

## A Drift in Time: Chapter 21

Pansy was making her way through the corridor after dinner when a hand wrapped around her arm and yanked her sideways into an empty classroom. She stumbled, catching herself against a desk, and whirled around.

Her eyes widened when she saw Daphne Greengrass closing the door behind them.

"What do you want, Greengrass?" Pansy demanded, straightening her robes with as much dignity as she could muster.

Daphne turned to face her, and Pansy was struck by how composed she looked. Where Pansy felt like she was barely holding herself together, Daphne appeared completely at ease. Her blonde hair was perfectly styled, her robes immaculate, and her expression pleasantly neutral.

*'Filthy spawn of a half-breed,'* Pansy thought jealously. No one had the right to look that hot, that perfect. And all of that without any effort of their own.

"I wanted to talk to you," Daphne said simply, moving to lean against one of the desks. "Privately."

"About what?" Pansy asked, dragging her mind to the matter at hand. She had a feeling she wouldn't like what was coming her way here.

"About your situation."

Pansy's jaw tightened. "I don't have a situation."

"Don't you?" Daphne's blue eyes were cool and calculating. "You've been disowned by your family, cast out of your social circle, and you're currently being treated like a pariah by most of Slytherin House. That sounds like a situation to me."

"If you came here to gloat, you can save your breath. I've heard it all already from Draco and his cronies."

"I'm not here to gloat." Daphne examined her nails with apparent disinterest. "I'm here because I think we might be able to help each other."

Pansy barked out a harsh laugh. "Help each other? You've never spoken two words to me unless absolutely necessary. You've made it abundantly clear over the years that you think I'm beneath you."

"True," Daphne agreed without a hint of shame. "I always found your behavior rather distasteful. The way you fawned over Malfoy, the casual cruelty toward other students, the blind adherence to pureblood supremacy rhetoric. It was all very tiresome."

"Then why are you here?"

"Because people change. Or at least, their circumstances do." Daphne's gaze sharpened. "You're no longer the spoiled bitch you've been until now. Now, you're vulnerable. Alone. Without protection or resources."

"I'm managing," Pansy gritted out.

"Are you?" Daphne pushed off from the desk and took a few steps closer. "How long do you think that will last? Malfoy's already turned the house against you. It's only a matter of time before things escalate beyond verbal harassment."

Pansy said nothing. The words hit too close to home, touching on fears she'd been trying to suppress since yesterday.

"I'm offering you an alliance," Daphne continued without missing a beat, her voice smooth and reasonable. "I can provide you with protection within Slytherin. Make sure the harassment doesn't go too far. Perhaps even help restore some of your standing."

"In exchange for what?" Pansy hated the hint of hope in her voice, and she hated even more the smile that emerged on the bitch's face. Of course she didn't miss it. She rarely ever did.

"Information. Connection. Your cooperation when I need it." Daphne's smile was pleasant and utterly cold. "You know how these things work, Pansy. Nothing comes without a price."

Pansy studied the other girl, trying to see past the composed exterior to whatever lay beneath. Daphne was known for being clever and calculating, someone who played the long game and always seemed to come out ahead. Getting involved with her would be trading one form of control for another.

And Pansy had quite enough of being controlled, thank you very much.

*'Well, not really,'* she thought with a hint of thrill as she recalled the train journey back to Hogwarts.

"What kind of cooperation?" she asked, stalling.

"Nothing too difficult. I might need you to share information about certain people or situations. Maybe act as an opening to useful contacts. Help facilitate certain arrangements." Daphne waved a hand dismissively. "Simple things, really. Nothing that would put you at risk."

The proposal sounded familiar. Too familiar. The only difference was that she wouldn't have to sleep with this one.

"You want to use me."

"I want to form a mutually beneficial alliance," Daphne corrected. "You gain protection and support. I gain a useful connection. Everyone wins."

"Except I'd be beholden to you."

"Better me than Malfoy, don't you think?" Daphne's smile didn't reach her eyes. "At least I'm honest about what I want. And I don't make promises I can't keep."

Pansy considered the offer. On the surface it seemed reasonable enough. Daphne was offering exactly what Pansy desperately needed, protection from the escalating hostility in Slytherin House. And the price, while vague, didn't seem excessive.

But there was something in Daphne's eyes, a calculating coldness that made Pansy's instincts scream warnings. This wasn't about helping Pansy. This was about acquiring an asset, someone Daphne could control and manipulate for her own purposes.

And Pansy had just escaped from one controlling situation. She wasn't about to walk into another, no matter how prettily it was packaged. There was also the other party to consider, someone who, despite all her former misgivings, seemed much more appealing to her.

"I appreciate the offer," Pansy said carefully. "But I'll decline."

Daphne's eyebrows rose slightly, the first crack in her composed facade. "That's not a wise decision."

"Maybe not. But it's my decision to make."

"You do realize what you're turning down? Without protection, you're completely vulnerable. Malfoy will make your life hell."

"Let him try."

"He will do more than try," Daphne warned. "And when he does, when things get truly bad, don't come crawling to me for help. This offer won't be extended twice."

"I'll keep that in mind."

Daphne studied her for a long moment, her blue eyes sharp and assessing. Pansy met that gaze steadily, refusing to show any of the uncertainty churning in her gut.

"You're either very brave or very stupid," Daphne said finally. "I haven't decided which yet."

"Does it matter?"

"I suppose not." Daphne moved toward the door, but she paused with her hand on the handle. "Out of curiosity, what makes you so confident? You have no family backing, no money, and no allies in Slytherin. What exactly do you think is going to protect you?"

Pansy thought of Harry, of the deal they'd struck, of the way he'd looked at her, and how he'd dealt with Malfoy with absolute certainty that he could destroy him if

necessary. She thought of the promise implicit in their arrangement, that she was his now and that meant something.

But she said none of that aloud.

"That's my business," she replied instead.

Daphne's eyes narrowed slightly. "Is it now?"

"Yes."

For several seconds, Daphne simply stared at her, clearly trying to puzzle out what she was missing. Pansy kept her expression carefully neutral, revealing nothing.

"Interesting," Daphne said finally. "Very interesting indeed."

She opened the door and stepped into the corridor. The door clicked shut, leaving Pansy alone in the empty classroom.

She sagged against the desk, her carefully maintained composure cracking now that she was alone. That had been more difficult than she'd expected. Daphne's offer had been tempting, appealing to every survival instinct Pansy possessed.

But she had Harry now. Whatever that meant, whatever their arrangement would become, it had to be better than becoming Daphne Greengrass's puppet.

After a few minutes, Pansy straightened and left the classroom. The corridors were mostly empty now, students having returned to their common rooms for the evening. She made her way down to the dungeons, steeling herself for another night in hostile territory.

As she descended the stairs, she caught sight of Daphne ahead of her, walking with her usual graceful composure. The blonde girl glanced back once, her expression thoughtful, before disappearing around a corner.

Pansy knew that Daphne would be watching her now, trying to figure out what she was missing. Trying to understand why Pansy had turned down such an obviously beneficial offer.

Let her wonder.

Pansy had bigger concerns than Daphne Greengrass's curiosity. She had to survive in Slytherin House without giving in to the various people who wanted to use her for their own purposes. She had to navigate her strange new arrangement with Harry Potter without anyone finding out about it.

And she had to figure out what the hell she was doing with her life now that everything she'd known had been torn away.

But there was a small, fragile ember of hope burning in her chest. The knowledge that she wasn't completely alone, that someone powerful was in her corner even if no one else knew it.

It wasn't much. But it was enough.

For now, it was enough.

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Meanwhile, Daphne made her way back to the Slytherin common room, her mind working through what had just happened. Pansy's refusal had been unexpected. Foolish, even. The girl had nothing and no one, yet she'd turned down protection and support without hesitation.

That suggested either spectacular stupidity or something Daphne was missing.

Daphne strongly suspected it was the latter.

Pansy had been too confident, too certain, for someone in her position. She'd shown no fear of Malfoy's threats, no desperation at her circumstances. It was as if she knew something Daphne didn't.

But what?

Daphne mentally reviewed what she knew about Pansy's situation. Disowned by her family, cast out by her former social circle, and isolated within Slytherin. On paper, she should be desperate for any alliance offered.

Unless she already had one.

The thought stopped Daphne in her tracks. Could Pansy have found protection elsewhere? But from whom? She had no connections outside Slytherin, no friends in other houses, no family to turn to. Malfoy was her biggest enemy, and even with his father dead, he had enough money at his disposal to make Pansy's life a living hell.

Unless...

Daphne's mind flashed back to the confrontation she'd witnessed the previous night. Potter standing over Malfoy with his wand pressed to the prat's throat. The casual confidence in his threat. The way he'd destroyed Malfoy. And the clear warning in his tone.

Daphne's eyes narrowed as she thought about something that made little sense to her.

Could Potter have taken an interest in Pansy?

It seemed unlikely. The two had never shown any connection before. But then things had changed massively over the summer.

It was entirely possible that there was a connection there after all.

Daphne filed that information away for future consideration. If Pansy had somehow secured Potter's protection, that changed the equation significantly.

Harry Potter was powerful and had perhaps more influence than most adults in the society. Having his backing would definitely explain Pansy's confidence.

If Pansy had an in with Potter... well, that would make her a much more interesting chess piece than Daphne had initially thought.

She continued walking, a small smile playing at her lips. This year was shaping up to be far more interesting than she'd anticipated. The Triwizard Tournament, the shifting power dynamics in Slytherin, and now this intriguing mystery surrounding Pansy Parkinson.

Daphne did so love a good mystery.

And she fully intended to solve this one.

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Harry straightened and headed for the stairs to the boys' dormitory. He had essays to work on and plans to consider. The day had been productive in various ways. His interactions with Hermione were progressing nicely, building tension and awareness. Katie had responded to his attention with obvious interest. And Ginny remained as eager as ever.

Things were moving forward exactly as he'd hoped.

The dormitory was empty when he entered. Harry settled at his desk and pulled out his assignments. Snape's Potions essay needed finishing. And Professor Sprout wanted a foot of parchment on the care and keeping of Bouncing Bulbs.

He worked steadily for the next few hours, completing each assignment. Around him, his dormmates gradually filtered in. Dean and Seamus were arguing about something Quidditch related again. Neville was carefully watering the plant on his bedside table. Ron appeared last, looking frustrated and carrying his half-finished Potions essay.

"Hermione kicked me out of the common room," Ron announced, flopping onto his bed. "Said I was being deliberately dense."

"Were you?" Harry asked without looking up from his essay.

"Probably. But still."

The dormitory gradually settled into quiet as everyone prepared for bed. Harry finished his last essay and tucked his completed work away. He changed into sleep clothes and climbed into bed, drawing the curtains around his four poster.

But he didn't go to sleep. Instead, he lay there in the darkness, listening as his dormmates settled down. Ron's snoring started almost immediately. Dean and Seamus' whispered conversation eventually trailed off into silence. Neville's gentle breathing indicated he'd fallen asleep.

Harry waited until he was certain everyone was deeply asleep before carefully climbing out of bed. He pulled on his Invisibility Cloak and slipped silently from the dormitory.

The common room was dark and empty. Only dying embers remained in the fireplace, casting faint orange light across the furniture. Harry moved toward the stairs to the girls' dormitory and began climbing.

The wards that prevented boys from accessing the girls' dormitory stairs were still in place. Harry felt the magic resist him, trying to turn the stairs into a slide. But he'd learned how to navigate around those wards during his previous time through these years. A bit of clever wand work and focused will, and the magic reluctantly allowed him passage.

He reached the appropriate landing and knocked softly on the door. It opened almost immediately and Ginny stood there in her nightgown, her red hair falling loose around her shoulders.

The dormitory was dark, Ginny's roommates all sleeping in their respective beds. Ginny led Harry to her bed and climbed in, pulling him down beside her. She drew the curtains and cast a Silencing Charm.

"Took you long enough," she whispered, her brown eyes gleaming in the dim light filtering through the curtains. Her eyes were dark with lust and hunger.

"Had to wait for Ron to stop snoring like a bloody dragon," Harry muttered, already reaching for her. "Thought he'd never shut up."

Ginny's lips curved into a wicked smile. "Worth the wait, though." She pressed herself against him, the thin fabric of her nightgown sliding up her thighs as she straddled his lap. "I've been wet for you since dinner."

Harry groaned low in his throat and captured her mouth in a kiss that was anything but gentle. This wasn't their first time sneaking into each other's beds, and it showed.

Ginny's tongue slid against his, teasing, demanding, and Harry answered by tilting her head back to deepen the kiss. His hands roamed up her sides, his thumbs brushing the undersides of her breasts through the cotton. She arched into the touch, her nipples already hard and pressing against the fabric.

"Off," she breathed against his lips, tugging at his shirt. "I want to feel you."

Harry yanked the fabric over his head and tossed it into the dark. Ginny's hands were immediately on him, her nails scraping lightly down his chest, tracing the faint scars that crisscrossed his skin. She leaned in and dragged her tongue along the line of one, tasting salt and skin, and Harry's cock twitched hard against the confines of his trousers.

He retaliated by catching the hem of her nightgown and dragging it up. Slowly. Teasingly. His fingers skimmed the backs of her knees, the sensitive hollows behind them, then higher, over the curve of her thighs. Ginny lifted her arms and let him peel the garment away, leaving her completely bare.

"Fuck," Harry breathed, his voice rough. "You're so beautiful."

Ginny's laugh was low and throaty. "Flattery will get you everywhere." She rolled her hips again, grinding down against the thick ridge of his cock, and Harry's hands flew to her waist to steady her. The heat of her cunt seeped through his trousers, soaking the fabric where they touched.

"Missed this," she murmured, rocking her ass slowly, teasing him. "Missed feeling you hard for me."

"It's barely been two days," he managed, though his hips were already lifting to meet her movements.

"Too fucking long." She leaned down to bite at his lower lip, tugging it between her teeth. "I've been touching myself thinking about you. Couldn't come properly without your cock."

Harry groaned at the image. His hands slid up her back, his fingers splaying wide, and he dragged them down again to grip her arse. He squeezed, pulling her tighter against him, and Ginny gasped, her rhythm faltering for a moment.

"Show me," he said, his voice low. "Show me how you touched yourself."

Ginny's eyes darkened at the commanding tone. She reached between them, guiding his hand to where she was already slick and swollen. Harry's fingers slid through her folds, finding her clit and circling it slowly, just the way he knew she liked. Ginny's head fell back, a soft moan escaping her.

"Like this?" he asked, pressing harder, feeling her throb against his fingertips.

"Fuck, yes." Her hips jerked forward. "But I need more. Inside me. Please."

Harry didn't need to be asked twice. He slid two fingers into her pussy, curling them upward, and Ginny's inner walls clenched around him immediately. She was so wet that he could hear the soft, obscene sounds every time he thrust his fingers deeper.

"Fuck, you're dripping," he muttered against her throat, kissing and sucking at the sensitive skin there. "So ready for me."

"Always," she gasped, riding his hand now, chasing the pressure. "Always ready for your cock."

He added a third finger, stretching her, and Ginny's breath hitched. Her nails dug into his shoulders as she rocked faster, chasing the orgasm that was approaching at a rapid pace.

Harry watched her face, taking in her half-lidded eyes, her parted lips, and her flushed cheeks. He felt his own arousal spike painfully.

"Come for me," he whispered, his thumb finding her clit again and rubbing tight circles all over it. "Come for me, Gin. You want to come all over my fingers, don't you?"

Ginny shattered almost immediately, her whole body tensing, then convulsing around his hand. She buried her face in his neck to muffle the cry of his name, trembling hard as wave after wave of bliss rolled through her. Harry kept moving his fingers slowly, drawing out her orgasm until she was a whimpering mess.

Shivering, she pushed his hand away, oversensitive.

She collapsed against him, breathing hard, but only for a moment. In no time, she lifted her head, her eyes gleaming with renewed hunger.

"My turn," she said, her voice husky. She slid down his body, her breasts dragging over his stomach, and Harry's cock jerked in anticipation.

Ginny tugged his trousers down just enough to free him. He was already painfully hard, the tip of his cock glistening with precum. She wrapped her hand around him, stroking once, twice, watching his face as she did it.

"Look at you," she murmured. "So hard for me. Leaking already."

Harry grunted, propping himself up on his elbows. "Gin..."

She didn't tease him long. Smirking, she leaned down and licked a slow stripe from base to tip, tasting the salt of him. She swirled her tongue all over the purple head, licking off the precum that oozed out, and slowly took him into her mouth. Her lips stretched around his girth as she slid down, taking in as much as she could.

One of Harry's hands fisted in the sheets and with the other, he guided her. Her mouth was hot, wet, and perfect. She hollowed her cheeks and sucked, her tongue swirling around the head on every upstroke. When she took him deeper, the head bumping the back of her throat, Harry's hips bucked involuntarily.

"Fuck Gin..."

She hummed around his length, the vibration shooting straight to his balls. One hand cupped them gently, rolling them in her palm while the other stroked what her

mouth couldn't reach. She worked him with steady, relentless focus, alternating between long, slow pulls and quick, teasing licks.

Harry threaded his fingers through her hair, not pushing, just holding on as pleasure built in tight, hot coils low in his belly.

"You've gotten so good at this," he growled. "Love watching you suck me off."

Ginny pulled back just enough to speak, her lips shiny and swollen. "And I love having you in my mouth. I love feeling you throb against my tongue."

She dove back down, taking him deep again, her lips stretching wide around his thick shaft. Harry groaned as the wet heat of her mouth enveloped him completely, her throat relaxing to swallow him to the hilt. The tip of his cock nudged the soft back of her throat, and she hummed around him, the vibration sending sharp jolts of pleasure straight to his balls.

She worked him with slow, careful strokes, her tongue pressing flat against the underside of his length, tracing every vein, flicking teasingly against the sensitive head each time she pulled back. All the while, she kept stroking in time with her mouth, while the other hand cupped his balls, rolling them gently, tugging just enough to make his hips jerk.

Harry's fingers tangled in her fiery hair as waves of sensation built low in his gut. He tried to warn her, his voice a bit ragged.

"Ginny... I'm close. Fuck."

She didn't pull away. If anything, she sucked harder, her cheeks hollowing as she bobbed faster, her tongue swirling relentlessly. The wet, obscene sounds of her mouth filled the room, slick and filthy, mingling with his choked moans. When she took him deep again and swallowed around him, the tight ripple of her throat pushed him over the edge.

He came with a guttural groan, his hips bucking as he spilled down her throat in hot, thick pulses. Ginny swallowed greedily, milking every drop, her tongue lapping at him until he was twitching. Only then did she pull off slowly, her lips glistening, a thin string of saliva and cum connecting her mouth to his tip before it broke.

She crawled up his body, straddling his hips, and kissed him deeply. Harry tasted himself on her tongue, salty, bitter, and strangely intoxicating. He groaned into her mouth, his hands sliding down to grip her arse, pulling her closer so her wet folds dragged along his softening cock.

They stayed like that for long minutes, bodies pressed together, hearts pounding in tandem. Sweat slicked their skin. Ginny's fingers traced lazy circles over his chest,

her nails scraping lightly through the sparse hair there. Her breathing slowly steadied, but her eyes stayed dark with hunger.

"You've gotten so much better at this," Harry rasped, his voice still a bit breathy.

Ginny lifted her head, smirking wickedly. "I think we're just getting started."

His cock gave a weak, interested twitch beneath her at those words. The sight of her, with her cheeks flushed, her lips swollen and red, and her hair wild and tangled, stirred him back to life faster than he would have thought possible.

He rolled them over so that she was pinned beneath him, settling between her spread thighs. His half-hard length pressed against her soaked entrance, already slick with her arousal and his own release.

"Good girl," he murmured, his voice low and rough as he kissed along her collarbone, then lower, sucking a mark into the soft skin above her breast.

Ginny wrapped her legs around his waist, her heels digging into his lower back, pulling him closer. "Only for you," she breathed.

Harry reached between them, guiding his erect cock to her entrance. He rubbed the head through her folds, coating himself in her wetness, teasing her clit with slow, sensual circles until she whimpered and arched beneath him.

"Please, Harry," she begged, her voice trembling. "I need you inside me."

He pushed in slowly, inch by torturous inch, groaning at the tight, wet heat that welcomed him. Her walls fluttered around his shaft, still sensitive from her earlier orgasm. Ginny's nails raked down his back, leaving red trails that stung deliciously. She tilted her hips, taking him deeper, until he was buried to the hilt.

"Fuck," he groaned, his forehead dropping to hers. "You feel so good. So tight."

He started with slow, deep thrusts, savoring the drag of her walls along every ridge of his cock. Each time he bottomed out, Ginny gasped, her breath hitching. Her hands roamed everywhere — over his shoulders, down his back, gripping his arse to urge him harder.

"Harder," she whispered against his ear. "Fuck me hard, Harry. I want to feel you tomorrow."

He obeyed. His pace quickened, hips snapping forward with more force, the bed creaking beneath them. The wet slap of skin on skin filled the room, obscene and intoxicating. Ginny met every thrust, rolling her hips up to take him deeper, her clit grinding against his pubic bone with each stroke.

Suddenly, Harry hooked one of her legs over his shoulder, changing the angle so he could drive even deeper. Ginny cried out, her nails digging into his shoulders as he hit that perfect spot inside her over and over. Her breasts bounced with each

powerful thrust, her nipples tight and begging for attention. He leaned down to capture one in his mouth, sucking hard, his teeth grazing just enough to make her arch and moan his name.

"Harry... oh yes, right there... don't stop..."

He didn't. He fucked her relentlessly, chasing the slick, tight heat of her cunt, the way she clenched around him every time he bottomed out. Sweat dripped from his brow onto her chest, mingling with hers. It smelled of sex there – musky, primal, and addictive.

Ginny's hands slid between them, her fingers finding her clit. She rubbed tight, frantic circles, chasing her release while he pounded into her. Her walls began to flutter around him, clamping down hard as she came with a broken cry. Her orgasm ripped through her, her body shaking and her thighs trembling around him as she pulsed and squeezed his cock tightly.

The sight and feel of her coming undone pushed Harry over the edge. He buried himself deep one last time, his hips stuttering as he came with a low, rough groan. Hot spurts of cum filled her, coating her walls in white and once again marking her as his. Her golden mark pulsed as Harry kept thrusting through it, shallow and slow, drawing out every last pulse until they were both trembling.

They collapsed together, breathless, tangled in sweat-damp sheets. Harry's cock softened slowly inside her, but he didn't pull out yet. Ginny's legs stayed wrapped around him, holding him close.

They shifted into a more comfortable position and lay in silence for several minutes, their bodies cooling in the aftermath. Harry's fingers traced idle patterns on Ginny's bare back, his mind already drifting to other matters even as satisfaction hummed through his veins.

"So," Ginny said eventually, breaking the silence. "Looks like your approach changed a bit with Hermione. Something happen?"

Harry smiled at the ceiling. "Let's say things are progressing nicely."

"I noticed. She was flustered all through dinner." Ginny propped herself up on one elbow to look at him, her red hair falling over her shoulder. "You seemed to be quite aggressive with the touching today."

"Building tension. Making her hyper aware of me."

"It's working. She practically jumped every time you got near her." Ginny's smile was wicked. "I particularly enjoyed watching her get all snippy when Katie was flirting with you."

"You noticed that too?"

"Of course I did. She must've been interested from before. But that's another matter. Getting back to Hermione... she was stabbing her salad like it had personally offended her." Ginny laughed softly. "She's getting jealous, which means you're definitely making progress."

"Good," Harry replied. "But she'd need to learn that jealousy has no place in here."

"Oh, I don't think it's that kind of jealousy," Ginny smirked. "She already knows about us, after all. No, I think she's more jealous of the fact that another girl might beat her to it."

"Now that makes more sense," Harry chuckled. "Everything's a competition for her."

"Have you thought about how you're going to seal the deal with her?" Ginny's fingers traced patterns on his chest. "Because Hermione's not going to just fall into bed with you. She'll need more convincing than most."

"I know that. That's why it's taken so much time. She's someone who has to be shown what she wants. The convincing is the real game with her. After that, it's a piece of cake."

"Part of me is pissed that she's like this, you know?" She muttered. "It's like she's a little girl who has no idea about sex and desires. Makes me feel like she might panic and pull away entirely if you push too hard too fast."

"You're not wrong there," Harry agreed, pulling her close. "That's why I'm letting her come to me. Or rather, making it seem like she is."

Ginny's eyes gleamed with understanding as she moved deliciously against him. "Devious. I like it."

"I thought you might."

"You know," Ginny said thoughtfully, "I could help more if you want."

"More than you've done already?" Harry chuckled.

"Well, we could always give her a few more shows," Ginny's smile turned wicked. "Or play on this little jealousy of hers. I could tell her how girls are starting to notice you more. This little jealousy of hers will make her act before she even realizes it."

"Don't think you'd need to do much for that, if I'm being honest," Harry replied. He told her about what she'd done the previous night, and Ginny's eyes widened.

"That little sneaky bitch!" Ginny exclaimed in a hiss. "I never thought she'd have it in her!"

"Why do you think I upped things a bit today? Until now, I always teased her in private. Today was the first time it all happened in public."

"It was actually quite fun watching her squirm." Ginny grinned before she bit her lip, her expression turning thoughtful.

"Go on, say it. I can tell you're thinking something," Harry said calmly.

Ginny looked a bit uncertain for a moment. "It's just... well, I'm a bit surprised you're really going after Hermione."

"Why?"

"Because she's Ron's sort of future interest, isn't she? I always assumed they'd end up together eventually."

Harry thought about the future that would never be, where Ron and Hermione had indeed ended up together. Where Harry had watched them dance around their feelings for years before finally admitting what everyone else could see.

"Maybe in another life," Harry said. "But not this one."

"Fair enough." Ginny settled back against his chest. "Now, what about Katie? She's definitely interested."

"I know. I'll encourage that."

"And Cho Chang too. I saw the way you two were looking at each other on the platform yesterday. And since then as well."

"Cho too."

Ginny laughed delightedly. "You're collecting quite the harem, aren't you?"

"Is that a problem?"

"Not at all. I think it's brilliant actually." Ginny tilted her head to look at him. "As long as you remember that I'm yours."

"I remember."

"Good." She kissed him lightly. "And as long as you keep giving me what I want, you can go after whoever you want. I don't mind sharing."

"You're remarkably understanding about this, our little dynamic notwithstanding."

"You mean our dirty little bond?" Ginny grinned. "Honestly? It's kind of hot, watching you work. The way you manipulate situations, the way you make girls notice you without seeming like you're trying. It's like watching a master at work."

"High praise."

"Don't let it go to your head."

"Too late."

Ginny laughed and kissed him again, this time with more heat. "You're terrible."

"And you love it."

"I really do." She pulled back slightly, her expression turning more serious. "Just promise me one thing."

"What's that?"

"When you do finally get Hermione into bed, you'll tell me all about it."

Harry laughed, genuinely surprised. "You want details?"

"Oh absolutely. I want to know everything." Ginny's smile was pure mischief. "How she sounds, how she responds, whether she's as vocal as I am. All of it. And then, maybe I can teach her a thing or two. With you preferably present. It'd be some experience, teaching her something. Usually, it's the other way around."

"You're twisted."

"I prefer the term 'enthusiastically deviant.'" Ginny kissed him again. "So do we have a deal?"

"Deal."

"Excellent." Ginny settled back against him with a satisfied sigh. "This is going to be such an entertaining year."

They lay there for a while longer, discussing Harry's various interests and strategizing about the best approaches. Ginny proved to be a valuable ally in these matters, offering insights about the other girls that were very much appreciated.

"Hermione needs to feel intellectually valued," Ginny explained at one point. "Compliment her mind as much as her looks. Make her feel like you see her whole self, and not just another pretty girl. Although with her lack of confidence in her looks, which she's an idiot for, you can score some nice brownie points."

"Noted."

"And Katie responds well to confidence. She likes guys who know what they want and aren't afraid to go after it."

"That much has been clear since yesterday now."

"As for Cho, she's a romantic. She'll want the sweet gestures, the meaningful looks. Play up the tender side."

Harry filed all of this away, already incorporating it into his plans. Ginny truly knew her stuff.

Eventually though, Harry knew he needed to return to his own dormitory before anyone woke and noticed his absence.

"I should go," he said reluctantly.

"Mm, probably." Ginny didn't sound any more enthusiastic about it than he felt. "But don't leave me hanging for long, hmm?"

"Eager?"

"Always."

Harry kissed her once more, slow and deep, before reluctantly extracting himself from her embrace. He found his clothes scattered all over the bed in the darkness and pulled them back on while Ginny watched, lying on her back, all naked and provocative.

"Sweet dreams, Harry," she said as he prepared to leave, her legs spread apart and her fingers teasing her folds where he could still see his release dripping slowly. It sent another jolt straight to his cock.

"You fucking tease."

She merely smirked.

Harry pulled his Invisibility Cloak back on and slipped from the bed, making his way out of the dormitory. The common room was still dark and empty as he made his way back to the boys' staircase. Within minutes he was back in his own bed, his dormmates none the wiser.

He lay there in the darkness, replaying the evening in his mind. The physical pleasure had been excellent as always, but the strategic discussion had been equally valuable. Ginny was proving to be far more than just a willing bed partner. She was an ally, a co-conspirator, and someone who understood what he was building and actively wanted to help.

That made her invaluable.

Tomorrow would bring new opportunities. More chances to build tension with Hermione, to encourage Katie and Cho's interests, and to solidify his little pursuit of Pansy. And he also had Ginny actively working to help him, planting seeds and creating opportunities.

Things were progressing beautifully.

To be continued...