

Draco

I woke up to unwanted noise, one Saturday morning. November was here, the Quidditch teams had all practiced and the pit was dressed. I would have preferred to sleep for a little while longer, but being the Seeker for the Slytherin team, that wasn't about to happen. Sitting up, I changed the cloth on my arm, very aware of the boys in the room. The last thing I wanted was a rumor started that I was a Death Eater.

Harry Potter and his horrid little friends would be all over me, poking me with their Muggle loving fingers and getting their Mudblood germs all over me.

That last thought made me stop for a moment. It was shocking the way the thought slipped out, but I didn't *mean* it. Not like I use to. Before, whenever I used the word, it was able to pierce feelings and rip reputations to shreds. Now....

Now it hurt to say it.

The sensation was odd, leaving a gap in my chest. A hole that was neither painful, nor meaningful, but definitely felt. As I felt this hole, a new feeling came over me, and suddenly I wanted to destroy something. The rage I felt bubbled in me until I saw red.

Gasping, I fought the hole and suppressed it, hiding it. Pulling the curtains of my bed aside, I stood and put on my Quidditch uniform, minus the pads. My green and silver striped sweater hugged me well, lending to the hint that I took very good care of my body. When I was ready, I climbed the spiral staircase up to the Slytherin common room where I found Pansy waiting for me.

"Draco!" Her voice was an awful thing to hear. Running over to me, she wrapped her arm around mine, "I'll be cheering for you, Draco."

"Yeah, you and the rest of Slytherin."

Pressing herself against me she asked, "Do you need help getting... pumped up?" She gave that giggle that was supposed to be appealing.

Pushing her away I said, "No. I don't need your help."

She frowned, "Do you not love me anymore?"

I looked at her, shocked, "That word *never* left my mouth!"

"So you don't?"

"No. I do not *love* you. Gosh, with the way you've been acting, I'm surprised I can even tolerate you."

Now she looked hurt, "I... I'm just trying to make you happy, Draco."

"Well stop."

"We've only had sex once this year. Last year we were together almost every night."

"Blimey! Keep your bloody mouth shut! Do you want Snape over hearing you? Do you know how much trouble we'd be in?"

She blushed and looked at her feet, "Fine. I'll just leave you alone."

I nodded, "Fine by me." I walked away from her and through the wall on the far side of the room. Entering the dungeons, I made my way down the corridors and up to the Great Hall. Entering the large space, the Slytherin table cheered, all were ready for the traditionally epic match.

Without being able to help myself, I found Hermione at the Gryffindor table, flanked by the always present Potty and Weasilbee. She looked worried while she focused on the ginger, and soon they were joined by Loony Lovegood wearing some stupid hat. Looking at it, I saw a lion with a snake dangling from its clenched jaw.

Not hard to guess where *her* supports lie.

I'm sure the rest of the school held similar thoughts.

I could already hear the chant *Go! Go Gryffindor!* that would thunder deafeningly from the stands.

Sitting down I filled my plate with food and my glass with orange juice. Marcus Flint took a seat next to me and nudged me, "Ready to play, Malfoy?"

I nodded, "Don't worry about me, Flint. I'm not the one you should be looking at."

He held up his hands in surrender, "Just asking, mate."

I frowned, "Sorry... not in the best mood. Pansy. You know?"

He nodded, "Bitch needs to learn her place."

"That's an understatement," laughed Crabbe with his deep voice.

I chuckled half-heartedly, but didn't say anything. Again I looked at Hermione to find her watching me. I held her gaze for as long as I could before I went crazy. Taking my plate I stood, "I'm going somewhere quiet. I need time to get my mind ready."

"Where?" Crabbe asked.

Making sure my mouth was visible, I said, "The library."

I left the table, seeing Hermione stand as I reached the doors. Students were slowly making their way out of the front doors and to the Quidditch pit, but I went the other way. Going to the third floor, I set my plate down and entered the library. Wasn't that hungry anyway.

I went to pre-historic magic and waited a few moments. Hermione entered the alcove and came to me, wrapping her arms around my neck, "Good luck, Draco."

I chuckled, "Thank you, Hermione."

"The first trip to Hogsmead is next weekend."

"Yeah?"

She smiled, "Still want to take me on a date?"

I smiled, a genuine smile, and replied, "Yes! I mean... yes, I would."

Hermione giggled, but then frowned, "We won't be able to... sit next to each other, however."

"Then how?"

"We can sit near each other, or back to back... It's not very good, but it will keep people from gossiping."

I smiled, "I love it."

"Really?"

I nodded as I moved in to kiss her. Pulling away I said, "Meet me here after I beat Potty and his Quidditch team?"

She gave me a warning look, "Yes. I'll meet you here."

"Just because I want to be with you doesn't mean I have to like your friends. And you have full permission to hate mine... I do."

"Why do you hang out with them?"

"Comfort in not being alone."

She frowned, "You know... you and Harry have more in common than you think."

The hole in my chest burned and I could feel my expression darken. A look of fear crossed Hermione's face. "I am *nothing* like Harry Potter," I said, "Nothing."

She shied away, "I'm sorry I said anything."

I watched her for a moment, anger still running through me. Leaning in I placed a kiss on her cheek, "See you after the match."

Moving around her, I made my way out of the library and to the Quidditch pit, ready to kick some Gryffindor ass.

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We lost.

Our keeper sadly isn't really a match for that Weasley girl. And if our Beaters would keep the bloody bludgers away, I wouldn't have to swerve away from the snitch. Ripping my pads off, I threw them on the floor and grabbed my broom. Walking out of the tent, I saw the Golden Trio walking back to the castle, Weasilbum with his arm around Lavender Brown - the Pansy Parkinson of Gryffindor.... Just not as slutty.

Reaching the group I sneered, "Nice game, Potter. Going back to your house to soak in the fame?"

Potter rolled his eyes at me, "Go away, Malfoy."

"Nice dancing in front of the hoops, Weasley. Careful though... don't want to actually catch something. Might make people think you're actually good at something."

Lavender Brown scowled at me, "Leave Ron alone, Malfoy. Just because your team lost doesn't mean you have to take it out on everybody else."

I laughed, "Hiding behind your little girlfriend, Weasley? How perfectly fitting. A coward just like the rest of your no good, Muggle loving family of yours."

"Malfoy, that's enough," said Hermione. She looked angry which didn't help my mood.

"Whatever, Mudblood." With that, I walked away.

Entering the castle, I made my way to the Slytherin common room where I dropped off my broom in my dorm and grabbed a towel. Heading down to the Slytherin showers I bathed myself while slowly realizing what I had done.

Getting out, I changed into a slightly casual outfit - a pair of slacks, a white button up, and my Slytherin tie - before I ran upstairs. Crabbe and Goyle were in the common room and I gave them a bogus excuse about wanting to be alone to get over the loss. Running up the stairs, I entered the second floor of the library and walked over to the pre-historic magic alcove.

Hermione was nowhere to be found.

I nodded to myself, feeling a weight settle in on my heart. Maybe she was running late. Too busy celebrating her house's victory with her friends. She'll come.

She'll come.

While I waited, I pulled out a book and began my search for clues as to how I was going to fix the Vanishing Cabinet.