mind, so I pick up where I had left of.

As I said, or thought, hmm, maybe my mind is still split in two. Whatever.

Lucius was lying on that cloak, and Severus was already inside of him. Sliding in and out slowly, carefully loving Lucius. They were always either looking each other in the eye or kissing passionately. Unfortunately, I had found them in the last moments of their passion, and within a few minutes, they had both come. Yet, though it was short, it left me with a feeling of both sadness and happiness, for it was obvious they had at one point loved each other very much, and somehow I knew it was never meant to be that way for them. I could see and feel the love, but more than that the love they had lost.

To feel that love was enough for me to know that I would remember that night for the rest of my life. Maybe I should mention to Severus what happened the next day. I didn't pay attention to Lucius afterwards, I knew my other self would see him, so I more or less followed Severus, and the emotions in his eyes were enough; enough for me to want to see more, to not miss any emotion this man might feel. I didn't care for Lucius, but I started seeing a bit more of Severus.

My fascination, however, did not start completely until the next day. The Mafloy Eagle Owl landed in front of me with a short note. Ron and Harry didn't recognize him, but Mafloy did, and he gave me a smirk, thinking his father had something nasty for me, and for others it might have been.

The note simply said: "Hermione. Did you like what you saw? Lucius."

The answer was simple. No, I didn't like it, I realised I loved it. I also realised that Lucius must have seen me the night before and now thought to scare a thirteen-year old away by letting know he had, but my fascination already went deeper than that. I looked up at the Head Table, but Severus wasn't looking at me, nor did he seem to notice anything special at all. I guess I started loving Severus a bit then.

I decide to tell Severus of the note, another part of my secret.

"He knew, you know."

We are inside the castle now and are almost at the painting that I know guards his private chambers. His answer is an abrupt standstill. He slowly turns himself towards me, and I wonder if either of us is still drunk. The alcohol is there, yes, but other than that...

"What do you mean?" He quickly starts walking again and opens the portrait for us. I guess I should wait until I'm inside to answer that one.

Taking a seat, he gets us both another drink, something similar to what he had before by the looks of it, and I take the chance to look around his quarters. They are pretty similar to mine, though with more of the expected green in it, just as mine came with the expected amount of red.

He is now mixing a clear drink with some sugar and water. Absinth, my mind tells me right before he pushes the glass into my hands.

"Explain."

What?! Oh yeah, explain the note. "You know I had a Time-Turner in my third year, right?" Ah, no, it seems he didn't know that, but he seems to want me to continue explaining, rather than telling about any misdeeds I got up to that year. "It doesn't matter right now. Right, well," I continue in lecture mode, "I saw Lucius leaving the castle one evening and knew what it had to mean. I had seen you together a few times by then, and I didn't want to pass this opportunity by. I found you near the Great Hall and watched you two together, before following you towards your quarters, knowing my other self would see Lucius."

He suddenly sits down on the chair opposite me. It seems to be another shock for him, and I know he's realised which encounter this was. I allow him a moment to recover and take a careful sip of my drink. Not bad, though it's definitely an acquired taste, and there is a new feeling in my head. I will be floating around after a glass of this, I'm sure.

"That doesn't..." He takes a sip of his whisky. Apparently this wasn't something he expected, but there is still more to tell him that will shock him. He continues, "That doesn't explain that Lucius knew you were watching us."

"No, it doesn't. But the note I received the next morning, asking me if I had liked it, did."

"He wrote you a note." No emotion.

"Yes."

"Asking you if you liked it?" Still no emotion.

"Yes. But I think he was trying to scare me. You know, the big evil Lucius Malfoy is having sex with Severus Snape, so he must be evil as well."

"But it couldn't have stopped there. Lucius always liked to play with people, there has to be more to it than just the one note." A question, and just the tiniest bit of insecurity.

He seems resigned to this now. Maybe it is the alcohol, which is definitely still wreaking havoc within me, but he simply seems to become detached and wanting to know more. He is correct of course, there is more to it.

"No, it wasn't the end. I guess he was testing how much I knew, for the next time he was in the castle, he left me some clues. Simple things just a tiny bit out of place, meaning absolutely nothing to others, but obvious to me. I think I knew he was in the castle during the Christmas holidays, even before you did."

"I never knew Lucius to be reckless enough to leave out clues. Nobody knew; what if others had found his clues. Taking them to mean I was on his side." He seems to get a bit more anxious again. Maybe that's the kind of drunk he is, swinging from one mood to another. I know how to reassure him though.

"Nobody else knew, and nobody figured out the clues, we both made sure of that. By the time Lucius knew I was watching and willingly coming back to see more, he changed tactics. I think he even got a new owl for it, one that wouldn't be recognised as one of the Malfoy owls by both you and Draco. It was a little black thing called Second."

His reaction is instantaneous. "You mean to tell me that little black owl, the one with the single white feather on its wing, was Lucius'?"

Now it is my turn to be shocked, though Severus seems to be aware of what he has confessed to, as well. Second, named that way after Lucius found out I saw them for the first time in second year, wasn't recognised by anyone. Ron and Harry saw her, but she came randomly and infrequently enough for them to not notice my reaction to every message she bore. But, for Severus to notice her... I need to know.

"How do you know about Second? Not even Harry and Ron recognised her. Not once in the almost five years Lucius and I used her to communicate."

The confessions are flying back and forth now, and most of it has nothing to do with the sexual relationship I was witness to. Or maybe it has everything to do with it. He seems to realise something though, when I use the word communicate, indicating that I wrote to Lucius as much as he wrote to me.

"Sometime during your sixth year, Albus came to me, to warn me. He asked me not to go the next time the Dark Lord would summon his followers, begged me actually, because it would cost me my life. That was the only time Albus had ever seemed afraid of the knowledge he had gained, and he was willing to compromise his plans to keep me safe. I never found why he was so scared, and he never told me where he got the information, but somehow I suspected it to come from within the school. I haven't seen Lucius since, but I noticed many little things about certain students, things I hadn't before. One of them was a little black owl bringing you mail, an owl not noticed by anyone else. Every time that owl came, you would look at me."

I knew Severus Snape had been a good spy, but to have noticed Second, he must have been real good.

"Lucius was a cold bastard, *that* never changed. But I noticed that sometimes he did things that went against the cold bastard persona, sometimes he would do things that went against the Dark Lord's orders." I'm playing with the drink in the my hands, not looking up, not wanting to see those black eyes when he realises that Lucius Malfoy loved him until the end.

"He cared for very few people, but he did everything he could for those few. One of the things he did was to explain, to me, what would happen to you during the next summons. He even gave me the information I needed to get Albus to do as I told him to. After that, I never needed to explain anything to Albus, he just listened and did what needed to be done."

I haven't right out said it, but he realises it, we both know it. When I finally look into his eyes, they are filled with a new knowledge and sorrow.

"I knew it; I just never realised I was one of them." And there it is, the realisation of the last part of my secret; it is the biggest shock for him this evening, just like it was for me when I realised what had happened. "I never did understand why he stepped in front of that curse for you, a girl he professed to hate. Everyone thought it was an accident, but I knew it was deliberate; Lucius Malfoy took a curse intended for Hermione Granger because whether he liked it or not, he couldn't cut out his own heart."

I agree. "He knew he wouldn't make it through the battle alive. He was dying, and I think it was his way of thanking me for helping save your life." The silence is complete, and we sit there drinking, watching each other.

I watch as Severus gets up from his seat as he sheds the outer layer of his clothing. For a moment I wonder if his mind has turned back to our original conversation, but he simply walks into his bedroom, and I realise he is preparing himself for the night. It seems our conversation is over for the night, and I sure won't mind if it never comes up again. I'm about to walk to my own quarters when I hear him call out to me.

"Come to bed, Hermione."

He must know that I can't resist him, so my answer is clear to the both of us. I walk into his bedroom, shed my own clothing and crawl in the bed with him. Tomorrow when we are both sober again, we can see where this will lead.

AN: Wormwood or *Artemisia Absinthium*, is the main ingredient that lends its name to the drink known as Absinth. It is a clear drink with a green sheen to it, though from the distance Hermione sees it and the high quality I know Severus would use, it looks completely clear. You mix it with water poured over a sugar cube until you get a milky white substance.

In the old days it was said to give people hallucinations, but with the amount of thujone, most likely the working agent in Absinth, in legal versions of the drink it is not quite possible to obtain that level of delirium. This toxic substance does, however, give you a different feel than the amount of alcohol, which can go up to 73%, can give you. It can be rather similar to smoking a joint without the potential of getting nauseous. Very pleasurable.

http://www.absinth24.net/shop/absinthe_glossary/thujon.html