

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Fleur done fucked up~

-x-X-x-

Luna's question about Penny's panties sucks all the air out of the area and forces all eyes to turn towards the Senior Undersecretary and the black lace thong she currently has held tight in a white-knuckled grip. Everything is quiet for a long moment before Lavender starts to reorient, turning her body in the direction of Ms. Clearwater and opening her mouth to ask a question of her own.

Before she can speak, however, Penny snaps out a waspish response.

"No comment!"

And then she barges right through both witches, reaches the bottom of the steps, and turns on her heel, apparating away right then and there. Of course, this leaves the Minister of Magic all alone and Lavender turns back to her without a second thought, magical quill at the ready.

Only, before she can reiterate her previous questions or ask any new ones, Amelia just smiles softly and shakes her head.

"As my subordinate said. No comment."

She does so with less vitriol in her voice, and she walks past the blondes with a far more casual pace. When she too reaches the bottom of the stairs, she throws one look back over her shoulder at Harry in particular... and then turns and apparates away as well.

This, of course, just leaves Harry. And Fleur. The latter of whom is utterly mortified by everything that's just taken place. This... this was not what Fleur had wanted to happen. When she'd 'misplaced' Penny's thong, the intent had merely been to embarrass her in front of her superior and Harry.

A way of getting back at Penny, yes, but also a way of showing Harry that Fleur had her Lord's back. That she was on his side.

Now however, she'd created a scandal hadn't she? Lavender Brown looks almost feral with hunger at this point, not at all surprising given that she was said to be Rita Skeeter's protégé and also her top reporter ever since the older witch had taken over as Editor-in-Chief at the Daily Prophet.

And Luna... well, Luna Lovegood was a weirdo, everyone knew that. However, given the mystery the Magical World had been dealing with for years now, the Quibbler wasn't as maligned as it once was. It was actually serious competition for the Daily Prophet these days, even though it was still just a one woman operation.

"Lord Hallows, care to comment on any of what we just witnessed?"

"Lord Hallows; how do you feel about the current wrackspurt crisis?"

Harry just chuckles at both questions. Fleur, meanwhile, stares at Luna. Why couldn't she open with an inane question like that?! Oh right, because Fleur had gone out of her way to put Penny in a position to be thoroughly humiliated. Fuck.

"Let's make a deal, shall we?"

Both Lavender and Luna perk up in their own ways at that. Harry just smiles.

"I am currently the only Wizard Lord in all of Magical Britain. I imagine getting a proper sit down interview with me would be quite the feather in your caps."

Lavender hesitantly nods. Luna just smiles a seemingly empty smile.

"So here's the deal. I'll promise both of you a full sit down interview at a later date sometime soon once I've settled in and gotten my ducks in a row. We can talk about whatever you like at that time. However, these interviews will only happen if the both of you can... forget about Ms. Clearwater's little mishap."

Fleur swallows hard. Oh, she'd really fucked up hadn't she? And now Harry was having to clean up her mess for her. Fuck...

Lavender and Luna both fall into contemplative moods at that. In the end, Lavender is the first to come to a decision.

"We have a deal, Lord Hallows. Though if you die before the interview can take place, all bets are off."

Harry just smirks at that.

"If I die even after the interview takes place, you may do as you like, seeing as I will no longer be able to stop you. However, I do not intend to die any time soon... and I would like you to keep in mind that the reverse is also true. For as long as I live, reneging on our deal will make me... most upset with you."

A shiver runs down Lavender's spine and she nods rapidly, her eyes wide. After a moment, she swallows thickly and then coughs into her fist.

"Uh... another photo then please, Lord Hallows. So that we have something to use for the Prophet that has nobody else in it."

Harry hums and nods, stepping to the side and letting the magical cameras take his picture once more. After that's done, he looks back to Luna, who has stayed quiet all this time.

"Luna? Will you accept the deal?"

Jolting at the use of her first name, the spacey blonde witch peers at Harry for a moment.

"I don't like lying. The Quibbler is a source of truth in a world gone sour. Our readers trust that everything we print is honest and factual."

Harry sighs.

“You’re not lying, you’re simply choosing not to tell them everything. Don’t tell me that there aren’t secrets you’ve kept out of the public eye for their own good. For instance, you’ve never told anyone about the Tri-Horned Snorkacks, now have you? Only their less dangerous cousins, the Crumple-Horned Snorkacks.”

What. Fleur blinks along with Lavender as Luna’s breath hitches and her eyes widen in shock and surprise.

“You know about... very well Lord Hallows. W-We have a deal.”

Hold on! Where does Luna get off looking so shaken up all of the sudden?! What the fuck was a Tri-Horned Snorkack?! What was a Crumple-Horned Snorkack, even?!

“Very good, Ms. Lovegood. Then I shall look to see about fitting both of you into my schedule post-haste once all is settled. For now though, I have business to attend to and I must bid you both good day.”

Lavender and Luna share a look... before nodding one after the other. Harry just smiles as they depart... and then turns to Fleur, the smile dropping off his face.

Fleur’s blood turns to ice in her veins as Harry leads her back into the mansion in utter silence. The doors close heavily behind them with a sense of finality... as Fleur watches Harry pull something from thin air and then put his wand to it, enchanting it wordlessly.

Finally seeking to break the uncomfortable, awkward silence, Fleur speaks.

“M-My Lord, I...”

“Why did you do it, Fleur?”

Harry cuts her off with a sharp question that makes her grimace. He knows what she did. He knows she did it on purpose. There’s no trying to talk her way out of this so all she can do... is own it.

"I... I didn't like the way she spoke to you last night. D-Demanding that magical oath from you after her own superior dropped it... it was rude and disrespectful. I just wanted to teach her a lesson."

Harry hums.

"And what lesson do you think you taught her, exactly?"

Her shoulders slump and Fleur lowers her head.

"... I don't know. I apologize my Lord. I erred."

"Yes, you did. But you don't need to apologize. Not to me anyways. In the end, it's my fault after all."

What? His fault? Fleur looks up again, incredulous, only to see Harry holding out a strip of cloth... the thing he'd silently been enchanting.

"This is a twenty-four hour two-way portkey that will take you to Chateau Delacour in France. The activation phrase is 'take me home'. To use it again to bring yourself back here, the activation phrase is 'bring me back'. However, if you come back at any point in the next ten hours, I will immediately terminate your employment with me, Fleur Delacour. Am I understood?"

Fleur's eyes are wide as he finishes speaking. At first, she'd been ready to protest, the fear that he was sending her away for good causing a spike of pain to slam into her heart. However, then he'd kept speaking and she'd kept listening and... from the sound of things, he was still willing to take her back. He just wanted her to... go home for some reason?

"I... I don't fully understand, my Lord."

Sighing, Harry holds the cloth out... and Fleur finally takes it from him, holding it carefully and making sure not to say the activation phrase as she stares at him beseechingly.

“It’s simple, Fleur. You’ve attached yourself to me too fast. It’s not even a case of feeling beholden to me... you’ve been forced to serve the goblins for so long that you can barely fathom the concept of freedom. I should have done this ages ago, but I selfishly put it off and kept you close by. Now though, I’m going to make sure you get some time away from me. You need to see your family, to speak with your mother and sister, to let them know that you’re okay. And you need to decide, at the end of it all, whether you really want to continue working for me or not.”

Fleur opens her mouth, but Harry cuts her off with a raised hand.

“Now is not the time to say anything, Fleur. Return if you wish, destroy the portkey if you don’t. But for now... go home.”

Home. It’s been so long that Fleur won’t lie... she wasn’t even sure if her family’s home WAS her home anymore. But Harry isn’t asking. He’s giving her an ultimatum at this point. So...

“A-As you wish. I will see you again soon, my Lord.”

Harry just inclines his head, watching her with those beautiful emerald eyes of hers. Fleur grimaces, looks down at the strip of cloth... and lets out a long exhale before finally speaking.

“... Take me home.”

A moment later and the portkey, an international portkey at that, whisks Fleur away. She wonders briefly on the trip whether Harry knows how ridiculously powerful he is... or how many laws he’s technically having her break.

Still, when she lands outside of Chateau Delacour, no Magical French Law Enforcement pops in to arrest her. As expected, the international portkey is also a stealth portkey and goes seemingly undetected.

Letting out a shuddering breath, Fleur tucks the cloth away in her pocket, making sure its nice and secure so she can't lose it. Then, she ascends the steps to the Chateau's front doors and... knocks.

There's a momentary pause and then the door opens and a familiar face stares out at her blankly. The family butler's eyes widen after a moment as he recognizes her.

"Lady Fleur! C-Can it really be you?"

Smiling weakly, Fleur nods.

"Yes, it's me... I-let my mother know I'm home, please?"

"Of course my Lady, at once! The wizard (and boy is it strange to see another wizard aside from Harry after so long) takes out his hand and sends off a message while also letting her inside. Fleur barely has time to get her bearings and take in the state of her childhood home before the voice of her mother precedes Apolline Delacour down the hall.

"Auguste?! This better not be a trick, I swear I will- MY BABY!"

Fleur winces as Apolline finally comes into sight and cuts herself off the moment her eyes land upon her daughter. Her voice increases in volume as she races the rest of the way down the stairs and grabs Fleur in her arms.

"Y-You're here! You're really here!"

Fleur freezes... but only for a moment. Then, she collapses forward into her mother's embrace, not even realizing just how badly she needed this until now.

"I'm here, mama... I'm here..."

She was home. She was finally home.

-x-X-x-

“I suppose that’s one way to make the dear finally go home for a bit.”

Harry snorts derisively as Death pipes up. The bodacious, raven-haired ‘woman’ leans against a nearby doorframe, arms crossed under her bust, a smirk playing across her plush lips.

“After all, you knew what was going to happen. You could have stopped it if you wanted to.”

That... was true, yes. Oh, Harry hadn’t known about Fleur’s little gambit with Penny’s panties until she’d gone and done it, to be clear. But he HAD known that Lavender Brown and Luna Lovegood were on his doorstep waiting to ambush him and the two ministry officials who had been his guests for the evening.

He could have stopped Penny’s little humiliation from happening. He could have even had Amelia and Penelope leave out the back and avoid the two blondes altogether. But he hadn’t. He’d let it happen and let everything play out.

Why? Simple reason. First and foremost, Fleur was getting a tad too obsessed with him. While Harry liked a good amount of female attention just as much as the next guy, he didn’t want Fleur to make him the center of her entire damn universe. That was the whole reason he’d done so much to avoid her swearing a life debt to him in the first place.

So, using this ‘fuck up’ on her part to send her home to her family for a day was his way of trying to balance her out. Hopefully spending some time with her mother and sister would help Fleur find her equilibrium once more.

Secondly, he might have been a little annoyed at Penny for bringing back up his identity while they’d been fucking last night himself. By allowing Fleur to get back at her on his behalf, Harry no longer had to find a way to take revenge himself. And by making the deals he’d made with Lavender and Luna, Harry kept Penny’s humiliation to a small thing, rather than it being plastered all over the front pages of both the Daily Prophet and the Quibbler.

At least, he hoped so anyways. He wasn't all-knowing or all-seeing, so it was entirely possible that Lavender and Luna would renege on their deals after all. Only time would tell, in the end...

Chuckling Harry looks over to Death and shrugs as if to say 'what can you do?'.

"If it works, it works, right?"

Death just smirks at that and Harry turns away. With Fleur gone for the day, it was time for him to get things done for himself.

-x-X-x-

A/N: Remember to go back and VOTE!