

Bare Necessity (of the Rebound)

by SS Lupin

Harry has a new boyfriend... and it's driving Ron crazy.

One-shot.

Chapter 1 of 1

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Disclaimer: JKR owns Harry Potter, but the rum is mine.

"I don't know what I saw in him," Harry said, raising the glass of rum to his lips.

Me neither, Ron thought. Aloud, he said, "Isn't it too early for the rum?"

Harry swallowed down most of the glass. "I just need to forget, 's all."

Ron nodded and wished he could *Muffliato* the techno music in the club Harry wanted to lose himself in. The drink, dance and shag scene wasn't a favorite of Ron's not that he'd say no to the drinking and shagging, but when they were all put together in a place where the lights blinked too fast and the music that reverberated in his chest was shit, it just made Ron want to take Harry to their flat and buy their own beer.

He'd never tell Harry that, though.

Now that Phase One of Harry's rebound plan was well underway, Ron knew it was only a matter of minutes before Phase Two began.

And with the way Harry stared out beyond Ron's left shoulder into the crowd of gyrating bodies, it looked that the next phase was coming along faster than Ron thought it would.

Harry set down his glass, told Ron not to wait up, and hopped off the bar stool, making his way through the dance floor.

Ron looked after him for several moments, feeling a familiar twist in his gut. Ignoring it, he paid the bartender and left the club for a decent corner to Apparate.

~*~

"I don't know why he needs me anyway," Ron told Hermione the next morning through the Floo. "It doesn't take long for him to see the next one he wants, so he can just leave me out of it!"

Hermione finished pinning up her simple twist of curls turned to stare directly into the fireplace. "You're his best friend, aren't you?"

Ron tried to avoid Hermione's gaze, but it was either her or the green flames, which were disconcerting to look at when there was no torso under his head. "Yes," he

mumbled.

"Then there should be no problem. He suffered through a bad breakup and needed some company."

"Well, he didn't need it from me," Ron said, thinking of how quickly Harry had found a bloke to pull. He wasn't even home yet.

Hermione reached through the flames and touched Ron's cheek. "There are some things you can't give him," she said softly.

Standing up, she grabbed her cloak and fastened it over her light robes. "I've got to get to work, and I suspect you do, too."

"Suspect? There's only a floor between us at the Ministry!"

Hermione smiled. "Then quit clogging my Floo."

Ron waved good-bye and ducked out of the fireplace, dizzy and unwilling to think about Harry for the rest of the day.

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But what Ron wanted and what Ron got were two different things, a fact proven by Harry stepping into his cubicle, robes wrinkled and hair tousled more so than usual.

Ron put up a Silencing Charm around his office and cleared out a chair for Harry. "Could you at least change your robes before coming to work?"

Harry didn't sit, pacing back and forth in the little space from Ron's desk to the wall opposite it. "Guess who I stayed with over the night?"

"Anyone I know?"

"Yeah," Harry said, a nervous smile outlining his lips. "Draco Malfoy."

Not again. "Harry, this didn't work the first time"

"We were kids then. Now, it's different." Harry leaned back against the cubicle's wall, head turned up to the ceiling.

"How so? As I recall, you were drunk the last time, too."

"But I'm sober now, and we're going out tonight."

"You mean you're *dating* him?"

"Starting tonight and I probably won't be coming home tonight either."

"That's foul."

"To you." Harry took down the charm, and the noise of the rest of the floor crashed around him.

When Harry approached the doorway, he paused and turned around. "You're okay with this?"

No. "Sure, Harry. Have fun."

~*~

It had happened in Grimmauld Place during the summer after their sixth year. Harry hadn't found a single Horcrux, and Hermione spent most of her time in the library, researching.

Snape and Malfoy had showed at the house midway through July, robes torn and their faces bloody. And when explanations had been made and a form of innocence had been proven, the two Slytherins were another fixture at number twelve.

Harry had taken to hole himself up in his room, and before long, Malfoy had been joining him, being allowed where Ron was not. Where Ron wanted to be.

And when Ron was ready to tell Harry, once and for all, that he had broken up with Hermione within a week after their first kiss, that something needed to change, he opened the door and saw his best mate and Malfoy shirtless and snogging on the floor, an empty bottle of firewhisky inches away from them.

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"It's been a month, Hermione. A whole bloody month and they're still together," Ron said, slumping into her sofa.

"Then why the complaints? They seem pretty happy together," Hermione said from the bathroom.

"That's the bloody problem... *He's* the one always complaining!"

"About what?" Hermione, holding a towel around her, darted to her bedroom and shut the door half-way.

Ron put on an impersonation of Harry's voice that didn't sound like Harry at all. "Draco whines too much. Draco doesn't like curry, but I don't want to eat at those snooty French restaurants he fancies. Draco's flirts all the time and *not* with me. Draco doesn't like it when I tug his hair, and he doesn't know how to suck"

"Okay!" Hermione yelled. "I got the idea."

"So do I, but that doesn't stop Harry from complaining all the time. And I'm sure that I wouldn't do a bang up job of blowing him."

Silence followed Ron's last words, and he was sure that his dignity was far behind them.

"What did I just say?"

Hermione stepped out of the door, fully dressed and toweling her hair. "I believe you hinted that you are skilled in the art of fellatio."

Ron's face heated down to his neck. He buried his face in his hands. "Hermione, I"

"Love him, obviously."

Ron let his hands fall away. "But that's daft. I'm not"

"Of course you aren't gay, thinking about performing oral sex on Harry."

"Hermione!"

She sat down next to Ron and placed the towel on her lap. "I'm just asking."

"I've done it. With a girl intercourse wise," he affirmed.

"Doing it once with a girl doesn't certify you as straight."

"But..." Ron sputtered.

Hermione patted his knee. "You love him. It started as a friend, and when we were seventeen, it turned into something more."

"You've known?"

"I've always known. Why do you think I spent all that time in the library?"

Understanding swept through him. "I'm so sorry."

"For what?" Her eyes shined, wet and bright, and Ron hugged her tightly.

"For being such a prat."

"It's part of your personality can't be helped, really." Hermione pulled away from Ron after squeezing him a last time.

"Oi!"

"Well, it's true." Hermione stood, and that's when Ron noticed she was wearing a pretty dress.

"Where are you going?"

"On a date."

"With a Muggle?"

"To meet Dean's mum."

"Oh."

"Which means you need to go home and sort things out with Harry before the wedding's announced."

"Mione..."

"Just go," she said.

Ron Apparated out.

~*~

"Ron, I want to talk to you."

Ron shook off the strange sensation of Apparation and looked at Harry, who was seated in the couch much in the same way Ron was in Hermione's home just minutes ago.

"It is about Malfoy, isn't it?"

"Yeah," Harry said dejectedly.

"You're having problems with him yet again."

"Ron, I need your help."

His fists clenched at his sides as he advanced on the couch. "Let me guess you want to break up with him, don't know how to say it, and want my advice. And once you get it over with, you want me to take you to a club, watch you get drunk and find some other bastard from our childhood to have sex with."

"But"

"Just leave the ferret and run away to Tahiti with me!"

Harry looked up at him questioningly.

Ron felt a flush of embarrassment rise up to his face, but did not falter as he kneeled at Harry's feet and took hold of his hand.

"I..."

Love him, but I can't say that.

"Want..."

I don't even know where Tahiti is.

"You," he finished lamely.

Harry looked shocked, and Ron panicked, snatching his hands away. "You never wanted to break up with him, did you?"

"Um... actually, I already did."

"Then why did you..."

"Wanted to use Pig to send Draco back something he lent me."

"I didn't mean"

"Yeah, you did."

"You don't feel the same."

"I want you, too."

Ron's breath caught. Harry smiled.

"Forever. I'm not your rebound until something better shows up."

"That's impossible."

Ron's eyes widened.

"You're the best."

Harry bent down to Ron, placing his hands on the other man's shoulders, and kissed him.

"I've heard Tahiti's nice this time of year."

- end.

Author's Notes: Many thanks to Southern_Witch_69 for her amazing beta skills.

This was written for the Harry Potter and Ron Weasley Fuh-Q-Fest in response to the prompt: "Harry is dating Draco (or choose a different guy or girl). And tells Ron about all of his relationship woes. Ron is jealous, but says nothing to Harry - while continually complaining to Hermione. All comes to a head when Ron thinks Harry is coming to him for break-up advice and Ron yells at him to just 'leave the ferret and run away to Tahiti with me'...and then they shag."