

HARRY POTTER

AND

THE BELOVED INCUBUS



Book Four:

THE BOUND PRINCE

Series

*by Slashpervert and
Sayingsorry_hh*

Summary, Notes & Copyright

Summary: Sequel to *Harry Potter and The Beloved Incubus*. Harry and Draco are married and expecting a baby – meanwhile the war has escalated. They have to find the remaining Horcruxes before too many more lives are lost.

Warnings: Language, Explicit M/M Sex, Anal, Oral, Rimming, Fisting, Bondage, Dom/Sub, SM, Dubious Consent, Monogamy, Jealousy, Mpreg, Caesarean Section, Humiliation, Exhibitionism, Necrophilia, Pain, Violence, Blood, Torture, and Character Deaths (H/D live).

Notes: AU from Chapter 24 of HPB, written before the release of DH.

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– CHAPTER ONE –

Cold Dawn

Draco stood by the window in the sitting room, watching as a cold sunrise lightened the grey sky slowly. The snow was thick but no longer falling. He had lost track of how many cups of tea he had drunk that night and he had soot on his face and in his hair from the numerous Floo calls. He had sent Tonks back to Grimmauld to help Remus with work at the Order.

All of their house guests had been persuaded to go to bed during the night. He was nearly alone now. He looked over his shoulder at Harry sleeping on the sofa. His husband had refused to go to bed alone. Draco had draped a blanket over him and let him sleep. He walked over now and stood looking down at his lover. He would have to wake him soon. Draco could already feel the cold in his toes and fingers.

Harry had been awake at different times throughout the night. He'd spent time between naps checking on his aunt and some of the others. He couldn't leave the room without Draco, couldn't lie in that big bed without his warmth. He was sleeping lightly even now, unable to sleep deeply without a hand pressed to Draco's chest or his head on his shoulder.

Harry was murmuring in his sleep again, so Draco knelt beside the couch, laying a soothing hand on his arm.

Harry opened his eyes slowly, blinking them a few times. He sat halfway up and looked around. "What time is it?" he asked thickly, stifling a yawn.

"Just after sunrise," Draco said, smiling softly. Despite the night they had had, the sight of those green eyes always filled him with delight.

Harry fell back to the couch, stretching his arms and legs. "Everyone still sleeping?"

Draco leant over him, hand coming up to cup his cheek. "Yes, love," he answered, and then kissed him gently, lips softly brushing

Harry's.

Harry kissed Draco back, feeling like it'd been ages since they'd last kissed. "You wanna head up?" he whispered, feeling the cold in Draco's fingertips, but wanting to be with him anyway.

"I suppose we should," Draco said, smiling again as he gently stroked Harry's face.

Harry smiled as well. "Think you can manage to Apparate us up there?"

Draco stood and reached his hands down to help Harry to his feet. "It's easier if we are both standing," he said, weariness in his voice.

Harry groaned quietly, standing up too and feeling sore muscles. He wrapped arms around Draco and Apparated them to their bedroom himself.

Draco stood smiling down at Harry. It might have been his imagination, but Harry looked a lot older than he had only months ago. Draco knew he felt old and worn this morning. Such a horrible night. He wanted to curl up with Harry and sleep.

"Sorry if it's not earth shattering," Harry said with a small, tired laugh, beginning to slowly undress himself.

Draco nodded, sitting down on the edge of the bed to take his shoes and socks off. Then he began to unbutton his shirt. "I don't want earth shattering this morning," he said quietly. "Comforting is much more appealing right now."

Harry nodded his agreement, shedding his robe and shirt. He sat down next to Draco to remove his shoes and socks as well before falling onto his back and wriggling out of his trousers and boxers that way.

Draco pulled himself up using the bed post and unfastened his trousers, sliding them down before sitting again. He then crawled into the bed and lay down with a groan, stretching.

Harry sighed and stared up at the 'H' above him, his glasses still on. He reached a hand over beside him and trailed a hand over Draco's stomach softly, in no hurry at all.

"I suppose we will have to keep this bed for the rest of our lives," Draco laughed when he saw where his husband was looking. "You really enjoy that 'H', don't you?"

Harry smiled and nodded. "Very much so," he said.

Draco rolled onto his side, facing his lover, and then smirked. He reached his right hand out and caressed Harry's stomach as well. Then he laid his palm flat just above Harry's navel. "You'll need to eat soon," he said quietly. "You are eating for two now."

Harry nodded. "I know," he said, smiling softly. He loved it when Draco touched his belly, feeling the baby.

"He's so much stronger than he was at first. Then it was like a spark, but now it's more like a candle flame," Draco explained in an awed voice, his hand caressing in circles on Harry's belly.

Harry smiled widely. "I love that you can tell," he said. "I love to hear that he's growing."

"Certainly is," Draco smiled, "and he reacts to your energy levels, so you have to eat well and get enough sleep. Not to mention, you have to have enough energy to shag your husband at least once a day."

Harry chuckled. "All right then," he said. "I suppose I have enough to shag my husband right now." He waggled his eyebrows jokingly and rolled over, pushing Draco back and staring down at him. Harry leant in to kiss him gently, letting his eyes fall shut.

Draco placed his hand on Harry's hip and opened to his kiss. Emotionally, magically and physically, he opened to Harry. Draco's lips tingled as Harry's touched his, and he felt the warm caress of his lover's breath on his skin.

Harry rested a palm on the side of Draco's face, running his tongue very slowly into Draco's mouth. He didn't think he had the energy to pull off a wandless, wordless Lubricant Spell, but he was able to Summon a jar of lube wordlessly. He set it aside for the moment, content to simply kiss Draco for a bit.

Draco's tongue met Harry's, sliding slowly against it. He slid his hand along Harry's hip and up his back, enjoying the feel of muscle and bone under soft skin.

Harry explored Draco's already well known body with his hands. No matter how many times he touched him, it always felt new, but it was comforting and familiar as well - home. Draco was home to him. He was where he felt the safest, where he felt the most needed and loved, where he wanted to be more than anywhere else. The mere thought of him made Harry warm and the sight of him filled him with inexplicable joy.

Draco raised his silver hand too, sliding it along Harry's side, the warm magical metal tracing up to find Harry's nipple. He teased that dark flesh with it, enjoying Harry's reactions.

"Mmm," Harry hummed, Draco's fingers making him shiver. He kissed along his jaw, licking and nipping very gently. "I love you," he whispered when he came to Draco's ear, sliding his hand down to stroke Draco's growing erection with slow, steady fingers.

"Yes," Draco said, sighing as he trembled at Harry's touch. "I love you, my husband." He ran those smooth silver fingers over Harry's skin, gently pinching his other nipple.

Harry smiled at that word leaving Draco's lips. It was always wonderful to be reminded that he was married to the beautiful man beneath him - not that he didn't think about it nearly every moment of the day. He kissed Draco's neck, smiling at the tickle of his hair slightly in the way.

Draco lifted his chin, displaying more of his neck for Harry. He ran his right hand up Harry's body to the back of his head, threading long fingers into his lover's thick, dark hair.

"Love you," Harry whispered between hot, open-mouthed kisses. "Love you, Draco."

"Yes, Harry," Draco sighed. "Make love to me. Show me." He lifted his hips a little, straining for more contact as his breathing sped up.

Harry sped his hand up slightly and reached for the lubricant with his left, not in the mood for teasing. He moved more over top of Draco and managed to get the jar unscrewed. He dipped fingers in and then pressed them to Draco's opening, still kissing along his neck and now his collarbone.

Draco breathed deep, relaxing himself to allow Harry's fingers easy entrance. He continued to card his fingers through Harry's hair and laid his silver fingers on his shoulder. "Yes," he encouraged, "yours."

"Mine," Harry breathed happily, guiding his fingers inside of his husband and loving the way his body felt underneath his own.

"Yes, and mine," Draco said, echoing him and their promises. He spread his legs wider and his breath caught when those loving fingers stroked his prostate, making him tremble again.

Harry stroked Draco's prostate and kissed his skin, loving giving

pleasure to him more than getting any himself. He would rather just simply lay here and do this to Draco some days, but he couldn't this morning and he pulled his fingers out slowly, feeling Draco ready for him. He coated his own erection and grasped Draco's legs lightly with both hands, spreading them apart further to move into position between them.

"Mmm," Draco murmured, bending his knees to make it easier for Harry to enter him. He smiled up at the beautiful man who made love to him everyday.

Harry smiled at Draco before moving forward and entering him gently, never looking away from those grey eyes.

"Gods, yes." Draco shuddered as he felt his husband's cock slide into him and his magic tingle inside and over him. There could be nothing and no one better for him than Harry and he knew it. Even tired and fucking because they had to, it was fantastic.

Harry let out a slow breath before sliding halfway out of Draco again and then back in, setting a deep, gentle pace. He held Draco's legs up for him, still watching his face and adoring the expressions he saw there, Draco's lips forming the words that were like beautiful music to Harry's ears.

"Oh, yes, love," Draco moaned, delighting in the slow, gentle strokes that filled him. He used his hand in Harry's hair to pull him down for a kiss, licking at his lips.

Harry moved his tongue out to twirl with Draco's, keeping his steady rhythm. He moaned into Draco's mouth, loving the feeling of his hand in his hair.

Every thrust, every moan, every stroke of Harry's tongue – all were accompanied by surges of pleasure in Draco that made his body seem to hum with it. His hands tightened in that thick hair and he began to pant, his cock bobbing against his stomach with each slow, deep thrust of Harry's.

Harry gasped and moaned, feeling the tingles in his lower half beginning. "Merlin, Draco," he panted quietly against his lips. "Merlin, yes."

"Yes, bring us," Draco whispered back. "Fill me." He could feel the rise in Harry's magic and his body was waiting for it.

Those words always seemed to make every sensation feel ten times stronger to Harry and, Merlin, hearing Draco say, "Bring us,"

like the only way they could come would be together - it set Harry's nerves ablaze. A few more thrusts later and he was coming, whimpering Draco's name, their lips still brushing.

Draco moaned against Harry's lips, coming in hot spurts between them as his body spasmed around his lover's cock. He felt the warmth inside him from Harry's orgasm and he felt the magic filling him. It seemed to wipe away all cold, pain and sorrow, leaving him feeling whole and peaceful.

Harry was panting, his hot breath on Draco's neck as he laid his head there, feeling exhausted, but good. He was amazed that he could feel good at all, but he was with Draco, and that mattered more to him than anything else. He didn't want to think about any of that other stuff until he was out of this bed and this room with his husband beside him.

Draco wrapped both legs and arms around Harry, holding him tight as he shuddered. His fingers continued to clench and unclench in Harry's hair. He smiled as the energy ebbed and he could feel that small spot against him where the magic was different.

Harry sighed, sated, and reached a hand up to pet the skin of the side of Draco's chest he wasn't lying all the way on top of. "Have I ever told you that I love you?" He smiled and yawned.

Draco chuckled softly, squeezing his husband with arms and body and feeling his cock jump inside him as he did.

Harry groaned and slowly lifted his head to stare at Draco. "M'tired," he said. "I think we can get a few hours in before we have to get up."

Draco let his legs slide down to the bed, giving Harry room to roll off him. "Sure," he said, "but I need to call a house-elf to leave a message. So if you don't want them seeing your beautiful arse, get under the covers." He grinned, knowing how shy Harry was about nudity.

Harry shook his head and pecked Draco quickly before slowly pulling out of him and scooting under the covers.

"Leakey," Draco called, not bothering to move or even clean up before calling the elf, who appeared beside the bed.

"Yes, Master Draco?" the elf responded as always.

"Please see to the needs of wizard and witch guests when they wake up, but have the elves remain out of sight of Mrs Granger and

Mrs Dursley. Also, tell the first Weasley to wake up that they are in charge of communication with the Manor and the outside world until Harry or I wake up," Draco instructed, and the house-elf nodded.

"Master Draco?" Leakey asked.

"What?" he answered.

"Mr and Mrs Weasley be both awake now," he said. "And she be wanting to know where the kitchen is."

Draco chuckled. "Okay, relay my instructions to them. Offer Mrs Weasley food, but if she wants to cook, let her into the kitchens."

Leakey cocked his head and actually frowned. Then he seemed to recover himself. "Yes, Master Draco."

"Fine." Draco sighed. "Now let us sleep. Only wake us if the others insist on it."

Harry laid back and waited for Draco to crawl under the covers with him, raising an amused eyebrow at the mention of Mrs Weasley.

Draco pulled down the covers and snuggled up against his husband. "Can you do the charm to take off my silver hand?" Draco asked. "I am very tired."

Harry nodded and did so, setting the hand carefully aside before wrapping an arm around Draco and holding him close. "Happy Christmas," he said a bit sadly.

"Gods, I forgot," Draco said, sighing. "Happy Christmas, my love."

Harry sighed and closed his eyes, breathing in the scent of Draco's hair and taking in the warm feeling of his skin against his own. "Love you," he murmured.

Draco murmured in response, but it was no longer words as he was now fast asleep.

Harry's eyelids fluttered and he shifted around a bit in his sleep, trying to get more comfortable. There was a bright something in the room and he grunted angrily at it, opening his eyes to see that it was the sun. He cursed having forgotten to close the hangings around the bed and sat up, rubbing his now hurting eyes to try and help them adjust to the light. He wondered what time it was and Summoned his glasses, slipping them on.

Draco didn't wake, but his body sought Harry's in his sleep, curling tighter about his husband as he sat up.

Harry yawned and smiled down at Draco before Summoning his wand as well and casting a quick Tempus. He saw that it was just after noon and he knew that Aunt Petunia was probably awake. He sighed and tried to move away from Draco without waking him.

Draco seemed to be doing an imitation of a snake as he curled his body around the back of Harry, arms and legs tightening as well.

Harry chuckled and tried to wriggle away, but when Draco moved closer still, he huffed lightly and fell back to the bed on his back. "Draco," he said quietly, giving the arm that Draco was holding on to a little shake.

Draco whimpered.

"Draco, I have to get up," Harry said, twisting around to face the blond. "You don't have to, but I'm going to need my arms and legs."

Draco huffed against Harry's skin and then groaned, blinking as he tried to open his eyes. "Wha' time?" he mumbled.

"Just after twelve," Harry answered, smiling at Draco's voice.

"Merde'," Draco cursed, rolling onto his back. "I suppose we should get up," he said after frowning and blinking a few more times.

Harry nodded. "Yes, we should. Plus, I'm hungry."

Draco forced himself to sit up. He made a small frown at the dried mess on his stomach. "Forgot the Cleaning Charms," he complained.

Harry shrugged. "Yes, we do that sometimes," he said, feeling sticky and messy himself. "I would suggest a shower, but it's probably better if we get down quickly. We can always take a bath tonight."

"Bath sounds lovely," Draco said. "Pass my wand, please."

Harry Summoned Draco's wand and handed it to him, chuckling at the fact that despite everything, Draco was still better at Cleaning Charms than he was.

Draco nodded and then did Cleaning Charms on both of them. "Don't forget to brush your hair," he said, smirking at the mess he had made of it.

Harry shrugged, not thinking there was really any point. He only did it because Draco wanted him to. He climbed slowly and reluctantly out from under the warm blanket and walked hurriedly over to the closet to get clean clothes.

Draco got to the edge of the bed and reattached his hand before going to the loo. He did his morning grooming as well before

returning to the bedroom to get dressed.

Harry smiled and kissed Draco as he passed him, making his way to the bathroom with clothes on now to brush his hair and teeth.

Once dressed, Draco called for Leakey, and the elf appeared promptly.

"Are our guests awake and out of their rooms?" Draco asked.

"No, Master Draco. Mrs Dursley still be in her room. Others be in the kitchen, dining room, or sitting room."

"Please inform Mr Weasley that we are awake and will be down soon," he said. The elf agreed and disappeared.

Harry returned to the bedroom, walked over to Draco and slipped arms about his waist. "You ready to head down?" he asked, moving upwards and kissing Draco's nose.

Draco nodded. "Your aunt is still in her room."

Harry sighed. "I thought she would be," he said. "I suppose I should go and get her." He paused and stared at Draco for a few moments. "I don't know what to say to her," he said finally. "It's not like anything I would tell Hermione about her father. It - it's a bit confusing."

Draco nodded.

Harry sighed and nodded too. "You going to just head down or wait while I get my aunt?"

"I can come with you if you like," Draco said, "or I could Apparate down."

"I don't want you to leave me, but she might respond better if I go alone," Harry said with another sigh.

Draco nodded and then leant down to kiss him. "Don't be long." He smiled.

Harry pressed his lips to Draco's and then pulled back from him. "I'll try," he said.

Draco Apparated to the downstairs hall, leaving Harry to deal with his aunt.

Harry took a deep breath, feeling a bit numb as he made his way out of his and Draco's suite to the rooms nearby that Draco had set up for Aunt Petunia. He stared at the door to the suite for a few moments and then knocked.

There was no answer.

Harry opened the door just a crack and peered inside. The sitting

room looked untouched, but he could see the bedroom door open a bit. He stepped inside quietly and walked over to the next door, knocking on the frame. "Aunt Petunia?" he asked.

There still was no answer, but Harry thought he might have heard a sniff.

"Aunt Petunia, it's only me," he said, trying to see inside the room without pushing the door open. "I - I was just wondering if you were hungry or anything."

There was a definite sniff.

"Are you awake?"

"Yes," Aunt Petunia answered, and she sounded like she had a bad head cold.

Harry waited a few seconds, but she said nothing else. "Erm, can I come in?" he asked.

A few more seconds passed by before, "Yes. If you want."

Harry sighed and pushed the door open.

The bed looked barely slept in and he saw that Aunt Petunia still hadn't changed into the bed clothes that Harry had given her last night. He had only pressed his ear to the door the previous night when he had come to check on her.

She looked at him briefly and then looked away again, her eyes red from crying.

He cleared his throat awkwardly. "Well, um, can I get you anything?"

She gave a tiny shrug.

"I know you haven't eaten," he said quietly. "I could have someone bring something up if you don't want to go downstairs."

"I don't want to go downstairs," she said, and then sniffed.

Harry bit his lip. "Okay then," he said. "Is there anything in particular you would like?"

She gave another small shrug.

"I'll just bring up a breakfast tray then," Harry said. "Or, well, lunch, I suppose."

She nodded.

He sighed again and backed out of the room, sort of glad to be going. Things were awkward between them and it made him uncomfortable.

He waited until he was out in the hallway to Apparate downstairs,

heading into the dining room to get some food.

– CHAPTER TWO –

Death Toll

Draco checked in on everyone, finding most of the guests sitting down to lunch. Mr Weasley was in the sitting room, making a Floo call to the Ministry, so Draco waited in the hall for Harry.

Harry saw Draco and headed over to him. "Hey," he said, giving him a small smile. "Everyone okay?"

"We're in time for lunch," Draco said. "Where is she?"

"She doesn't want to come out," Harry answered. "I was just going to bring her up a tray."

Draco frowned but nodded, taking Harry's hand and leading them into the dining room. There were several people in the room when Harry and Draco entered.

"Hey," Ginny greeted them quietly.

"Morning," said Harry, nodding to a few others. He saw that Hermione and her mother were at the table. While they both looked subdued and miserable, at least they were there. He picked up one of the trays still lying out from last night and began piling food on it, not really knowing what Aunt Petunia might like.

"Where are you going?" asked Luna.

"Taking food up to my aunt," said Harry, wondering if he could manage to carry the tray and the tea service. He couldn't without spilling everything all over the place. "Draco, can you grab that?" he asked, indicating the tea with a nod of his head.

Draco picked up the other items and stood waiting for Harry.

"Thanks," said Harry. "I'm going to Apparate into the hall outside the suite." And then he did, appearing there a moment later.

Draco followed him, sighing. This was the house-elves' job, not his.

Harry waited for Draco to appear, and stepped inside the room when he did. He made his way quickly across the sitting room again and entered the bedroom with the food. He set the tray on the small

table by the window that Aunt Petunia was sitting at.

"Erm, well, there's your food," he said.

Aunt Petunia looked up at him and then at Draco, frowning at him warily. Her eyes seemed to linger on his silver hand and then on his wedding ring.

Harry coughed awkwardly.

Draco set the tray down. "Let us know if you need anything else," he said, and looked to Harry.

Harry nodded. "I'm just going to be downstairs. Erm, you're welcome to come down whenever you like. There's a library if you want something to do."

She gave him a few small nods and reached meekly for a tea cup.

"Um, okay then. I'll just ... go."

She nodded again, not looking at him.

Harry took Draco's hand and pulled him out of the room, feeling very strange.

"You need to eat," Draco said, and then Apparated them back downstairs.

Harry's stomach grumbled as he and Draco headed back into the dining room. He sat down at the table next to Neville with an empty seat on his left for Draco. He reached forward and grabbed a few sandwiches, eating half of one in a few bites.

Draco poured tea for himself and Harry, setting them on the table. Then he froze, staring at a copy of the *Daily Prophet* that was laying out. The headline read "Christmas Massacre - 56 Dead". He swallowed, feeling faint.

Harry was chewing and reached for his tea. He swallowed his mouthful and turned to Draco. "Thanks, love," he said, but his face fell as he saw Draco's.

As Draco continued to stare at the page, the number changed from "56" to "59".

Harry followed Draco's line of vision and saw the paper. He clenched his teeth and closed his eyes for a moment before looking down at his food. 59 dead? He couldn't believe it. He didn't feel very hungry anymore.

"It updates the number every time they get a new report," Neville explained, gesturing at the page. "It was only up to 32 when we first

saw it."

Ginny looked sadly at Harry.

"That's more than half a hundred," Harry said, voice weak. "God."

Draco pulled out his chair and sat down heavily, reaching for his tea. "They are insane," he whispered.

Harry glared at the paper and looked down the table at Hermione and her mother again, deciding to refrain from saying just how insane they were.

"Eat, Harry," Draco said.

Harry looked at his half-finished sandwich and sighed before lifting it to his mouth. It didn't taste as good as it had a few minutes ago.

"How's your aunt, Harry?" asked Ginny.

Harry shrugged. "Not great, but she's eating."

Draco picked up the paper and began reading, still sipping his tea. It wasn't like he trusted the paper to get it right, but he had to know what they said anyway.

Ginny nodded and went back to picking at her own food.

Harry looked over and read a bit of the paper with Draco, wondering what they were going to do with all the bodies, wondering what they were already doing. His stomach squirmed a bit and he winced, thinking of Seamus and all the others.

Draco finished reading the paper and then set it aside. He frowned at Harry. "You need to eat," he said a little harsher than he intended.

"Well, I'm sorry if I don't have much of an appetite right now," Harry said, scowling slightly before he took another bite of his sandwich.

Luna looked at them curiously.

Draco got up from the table and stood behind Harry, leaning over him with his arms about his shoulders and his mouth against Harry's ear. "I love you and I need you. We both do," he whispered, "so please eat."

Harry sighed. "I am," he said a bit resignedly, knowing he would finish everything on his plate now.

"Good," Draco said, kissing Harry's cheek. He stood back up. "I

am going to check the news from the Order."

Harry nodded, wanting to go with him, but eating his food. "I'll be in when I'm finished," he said.

Draco nodded to the others and then strode from the room to find Mr Weasley.

Mr Weasley was talking with Lupin in the fire.

Mrs Weasley was sitting on the couch and listening intently. "Oh, good morning, Draco dear," she said when he came in.

Mr Weasley looked around and nodded to Draco in greeting.

Draco nodded to Mrs Weasley and then crouched beside Mr Weasley at the fire.

"And they say we've caught how many Death Eaters?" Mr Weasley asked, going back to his conversation with Remus.

Remus glanced at Draco. "Two dead, eight in custody," he said, "including the two your people took down."

Mr Weasley sighed and nodded. "At least it's a small dent," he said, taking off his glasses to wipe away the grime from the fire.

"Is the death toll in the *Daily Prophet* accurate?" Draco asked.

Remus nodded. "They are using the confirmed tallies directly from the Ministry. But we also have the missing to account for. They could be visiting somewhere else for the holidays, but it needs to be checked."

Mr Weasley nodded again, putting his glasses back on. "I should be heading to work soon. It won't be long before they're going to be needing help with the Muggles. I've already received an owl. The Muggles are reporting on dozens of missing people and deaths."

"Oh, Arthur, it's Christmas," said Mrs Weasley.

"It doesn't stop this from happening, Molly," said Mr Weasley wearily.

Draco nodded again, sighing. "How many of our people have been hurt? Or lost?"

Remus grimaced. "We have three Aurors dead, five in St Mungo's and more with minor injuries."

"Anyone in the Order?" Draco asked.

"Only minor injuries among the Order," Remus said. "Did you hear they reinstated Tonks?"

"I didn't," said Mr Weasley.

Remus shook his head sadly. "They needed Aurors badly enough they made a deal with her. They'll reinstate her but put a reprimand in her file. Charges dropped."

"Good," Draco said. "The reprimand can be dealt with later."

Mr Weasley nodded. "That's good," he agreed. He got to his feet, brushing his robes off. "I suppose I'm off then," he said.

Mrs Weasley got to her feet too, frowning at him.

"I'll be home later, Molly," he said, pecking her on the cheek. "You and the kids stay here."

She nodded. "Check on Percy," she said, still looking sad to see her husband leave.

"I will," said Mr Weasley. "Draco. Remus." He nodded to both of them before striding out of the room.

"I have to go," Remus said. "The fighting has stopped for now, but we have a lot to clean up."

"Let us know if we can help," Draco said.

Remus nodded and the image of his face fell back into flames.

Draco stood up and walked over to Mrs Weasley, sitting down in a chair near her. "He will be fine," he assured her. "The fighting is over for today."

She sighed and nodded. "Yes, I suppose," she said. She looked around her. "Where's Harry?" she asked. "I haven't seen him today."

"The others are in the dining room. Have you eaten?" Draco asked.

"A little at breakfast, but I suppose I could do with a spot of tea." She stood up again. "How about you? Have you eaten?"

Draco stood when she did. "A bit," he lied, "but I will come in there with you." He walked beside her.

She nodded and the two of them made their way back into the dining room.

Harry looked up when they entered, nearly finished with his own food. "What's up?" he asked Draco, finishing off his tea.

"Mr Weasley has gone to the Ministry to help. Remus gave us updates on the missing and injured," Draco said, looking over at Hermione and her mother.

Harry frowned. "Are any of ours dead or hurt?"

"None of our direct people, but three Aurors dead and more in

St Mungo's." He looked at Harry's plate, pleased to see he had eaten most of the food.

Harry had known that would be inevitable. He was silent for a few moments and then looked up at Draco. "Shouldn't you eat too?" he asked, pushing his own plate away, feeling full.

Draco huffed. "I will." He looked at Mrs Granger again and then walked over to where she and Hermione sat. "My condolences," he said. "I wasn't able to introduce myself last night. I am Draco Malfoy."

Harry got to his feet as well and followed Draco. He hadn't known what to say to Hermione and her mother and they hadn't really been speaking to anyone else.

Hermione looked up at Draco and gave him a small, watery smile. "He's a very good friend, Mum," she said. She reached out and grabbed Harry's hand tightly to pull him forward. "And this is Harry Potter. You've met him once before."

Harry smiled at Mrs Granger, trying to work as much welcome as he could into it.

Mrs Granger nodded to both of them. "Thank you for allowing me into your home," she said in a slightly squeaky voice.

"You can stay for as long as you like," Harry said, squeezing Hermione's hand.

Draco crouched down so that he was not standing over the woman and smiled softly. "Harry is right. We would be delighted if you would stay here," he said. "I would like to ask a favour of you, if it isn't too much of an imposition," he continued.

Mrs Granger stared at Draco for a few seconds before nodding. "No, I don't mind," she said.

Harry wondered what Draco could be talking about.

"Harry's aunt lost her husband and son last night in the attacks," Draco explained, "and she ... isn't comfortable with magic or magical people. She hasn't left her room today. I was thinking that she might feel comfortable talking to you."

"Oh, my - I - yes. I'll do anything I can to help," she said, still speaking in that small voice that reminded Harry of Hermione's. "I'm sorry," she said to Harry.

Harry didn't quite know what to say to that. He nodded. "I'm

sorry," he said.

"We appreciate it." Draco smiled then looked to Hermione. "She is in the Sage suite. Will you show her when she is ready?"

Hermione nodded, giving Harry's hand one last squeeze. "Can you tell Ron I'll talk to him in a bit?"

"Course," Harry answered, wondering where Ron was anyway.

Draco looked around too. "Where is he and where are his brothers?"

"I saw him earlier," said Hermione. "I don't know where the others are. Everyone has been coming and going."

"We'll find him," Harry said, finally letting go of Hermione's hand and giving her and her mother one last small smile.

Draco stood too and looked at his husband for a moment, reaching his hand for his.

Harry took Draco's hand and led him out of the room, not really knowing where to look for Ron. "I don't know where he is," he said with a sigh, rubbing his forehead a bit.

"Does it hurt still?" Draco asked.

"Just little tingles," Harry said, dropping his hand. "What's weird is I thought that Voldemort wanted the connection between us closed. My scar hasn't hurt in a while."

"You never told me about that," Draco said quietly, "about feeling things with the scar."

"It slipped my mind," Harry said. "I didn't think I had to worry about it anymore."

Draco sighed, shaking his head. He looked around the hall, and seeing no one in sight, he pulled Harry to him and covered his mouth with his own.

Harry smiled. He loved it when Draco sprung kisses on him. It made him feel better. He gripped the back of Draco's robe lightly.

Draco ran his tongue around Harry's lips before slipping it inside to find the other man's. His right hand slid up and along the back of Harry's skull, while his silver hand pressed against the small of Harry's back, holding him firmly to his own body.

Harry sighed into Draco's mouth. "Make me feel better?" he whispered against his lips.

Draco pulled back enough to look into his eyes. "Anything, my

love," he whispered.

"I want you to fuck me," Harry said, dead serious. He wanted to forget for a bit, wanted Draco to take it all away for a least a little while.

– CHAPTER THREE –

Still Christmas

Draco wasted no time in Apparating them to their bedroom. Harry's words were enough to make his heart speed up and his cock stir.

Harry closed his eyes and brought their mouths together again, pulling at Draco's robe.

Draco resumed the passionate kiss, walking them both toward the bed as he did.

Harry managed to push the robe from Draco's shoulders, but it caught on his arms. The next second, Draco was completely naked and Harry didn't even realise that he'd done the spell.

Draco gasped into Harry's mouth as the man's magic stripped him. His cock twitched both at being suddenly freed of fabric and at the caress of power.

"Yes," Harry hissed, feeling Draco's heated flesh beneath his hands. He removed his own clothes and pulled Draco completely against him, hands pressed flat against his back.

Draco sucked in a breath as he rubbed his naked skin against Harry's, every point of contact a source of pleasure.

Harry rolled his hips against Draco's grinding into him slowly. "Yes," he breathed again.

"Gods, Harry," Draco said. He had backed up far enough now so that he could feel his legs against the bed.

Harry turned suddenly and fell onto the bed on his back, pulling Draco with him. "Please, Draco," he whispered, kissing him. "Please."

Draco laughed. "So eager," he said, smiling. "How do you want it?"

"Good and up my arse," Harry groaned, running hands up and down Draco's skin. "On my back, on my knees, against the wall, fucking floating in the air for all I care. Just as long as you're fucking me."

Draco rolled off him and sat up. "Stand up," he said, smacking Harry playfully on his thigh.

Harry moaned again and quickly stumbled to his feet, wondering what Draco was going to do. He stood there, naked and erect, staring down at his husband and panting just slightly.

Draco sat on the side of the bed and Summoned his wand, using that to Summon the chair they had used before. He placed it behind Harry, smiling wickedly.

Harry raised a questioning eyebrow. "What ...?" he asked.

"Turn around, bend over, grab the arms of the chair and spread your legs," Draco instructed.

Harry's heart began racing in his chest, his cock bobbing. He turned slowly and bent to grab the chair, spreading his legs wide and putting himself on display. He looked over his shoulder, his eyes dark, and stared at Draco. "Want it?" he asked huskily, moving his hips and arse in a slow, sort of circular motion.

"Prat," Draco sneered, slapping his lover's arse.

Harry gasped and bit his lip. *Oh, fuck, yes*, he thought. *He's in that kind of mood.*

"Such a pervert," Draco teased. He laid a series of smacks on those lovely cheeks.

Harry gripped the arms of the chair tightly, still biting his lip and smirking now as Draco smacked his arse. "Fuck," he growled, squeezing his hands even tighter.

"Such a beautiful arse." Draco grinned, his own cock twitching as he spanked his lover. He stopped and caressed the warm, reddened flesh.

"Mmmm," Harry moaned, his skin feeling hot where Draco touched.

Draco concentrated, shifting the Warming Charm in his silver hand so that it was colder. He slid the cool metal over his husband's abraded skin.

Harry gasped quietly at the sudden change in sensation, shivering at the touch.

Draco hummed happily, alternating his warm flesh and his cool silver hand across Harry's arse, thighs, and back.

"Mmm," Harry moaned again, still shivering at the feeling of

coolness on his skin. Merlin! The simple things that Draco could make so fucking hot were so fucking amazing.

Draco sat forward more on the edge of the bed so he could rub his face against the warm flesh of Harry's arse. "So hot, so beautiful," he whispered, nipping softly.

Harry whimpered, his arse cheeks clenching as he felt Draco's face there. He let his head drop, resting it against the back of the chair while still gripping it for dear life with his hands.

"Yes, I know you like this," Draco purred against his lover's arse, continuing to nip, lick and kiss the soft flesh. He closed his eyes, resetting the temperature of his hand to match his body. He cupped a cheek in each hand and spread Harry, licking and kissing again.

Harry's breath sped up. He didn't like it, he *loved* it! There was barely anything hotter to him than Draco between his legs like he was (well, besides being between Draco's legs himself). There was just something so *dirty* and *hot* about it. Merlin, it was *so* fucking hot. It made Harry want to scream.

Draco did his best to lick and suck as noisily as he could, loving the effect this had on Harry. He worked down his crack to his entrance. Then he pointed his tongue and began to massage that tight muscle with the tip.

Harry arched and moaned and tried not to push against Draco. It was always very hard to hold himself back. "Merlin, Draco, fuck," he whimpered, his fingers rigid and his muscles taut.

"Mmm," Draco responded, and then pushed his tongue into the centre, his hands tightening on Harry's arse cheeks.

Harry moaned loudly and attempted to spread his legs wider, hissing through clenched teeth. He could think of absolutely nothing else but Draco's tongue.

Draco pushed his tongue deeper, wiggling and thrusting as he did. He shuddered as Harry moaned and writhed. It was so amazingly hot that he could do this to him.

Harry gasped and panted, having to push back just a little bit. "Merlin, Draco," he whispered. "Oh, fuck." His cock was so fucking hard and his heart was pounding madly. "Draco. So good, Draco." He could never say his name enough.

Tongue fucking Harry was incredible. Draco loved the scent and

taste, the feel of Harry's body shuddering with each small movement and amidst it all, Harry's magic crackling with his arousal. His husband was practically chanting his name. Draco pushed hard, straining to see if his tongue was long enough to do what he wanted, wiggling and stretching to reach the spot.

Harry cried out as Draco's tongue went further inside him. He felt dizzy from the sensation of it all. Merlin, Harry didn't want Draco to stop, but that wonderful muscle of his just wasn't long enough. He wanted more of him, all of him, everything Draco could give him. "Please," he begged. "Please, more!"

Draco growled in frustration, plunging his tongue in a few more times and then withdrawing. "Oh, you are so wet and open," he said, with a smirk. "I bet I could just slide my cock right in."

"Fuck me, please!" Harry groaned, Draco's voice and words making his cock twitch. "Oh, fuck, please!"

Draco chuckled deeply, enjoying Harry begging for him. He cast the Lube Spell, adding the oil to the saliva and then slicked his own cock. "Harry, reach up and hold on to the bed frame," he said as he put hands on both of Harry's hips and began to guide him back. "I want you to sit on me from this angle," he explained.

How the hell was Draco so calm? Harry felt like he was going to jump out of his skin if he wasn't fucked soon. He looked over his shoulder and let out a quiet whimper at the sight of the man who was about to fuck him. He reached up and grabbed the frame like Draco had said, somehow feeling more open and vulnerable this way, but so turned on he thought he might come the moment Draco entered him.

Draco was trembling with his need for Harry and amazed by the sight of him spread over him like he was. The blond took his cock in his right hand, angling it to enter his lover while he placed his silver hand on the other man's hip, guiding him.

Harry sank down slowly, his neck arched as he felt the head of Draco's cock breach him. He closed his eyes tightly and continued his descent, taking all of Draco inside of him and moaning and whimpering the entire way down. He sat panting in Draco's lap, hands still gripping the strong wood above him as his chest heaved.

"Fantastic," Draco gasped. With Harry's legs spread on either side

of his and sitting back like that, he was pressed down so tight that Draco had to struggle not to come from the sensation. He smoothed his hands up, wrapping arms around Harry and resting his face against Harry's back. "My love, you are so beautiful," he gasped, feeling physically and emotionally overwhelmed.

Harry's face, neck and chest were flushed and his heart fluttered with Draco's words and the feeling of being held by him. He lifted himself up a bit and rocked against Draco, crying out at the feeling of being so fucking gloriously full.

"Inside you," Draco whispered. "So deep inside you." He slid his right hand down his lover's belly, caressing flesh and soft hair until he came to Harry's cock. Draco wrapped his fingers around the shaft so that when Harry moved, he would be fucking himself on Draco's cock and sliding in his hand.

Harry gasped and cried out louder. "Inside me," he repeated, lifting himself again. The feelings and sensations were so good, he felt like squirming almost.

"Yes, love," Draco encouraged. "Ride me, feel me deep inside you." He slid his silver hand down to that spot above Harry's navel, emphasising the double meaning.

Harry turned his head to look slightly over his shoulder with half-lidded eyes as he moved against Draco, feeling like the most loved man on the planet. His husband's hands on his skin were so hot against him and it only made everything feel that much better. He smiled at Draco's words, knowing how truly inside him he was.

Draco smiled at Harry, those green eyes half-shut in pleasure made him groan even more as Harry rode him.

Harry couldn't hold back any longer, no matter how much he wanted this to last. And when Draco's cock brushed that spot inside of him, a powerful shock of pleasure shot through him and he arched his back, coming in powerful spurts in Draco's hand, clenching and convulsing around his cock.

Draco shuddered, filling his lover with his seed as Harry's orgasm rocked them both - magic and pleasure radiating out and through the blond. "Harry," he gasped, holding him tight.

It was all Harry could do to hold on to the frame tightly. He felt if he let go he would collapse. He smiled blissfully at the feel of

Draco's arms around him, holding him securely, and he shuddered and let out a tiny moan at the sound of his name leaving Draco's lips.

"I've got you," Draco murmured against Harry's shoulder, kissing the skin there. He moved his now slick hand up onto Harry's belly, feeling that pulsing energy inside. At the same time, he slid his silver hand up to his chest, holding Harry tight against his own body.

Harry let his arms slip from above and let Draco hold him, sliding hands to rest where Draco's were. "You've got me," he whispered.

"Yes," Draco sighed, his face still pressed against Harry's back. He didn't understand why, but he was crying again. Silent tears ran down his cheeks as he held his husband close.

Harry closed his eyes and felt Draco's heart beating against his back and there was nothing more important to him. "Yours," he whispered, laying his left hand over Draco's now so that their rings touched.

"Yes, mine," Draco said, rubbing his face against Harry's back.

Harry could have stayed like that in Draco's arms forever, completely surrounded by him. He could feel the wetness on his back from Draco's tears and, for some reason, he wasn't surprised that he was crying. He felt like crying himself, although he was a bit confused as to what the reason for that was.

"Do you want to lie down?" Draco asked, sniffing a bit.

"I want you to hold me," Harry answered, not caring whether they stayed like they were, stood up, or laid down. As long as Draco was wrapped tightly around him.

Draco sighed and kissed his skin again. "Let's get in bed and hold each other," he said.

Harry nodded, shifting and wincing a bit when he managed to turn slightly in Draco's arms, causing him to slip from him.

Draco gasped as Harry moved but managed to recover enough to lean in for a quick kiss. "Now get that sexy arse under the covers," he teased.

Harry smiled softly and nodded again, moving off of Draco's lap and onto the bed, pulling Draco along by his hand.

Draco allowed himself to be led into the soft comfort of their bed. He smiled at the warmth of Harry's body pressed against him.

Harry reached a hand out and wiped the slight wetness from Draco's cheeks gently, leaning in to kiss him with just as gentle a touch.

"I cry too much," Draco said softly after Harry had kissed him.

Harry shook his head. "No one can cry too much," he said.

Draco sighed. "Didn't they get mad at you when you cried when you were a child?" he asked. "I was told it was a great weakness."

"They mostly laughed at me," Harry said quietly. "I cried alone most of the time. They ignored me, didn't care if I was weak or not."

Draco frowned. "Father said he would beat it out of me," he said. "It never seemed to work."

"That's what Uncle Vernon said about magic," Harry said quietly, moving closer to Draco.

"Well, I guess beating didn't work on either of us," Draco said quietly. "Harry, I don't want to beat our child."

"No," Harry said, hugging Draco. "Never."

"Good," Draco said, relieved. "Does it bother you? Him being dead?"

Harry thought for a moment. "I ... didn't want him dead, but I'm not going to pretend that I'll miss him. It doesn't ... bother me exactly, but I wish they'd left them alone. It bothers me that they did it at all, not that he's dead."

Draco was quiet, thinking about it. "It's ... confusing," Draco whispered. "I miss Father. And yet, I don't feel ... bad that he is dead. That I killed him. Then I feel bad for not feeling bad."

Harry frowned. He didn't know what to say to that. There was such hatred in himself for Lucius Malfoy that he didn't understand how Draco could feel that way. "Why do you miss him?" he asked quietly.

Draco frowned. "Because I loved him, I guess," he said. "I always thought that if I did what he wanted he would love me more - that he would be proud of me."

"What - what he did to you wasn't right," Harry said, "but ... I suppose I can ... understand what you mean." He took a very long pause. "I don't want to do that to our child either," he said.

"No," Draco said. "I want to love our child even if he doesn't do things perfect or the way we think he should."

Harry nodded. "Me too," he said. "I want him to be ... him. Not us."

"Do you think he will feel weird, having two fathers and no mother?" Draco asked.

"I don't know," Harry said, frowning slightly. "Do you think that there's something we can't do for him?"

"Breast feed?" Draco wrinkled his forehead up. "At least, I don't think so."

"Oh, Merlin," Harry said, looking horrified. "If I grow tits I'll be fucking pissed off."

Draco continued to frown. "That's just ... very odd," he said. "The idea of a big belly does not bother me, yet breasts on you would certainly not work."

Harry made a face. "I should certainly think not," he said.

"Maybe we should find a book on pregnancy and see what usually happens," Draco said thoughtfully. "And then we can figure out what is happening with you and what isn't. It might tell us more about how this will work."

Harry sighed. "We should do something," he said. "I'm already what ... a month pregnant?" It still sounded odd to say that.

"Yes," Draco said, his hand reaching again to rest on Harry's stomach. "I wonder if he will grow the same speed as normal. He obviously is getting food from you, because he gets hungry when you don't eat."

"I have no idea," Harry said. "I don't know how anything's working in there."

Draco smiled. "Well, it definitely is working," he said, and then leant in to kiss Harry again.

Harry smiled against Draco's lips, trailing fingers up his side to rest in his hair. He pulled back a bit, still smiling. "We'll be good fathers," he said. "I know it."

"You make me feel like I could be anything I wanted," Draco smiled, "even a good father."

Harry snorted quietly. "You'll probably be better than me," he said.

Draco snorted at the idea and pulled his husband into another long, lingering kiss.

Harry led Draco back downstairs by the hand, having insisted upon walking instead of Apparition, just to delay the return to reality that tiny little bit. He entered the sitting room to see a few people milling about. The twins, Ginny, Luna, Mrs Weasley, Bill and Fleur.

He didn't really know what to say to any of them. What *does* one say after such a night?

"Hear anything new since this morning?" asked Fred from the sofa.

Draco shrugged. "We took a nap," he said, colouring slightly. "But last we heard, they were still trying to figure out which homes had been hit and checking on everyone. Anyone looked at the *Prophet* count recently?"

Fred shook his head no, but Ginny bit her lip and looked at the floor for a second.

"It's up to 64 now," she said.

Harry sighed very quietly and closed his eyes for a moment.

"Merlin," said George sadly, all of the life that usually shown on his face gone.

Draco gestured for folks to sit and took a seat on the sofa, pulling gently at Harry's hand to suggest he sit too. "They found and exploited one of our weaknesses," he said, "so we need to fix that."

Harry dropped onto the couch next to Draco and sighed again. He nodded along with the others. "I'm sure there'll be an Order meeting very soon," he said. "Once this mess is cleaned up, there can't be anymore ... well, I don't want to say slacking, but we really have to get moving. Getting out there, getting supporters, getting new members, all of that."

"I agree," Draco said, "which means you need to call a meeting for tomorrow."

Harry nodded again. "All right. I'll let Remus and Mr Weasley know today and we can set it up."

"Cheers, Harry," said Fred seriously.

"Last night's attacks will divide our world in two," Draco said. "No more bystanders. Everyone will choose a side. You can't be neutral when they murder children in their beds."

"It will be hard," Bill spoke up. "Voldemort uses whatever means

to get followers. Blackmail, threats, bribes, even the Imperious Curse if he needs to."

"Which is why we've got to fight harder than him," said Harry determinedly. "We've already got Hagrid continuing work with the giants and Remus working with some of the werewolves. We need to inform people better than the Ministry has."

"We can help with that, Harry," said Fred, indicating himself and his twin. "With the shop and all."

"Harry," Draco said, "it is time to use that spotlight you hate. It's time for you to give another interview to the *Daily Prophet*."

Harry turned his head to look at Draco. "What do I tell them? Would they print anything accurate?"

"Harry, I'd say it's worth a shot," said Ginny. "Whatever it takes, right?"

"We can plan it," Draco said, "like we did for the wedding. Use that same strategy, only this time, change the topic."

Harry nodded. "All right," he said finally. "Then we can set that up too."

"Where are Ron and Hermione?" Draco asked, looking around.

"I think Hermione went to talk to him," said Ginny. "Or at least that's what she said she was going to do, although I don't know when she was going to. I haven't seen him much today."

"He's very upset," said Mrs Weasley quietly.

"He thinks he should have been able to save Hermione's father," said George, just as quiet as his mother.

"It's not his fault," said Harry, frowning. "There were loads of people there."

Draco sighed. He had his share of regrets and no doubt that they would all have more than their share before this was over.

"You know Ron," said Bill.

Harry sighed and nodded.

"Plus, it's Hermione," said Ginny. "It makes it worse."

"Where's her mum?" asked Harry.

"Either still with her, or she took her up to your aunt," said Ginny.

"I don't know if she'd let her in."

Draco nodded, holding Harry's hand and thinking about the ways

in which their lives would change because of today. "It is still Christmas," he said quietly, "and I know it is inadequate, but I would like to encourage everyone to stay for dinner and, if they are willing, open their presents."

Mrs Weasley gave Draco a small, slightly sad smile. "That sounds lovely, dear," she said.

Harry gave him a similar smile and kissed his cheek gently.

– CHAPTER FOUR –

No Bystanders

Harry dropped the towel from his hips to the floor upon exiting the bathroom after his and Draco's shower. He found trousers in the walk-in closet and pulled them on, pulling the flaps of fabric at the fly just to test them. He looked in the mirror at his shirtless form, examining his body. He thought he could see a pooch in his lower stomach, but it was probably just his imagination. He gave his reflection a tiny frown and proceeded to dress himself, getting ready for the Order meeting taking place at Grimmauld.

Draco stood in the doorway, watching Harry look at himself. "I suppose we will have to buy you new clothes soon." He smirked. "But I don't suppose Madame Malkin gets much call for men's maternity wear."

Harry gave Draco a sarcastic smile and rolled his eyes. "Probably not," he said with a small snort.

"You may have to go back to wearing the over-sized Muggle clothes or traditional robes with lots of volume," Draco said.

"I'll have to do something," Harry replied. "Although I don't think I'll be able to hide it forever, no matter how big the robes are."

"Better to let the world think you are getting fat than know the truth," Draco said.

Harry nodded and shivered just the smallest bit as he thought of what Voldemort might do with the information.

"I want to talk about the meeting," Draco said, nearly finished dressing himself.

"What about it?" Harry asked, pulling on his outer robe.

"Everyone is frightened," Draco said, "and they should be. But you can't be. You need to show them that you can handle this."

"I know," Harry said with a small sigh. "I can, I think."

"They need courage, and they need you to show it to them," Draco said quietly, walking up to stand looking into those green eyes.

Harry smiled softly and nodded again, looking up at Draco. Despite his expression, there was also determination shining in his eyes.

"You don't have to know everything, that's why you have a team." Draco smiled.

"I have a good team," Harry said. "And a very, very, very good husband."

Draco raised an eyebrow. "I have some talents that please you," he purred.

Harry's smile widened. "They please me greatly," he said with a playful eyebrow waggle.

"I think, my husband, our leader, that we had better go before I get other ideas," Draco laughed.

Harry chuckled. "Save them for later, yeah?" he joked, leaving the closet.

Even previous Order meetings hadn't been as full as this one. The press of sorrow and fear was overwhelming. The only members not present were those who were needed in the field.

Everyone watched Harry with a sort of nervous calm if there was such a thing. When he, Draco, Hermione, and pretty much every Weasley, besides Ginny, arrived, the tension seemed to rise and fall at the same time.

Harry nodded to a few people before he made his way to the front of the kitchen table, staring around at the full room.

Draco sat down to the left and slightly behind Harry. His choice was deliberate symbolism. He would help with strategy and lead a field mission, but leading the Order was Harry's role.

Harry leant forward at the table and took a deep breath before letting it out slowly. "We all know what we're here for," he said. "The last two nights have been ... awful to say the least, but I've never been prouder to work with such a group." He paused and continued looking at each of them in turn. "With the final count at 117 dead, at least a third of which were children, I think it's safe to say that this war is finally, really, *truly* upon us. He's not going to hold back anymore. There's no reason for him to."

Draco sat back, waiting until Harry called on him to talk about

the issues he had brought up the day before.

"We need to focus on getting the word out about what the wizarding community can do to fight against him. As Draco said the other day, everyone has to choose a side now. We want them on *our* side."

"Right you are, Harry," wheezed old Elphias Doge.

Shacklebolt stood up, getting Harry's attention. The man looked older than he had at the last meeting and it looked like he hadn't slept since before Christmas Eve. "We were caught unprepared and the Ministry knows it," he said. "I am not sure how Scrimgeour will try to slant this, but we need people to know this could have gone better."

Beside him, Tonks was nodding. "Most died before we ever even figured out who we should be looking for," she said.

Draco discreetly nudged Harry, hoping to get a word in, but still very aware of his odd place in this group.

Harry felt the nudge and nodded to Tonks and Kingsley. "Actually, Draco was just saying something similar to me," he said, leaving it open for Draco to talk if he wished to.

Draco stood up. "Everyone knows that His followers target Muggles and m ... Muggle-borns," Draco began, realising he almost slipped his terms. "But what no one seems to realise is that because of that, they were able to exploit the rest of the wizarding worlds' own prejudice as well. The Ministry keeps a record of every witch and wizard, but pays no attention to Muggle relations of those members of the community. Families of wizarding folk were killed because they weren't protected. Most of us have wards or charms on our homes. They had none."

Mr Weasley gave a very firm nod. "I've always been saying that they need protection. They may not be part of our world, but they are a part of the people in it."

"Yeah, but how do we go about protecting them?" asked Fred. "It's illegal to do magic in front of Muggles, well, at least the ones that don't know anything about us, and while the families of wizarding folk know about us, it's still illegal to provide them with magical means of protection, isn't it? Like say, putting a ward up, or even giving them one of our Shield Charm hats. Too risky."

"And it's a ludicrous law," said Bill. "Draco's right. It is a weak

spot and one that should be looked at. These are things no one ever thinks about until something like this happens."

"Yes," Draco said. "Every child born in a magical family grows up with these protections. Muggle-borns are neglected even when we know who they are. And their families are at higher risk now than the wizarding families. Forty-two of those killed were children. Others were parents, sisters, brothers of our community."

The room was full of nods and comments of agreement. There were a few people, such as Headmistress McGonagall, who were so shocked to hear this from Draco Malfoy that they looked at him like they had never seen him before.

"This is a matter of changing the law," said Charlie. "With proper information out, it might be easier to do that. Most don't give a damn. They don't even think about it, like Bill said."

"I'm going to give an interview to the *Prophet*," said Harry. "Hopefully, that will make some difference."

"I was called a coward because I wouldn't kill," Draco sneered, "but they are the cowards, wearing masks and killing people who have no way of protecting themselves. Killing children in the night."

"Precisely," Shacklebolt agreed.

Harry felt that sharp hatred course through him, but it only lasted a second. "So, I'm going to give the interview to try and inform people about this weak spot and inform them about what this war means for them in general. They need to be more prepared than they are. You would think they haven't been through the first war at all."

"People have been trying to keep Fudge's mentality. Pretending it isn't happening yet, even after the leaflets have been sent out and there have already been dozens of deaths," said Mr Weasley. "There will be no ignoring after this. An article in the *Prophet* is a very good idea."

"Draco's idea, once again," said Harry, wanting to show these people just who he was married to and the man he trusted with all of his secrets.

"I think I understand the reason," Remus said quietly. "The last war wasn't won. It was only delayed. Most wizarding folk did not lift their wands to do a thing about it. They lived in fear, but not action."

"Well, it's started up again," said Harry. "And we'll damn well win

it this time."

Tonks frowned. "So what needs to be different than the last time?" she asked. "I mean, he was killed and came back. And we can't even keep the Death Eaters we capture in Azkaban."

Harry sighed. "Well, the Ministry was leaning so heavily on the Dementors, and now that they're gone, who the hell is guarding Azkaban anyway?"

Moody snorted then snapped, "Those willing to take the jobs. Seedy disreputable lot if you asked me."

"Well, we should have Aurors in there," said Harry firmly. "At the very least."

"Scrimgeour keeps saying he's going to place Aurors there - another thing the public doesn't know about are the guards in Azkaban - but one of the problems with that is there are limited numbers of Aurors as it is," said Mr Weasley.

"Well, wizards from the regular magical law enforcement should be there then. Not dodgy people who could probably be persuaded to join Voldemort anyway," said Harry.

"That is the problem," Shacklebolt added. "We don't have enough trained people in the Auror department or other divisions of Magical Law Enforcement. The Ministry has focused on paperwork for its staff and relied on the Dementors for punishment. We need to change that and get more field-trained people."

Harry nodded, wondering how on earth they were going to do all of this. "Okay then, so that's another thing on the list - near the top of the list mind you. We can't have every Death Eater we catch getting right out again. What do we do about the families of Muggle-borns and half-bloods? We can't leave them unprotected still, not after this."

"I have a suggestion about the Death Eaters," Draco said quietly.

Harry turned his head. He nodded and raised his eyebrows. "Go ahead," he said.

"You won't like it," the blond said.

Harry frowned slightly and a few other people suddenly looked a bit wary.

"What?" Harry asked.

"Kill them," Draco said. "They are a continuing threat. At least

kill their leaders when they are caught."

Harry frowned more and shook his head. "I've already said we can't do that," he said. "It's fine in battle. If they die they die, but I just - I don't think it's right of us to simply kill them once we've got them down, when they can't fight anymore."

Draco frowned, he didn't want to argue with Harry about this in front of people, but he felt the point was important. "So what will replace the Dementor's Kiss? And how is having your soul eaten by a monster like that not worse than being legally executed?" Draco asked.

"It is worse," said Harry, "but not all of them got a Kiss. Bellatrix and the Lestrage brothers are proof of that. If anyone should have been Kissed it was them. There are things worse than death. We don't have to kill them. We shouldn't." He didn't understand why Draco couldn't see that killing them would make them like the other side.

Draco sighed and sat back. Most of the Order members followed the conversation without stating their opinions. Draco noticed that several people had nodded with his questions.

"So we are still left with the problem of how to contain them until the Ministry is willing to change policies," Shackbolt said, sounding frustrated.

Harry nodded and sighed. "There's always sticking them in the cells at Malfoy Manor. They're safe enough. But it also depends on who catches the Death Eaters. Any Death Eater that isn't captured by an Order member will be taken to Azkaban. We can't smuggle them out of Ministry custody." He gave Tonks a quick glance.

Tonks nodded. "How much room do you have in the Manor dungeon?"

"I am not exactly sure," Draco replied. "And it depends on how many you are willing to put to a cell. We don't need guards at the Manor, as there are wards to prevent Apparition, no doors or windows in the cells, and the house-elves take care of the prisoners."

"I don't expect to catch all of them," said Charlie. "It's not as if it's easy. We may not even need that much room."

Harry sighed and nodded. "True. I think the Manor dungeons are plenty big."

"So we can bring Death Eater leaders to the Manor instead of the Ministry?" Shacklebolt asked.

Draco looked to Harry, nodding his approval but letting it be his decision.

"Yes," said Harry, not voicing how it still made him uncomfortable. "It's the best place we have for them."

"Good," said Mr Weasley. "Are the wards there set to accept every Order member?"

"No," Draco said. "The lower levels currently only allow Shacklebolt, Tonks, Harry and myself."

"Well, I suppose that will have to be remedied," said Mr Weasley. "Or there should be some sort of procedure set up for taking in prisoners, as it is your home, and where you and Harry are currently living."

"Who will need access besides Aurors?" Shacklebolt asked. "What do you think, Harry?"

Harry was silent for a moment. "Well, like Mr Weasley said, it is our home, so the least amount of people that can get in, the better. Not that it's a trust issue, but anyone is susceptible to Imperius, and if they had access to my place while I slept - well, I hardly think I need to spell it out for you. So I say that if anyone catches a Death Eater that's not an Auror, contact one of them and they can bring the prisoner in."

Draco nodded and everyone seemed to sigh with relief to have some decision about what to do.

Harry was relieved as well, but there was still the Muggle issue. "Okay, so we have that bit figured out. Now what do we do about the Muggle families?"

"Well, I think it appropriate that we include the wizarding families in this," said Hermione. "Being Muggle-born myself, I know my mother would feel odd with any sort of protection that I didn't say was all right, or approve. They're going to want to deal with their own family members, not people they don't know, who can do funny things that many of them don't understand."

"So we need to get the word out to Muggle family members that there are resources they could use," Tonks said. "We also have to find housing for refugees who can't go home."

"Well, where are we supposed to house them?" asked Harry. "We don't have many big places, as the wizarding world is all about being hidden."

"Well, we could always set a place up," said Ron. "Like we did for the Quidditch World Cup."

"But that took months, Ron," said Fred. "We need something quick."

"Hogwarts," Draco said.

"That's a possibility," said Mr Weasley. "Minerva?"

McGonagall raised an eyebrow. "It is certainly big enough to house them," she said, "but is it the safest spot for a Muggle? Hogwarts isn't exactly the most mundane place in the wizarding world. There are many dangers there. If it is needed, though, Hogwarts will certainly open its doors."

Draco was also thinking of the long term strategic placement of Hogwarts as the nearest place to the island which he owned, but suspected was occupied by Death Eaters. But like the Horcruxes, he didn't think it was time to let others know if it.

"Well, that is one option then that we may have to use. Anyone got anything else?" said Harry.

Draco raised an eyebrow and looked at Harry, wondering if he should wait and talk privately or speak up here.

"Well," said Mr Weasley slowly, "there is the option of setting it up so that the Muggle families stay with their wizarding relatives, but that might make it harder to protect them, as a lot of our own aren't very good at protecting themselves even. It also leaves out the parents of Muggle-borns still in school. They would have nowhere to stay. Hogwarts may be our best bet."

The discussion on where to keep refugees went on, and it was finally agreed that Hogwarts should be used for some of the Muggle families. There were some issues that needed to be dealt with as far as the families in the southern parts of Britain, jobs and such, but it would all be worked out in due time. Slow progress was still being made with the giants and werewolves, slow, but progress all the same. There was everything to be fixed with the Ministry, but that certainly was not going to be solved in a day. But at least they had the beginnings of a plan.

The meeting lasted quite a long time, for most of the day, in fact, and everyone was getting tired. It was apparent that nothing else could be discussed to further their positions.

"Well, if that's it then," said Harry with a sigh, rubbing his eyes.

Draco laid his hand on the small of Harry's back. He was tired too. Draco was impressed with the way Harry had handled the meeting.

"Yes, that's it," said Mr Weasley. "I say we call it a night."

Harry nodded. "Yes, let's," he said.

Draco waited while everyone milled about, saying goodbyes and talking with Harry. He wanted to get home but he knew the social aspect was important too.

Harry mingled a bit with some of the members that he didn't see very often, but he was ready to go himself and also found that he was feeling pretty hungry.

"I suppose we better be going," he said after a while to the small group he was talking to. He bid them goodbye, walked over to Draco and they Apparated home.

Once there, Draco pulled his husband into his arms and sighed wearily. "Let's eat in our rooms tonight," he suggested.

Harry nodded, hugging Draco and resting his head on his chest just below his chin.

– CHAPTER FIVE –

Too Much

Draco Apparated them to their sitting room and had Babb bring them dinner there, next to the fireplace.

Harry began eating quickly, realising that he was even hungrier than he'd thought. "Well, what do you think?" he asked between bites.

Draco snorted as Harry wolfed his food down and talked with it in his mouth. The blond swallowed carefully. "About what?" he asked.

"About that meeting," Harry answered, gulping down some pumpkin juice.

Draco tilted his head, smiling at Harry. "You did well," he said.

Harry smiled and gave a small shrug. "I suppose I did all right," he said.

Draco hadn't really eaten much since Christmas Eve, and while his appetite was improving, he still wasn't very hungry. After eating about half his food, he pushed his plate away and sat back, watching his lover. He was glad to see Harry was eating better.

Harry looked at Draco's plate, still eating his own food. "You aren't hungry?" he asked. "I was bloody starving."

Draco smiled, sliding off his shoes and brought his feet up onto the sofa. "I am glad to see that you are," he said. He slid his toes forward, pushing them a bit under Harry's arse.

Harry shrugged again and took another bite, his mouth too full for talking at the moment.

Draco waited while Harry ate, enjoying that the only noise in the room was the crackling fire and the sounds of his husband chewing.

Harry felt a bit odd being watched while he ate, but it didn't deter him much and he finished quickly, leaning back against the couch when his plate was empty. "Oh, I'm full," he said with a sigh, patting his stomach lightly.

Draco smirked, grey eyes glittering as he thought of the multiple lewd responses to the statement, but he remained quiet.

Harry looked over at his husband and smiled. "What are you so quiet for?" he asked, snuggling closer to him.

Draco shrugged, still smiling. "I am quiet sometimes," he teased, then leant over for a soft kiss.

Harry let out a very small snort and returned the kiss before pulling back just a little bit to look into Draco's face, resting the side of his head against the back of the couch.

Draco mirrored him, laying his head against the couch looking happily at him, his hand reaching for Harry's. "You aren't upset with me for challenging you in the meeting?" he asked.

"No," Harry said with another sigh. "I already knew you thought that, and you are entitled to your own opinions. I don't always have to agree with them all."

"Good," Draco said, smirking again, "because it isn't likely to ever happen." He laughed softly.

"Probably right," Harry said and then paused. "No, I know you're right."

Draco slid silver fingers up Harry's arm, over his sleeve, until he came to bare skin at the neckline. He softly ran smooth fingertips over that skin, watching his lover's face as he did.

Harry smiled, feeling very content. He sighed happily at the feel of those fingers and felt very, very good right then, sitting with what he thought was the most beautiful man on the planet.

"Do you want to go to bed early? Or do you have other plans?" Draco asked softly, silver fingers caressing Harry's neck and chin.

Harry smirked a bit, but it looked kind of goofy accompanied with his happy, sleepy expression. "Do you?" he said.

"You look pretty sleepy," Draco said. "Maybe I should let you rest."

Harry frowned a bit at that. "Has being tired ever put me off before?" he asked with an amused eyebrow raised.

Draco pushed off the couch and stood for a moment, then reached his hands for Harry to help him up.

Harry smiled gently and took Draco's hands, getting up from the couch. He stood close to Draco, staring at him.

Draco slid his hands up Harry's arms again, then down his chest to the hem of his shirt. He never took his eyes off of his lover's as he then slid his hands under the shirt, flesh and silver fingers sliding up, lifting the garment.

Harry lifted his arms, pleasant tingling sensations in every part of skin Draco touched.

Draco slid the shirt up and off, tossing it onto the sofa. He smiled at the pendant that hung glittering against Harry's chest. He slowly dragged his fingers back down the undersides of Harry's arms, using just a touch of nail as he did.

"Mmm," Harry moaned, a thrill running through him with the feeling of the nails. He could feel the heat of arousal flooding his lower half.

Draco's fingernails ran down and over his lover's pectoral muscles and then down the centre of his chest, over his stomach and finally came to rest - flesh hand on his belly and silver hand cupping him below. "How do you want it?" Draco purred in a low, sexy voice.

"Why do you always insist on asking me that when I can barely think?" Harry replied, his cock twitching as Draco grabbed it.

Draco could feel the flutter of magic in Harry's belly as much as he could the twitch of his cock, as he caressed both. He smiled wickedly. "Soft and gentle, or wild and kinky?" Draco purred again, making his words sound as seductive as his touch.

Harry was very, very torn. He didn't know which one he wanted right then. "Ummm," he said, trying to ignore the hand on his crotch, which was not an easy thing to do.

Draco huffed, smiling, and brought both hands together at the fasteners of Harry's trousers, slowly opening them and then sliding them, with his shorts, down his legs, hands caressing flesh as he did.

Harry let out a quiet, heavy breath, standing there and letting Draco undress him. He felt so utterly comfortable with him, perfect with him, and *so* in love with him. There was nothing better than the hands against his own flesh, nothing better than those grey eyes, that pale skin, absolutely nothing better than Draco.

Draco's hands steadied Harry as he nudged him to step out of the trousers and then he tossed them onto the sofa. He slowly dragged his nails up Harry's legs until both hands rested on the other man's

hips. Draco smiled softly. He leant forward and, just before his lips touched Harry's, whispered, "Lie down on the rug in front of the fire, face down."

Harry ached to kiss Draco, but bit his lip instead and stepped around him slowly, moving to the rug. The fire felt so warm and made him even more comfortable. He lowered himself to his knees and then lay down, turning his face towards the fire, his eyes half-closed.

Draco watched the firelight play over his lover's skin and sucked in a breath. He removed his own clothes now, laying them over the arm at one end of the couch and picking up his wand. Then he stood over Harry, admiring him. He flicked his wand with whispered incantations. Dinner remains removed themselves to the kitchen and several objects appeared in their place. He walked over and straddled his husband, sitting comfortably on that soft arse, his half-hard cock nestled against his crevice.

Harry smiled gently and licked his lips, moving just a small bit underneath Draco, feeling that cock so very close to being where he loved it to be.

"Cross your wrists above your head," Draco said quietly.

Harry shivered at Draco's voice and did as told, lifting his arms up above him on the rug.

Draco used another of those lovely spells he had got from that book on sex magic and Harry found a silky blindfold over his eyes.

Harry sucked in a breath and licked his lips again. His cock twitched and he tried to keep his breathing steady, already feeling like he would be panting soon.

Picking up an object from the table, Draco leant forward until he could reach Harry's wrists and clicked the cold metal handcuffs around them. They had been one of Harry's birthday presents from the twins. Draco grinned.

Harry shivered again, his heart speeding up. And the feel of Draco's body moving over top of him was maddening. He nearly whimpered, but held it in.

Draco had set a special bottle of oil near the fire to warm and now uncorked it, coating his flesh and silver hand in scented potion. His cock was harder now and still pressed into the cleft of Harry's

arse. He leaned forward and began rubbing the oil into Harry's neck, working the muscles under his hands.

"Mmm," Harry hummed, Draco's touch intensified because he couldn't see and could only focus on his other senses. He rolled his head on his neck a bit and rolled his shoulders, feeling content even with handcuffs and a blindfold on.

Draco focused completely on Harry's body, massaging his shoulders, arms, and then down his back. When he reached the base of Harry's spine, Draco slid down, his cock sliding lower as he massaged the strong muscles in the other man's hips and arse.

It felt so good to be treated like this, to feel like he was the only person on earth. Harry moaned quietly at the feel of Draco's beautiful cock sliding against him. "Draco," he whispered. "Mmm, Draco."

Draco was enraptured with Harry's oiled backside, glistening in the flickering firelight. He debated with himself which of the two options he had offered Harry would be best. He had both possibilities still open to him.

Harry stayed completely still, relaxed and warm. He was breathing deeply and vaguely wondering what Draco was going to do with him.

"Last chance to choose," Draco said quietly, fingers resting on the soft mounds of Harry's arse as he straddled his thighs.

Harry tried to decide, distracted with Draco's fingers on his arse cheeks, and he bit his lip again. On the one hand, he was feeling sleepy and relaxed and the soft, gentle option sounded good, but he also knew that he would be wide awake if they went for the wild and kinky. He smiled. "Let's go for kinky, but not too wild," he said, deciding to combine the options.

"Well," Draco drawled, "you are halfway there already. The cuffs are not the only gift from the twins you are wearing. I just massaged you with a potion that will heighten sensation." He began running slick fingers along the crevice of Harry's arse as he talked.

Harry let out a shaky breath. "Then what are you waiting for?" he asked, the fingers near his entrance already giving him more pleasure than they should have been at that point.

Draco chuckled, shaking his head as he ran his hands up Harry's

arse and back, not yet giving him what he knew he wanted. He pressed his own hips forward, sliding his cock up and down the crevice of his lover and coating himself with the oil in the process.

Now that the potion had begun to soak into his skin, Harry could feel every little movement that Draco made. "Oh, Merlin," he said in a shaky voice, knowing that it hadn't even taken full effect yet.

"I wonder what it will feel like inside you?" Draco asked in a husky voice, his hard cock pressed between Harry's cheeks as he ran fingers in swirling patterns over his back.

Harry gasped at just the simple movements Draco made with his fingers, whimpering slightly. "Fucking good if it's anything like how your hand feels on me," he gasped.

"Mmm," Draco hummed, beginning to pant as his cock slid back and forth over Harry's entrance but not entering. He used his hands to massage Harry's arse again, pushing that flesh tight together around his own flesh as he did.

Harry was panting now, the sensation of Draco's skin against his own making him crazy. He almost wanted to demand that Draco fuck him. He moaned loudly and squirmed, feeling high, like he was floating, and he knew Draco's cock would give him so much more pleasure.

Draco knew he could come from this, just the feeling of his cock pressed between Harry's beautiful arse cheeks. He chuckled, knowing that would drive the other man insane. But he felt wicked at this point, wanting to make him beg for it. So he enjoyed the squirming and maintained the same slow slide.

Harry let out a frustrated moan that almost sounded like a sob. "Draco," he said, voice tight and strained. "Merlin, Draco."

"Yes, love?" Draco teased, still rocking slowly.

"Ugh, please fuck me!" Harry nearly shouted. "Please!" The feelings in him were almost like Draco was already fucking him, but the knowledge that it could be even better was driving him up the wall. He wanted to pull his hair out.

"I have you at my mercy, Potter," Draco chuckled. "Do you think you could get off just from me coming against your slick arse?"

Harry knew he could, but he still wanted Draco inside him. "Yes," he growled, thinking that Draco was a very cruel man. "But I

want you to fuck me."

"I love it when you beg." Draco smirked. "Do you remember begging me the first time?"

Harry didn't quite know if he could remember anything at that point. "Has there ever been a time when I didn't beg?" he asked, wondering how he could even get a coherent sentence out.

Draco chuckled but it was interrupted by a moan as the sensations grew stronger. He reached oil-slicked fingers again to Harry's entrance, rubbing that tight flesh.

Harry's body jerked and he cried out. "Fucking hell I'm about to *order* you to fuck me!" he yelled, writhing under Draco, those fingers feeling far better than they should. Far, *far* better.

"No need love," Draco moaned, pressing fingers in smoothly but quickly, rubbing that lovely oil over Harry's prostate as he prepared him.

Harry's eyes widened underneath the blindfold. "OH MY GOD!" he shouted, arching and pulling at the handcuffs. He'd never felt anything like this before in his life. He was panting and wondering how he hadn't come yet.

Draco quickly withdrew his fingers and slid the head of his cock down, pressing into Harry. He was still straddling him, so he spread his own legs wide and leant forward so that he was on hands and knees above his lover. He lowered himself then, entering Harry and pressing the front of his body against Harry's back.

It was as if the world had exploded. Harry would have arched again if Draco weren't spread over him like he was, not that he minded that Draco was spread over him. He could have sworn he was having mini-orgasms all over his body. Every place Draco touched felt on fire, very, very, *very* good fire. And his arse - Holy. Fucking. Shit. His arse felt - Merlin, he didn't even *know* what it felt like. Filled with white-hot heat and magic, and, oh bloody Merlin, Draco had rubbed his prostate with that potion and he was in him! Harry felt like his brain was going to melt.

Draco shuddered and nearly collapsed on top of Harry as sensations robbed him of control and Harry's magic flared like wildfire, making the sensations of the potion even more intense. He swore he was aware of every nerve that touched Harry, inside and

out. Draco cried out, using taut muscles to slide against Harry, pulling out and pushing back in without breaking contact.

Harry didn't know how much of this he could take before he felt like it was going to kill him with sensation. He could barely breathe. All he could do was scream with rapture and ecstasy. He wondered if the entire wizarding world could hear him.

All Draco could do was move, sliding skin against skin as he felt Harry's body below him and surrounding his cock. Draco's breathing was ragged and he was dizzy from the overpowering sensations. He was aware of absolutely nothing but their bodies. Nothing else existed.

Harry pushed up into Draco and onto his cock as best he could with only instinct allowing him to do so, because he wasn't thinking - at all. Draco's cock felt so fucking good. He was going to *come*. He was going to come *very* soon. The steady build up was so strong, he felt lost in it and totally submerged.

Draco may have been on top, but the minute he pressed himself against and inside Harry, he lost all control of the situation. It was the combination of the potion, their bodies and Harry's magic that set the pace. He could feel the magic building and his own body speeding up. He could have been coming already for all he knew anymore. His body continued to shudder with each move and he was moaning incoherently.

Harry made fists with his hands, and his toes curled, and he screamed louder than ever as he finally released, feeling like some sort of firearm had actually gone off inside him and sent waves and waves of pleasure crashing down on him and through him. He felt it in every inch of his body, every single little part. It was so strong it hurt almost, but almost was the key word there, because it most definitely did NOT hurt. His mind was wiped blank and he lay shuddering, and whimpering, and moaning under Draco.

Passion and pleasure, so hot that it felt like a furnace, rolled over and through Draco. He completely collapsed on top of Harry, his arms and legs holding him tight as he cried out, tears flowing down his face as his come filled his husband.

Harry couldn't move, couldn't speak, could hardly breathe. He was suspended in some kind of timeless place, floating somewhere, as

far as he knew. He did know one thing - Draco was with him. He could feel him.

Could a person feel so much they could no longer feel anything at all? Draco curled over and around Harry, body flooded with sensations beyond what his brain even understood anymore. He was somewhere warm, comfortable and with his husband. That was all that mattered.

It was probably only minutes, but it might have been hours and Harry wouldn't have been able to tell. He finally lifted his head, which felt very heavy, and moved his shoulder around to shake Draco a bit. He still couldn't see anything. "Draco?" He meant to say it in his normal voice, but it came out raspy and almost a whisper.

"Mmm," Draco barely made any sound.

"We're on the floor," Harry rasped, but he didn't much care if they moved or not. Not really anyway.

Draco's only response was to rub his still-sensitive body against Harry's and then gasp again.

Harry let out a strange noise that sounded like a cross between an "Ooh" and a moan as a jolt went through him. *We're never going to move from this spot*, he thought, and he found the thought didn't bother him very much at all.

Draco couldn't move. He was exhausted. He didn't even remember that the man under him was handcuffed and blindfolded, not that he could have done much about it anyway.

Harry groaned and shifted around, but stopped moving when more jolts shot through him as he rubbed against Draco. It didn't feel very good at all to be pressed into the floor for an extended period of time, and his skin was so sensitive it was uncomfortable. His previous thought that he could've stayed there forever wasn't sounding so good anymore. He also wanted the handcuffs off and the blindfold removed, and wanted to collapse into bed as exhausted as he still felt. "Draco," he groaned.

Draco was still clutching Harry, thighs straddling him and arms around his upper body.

Harry could feel Draco's breath against the back of his neck but he wasn't moving. "Draco," he groaned again.

"Mmm?" murmured the blond on top of him.

"You're heavy," Harry complained. "And this floor is hard."

"Feel heavy," Draco slurred, but then tried to move. It took him a minute, but he finally slid sideways off his lover, hissing at his oversensitive skin.

Harry moaned and remained still after Draco was off of him. "I can't see," he said after a few moments.

Draco blinked. "Not sure I can either," he moaned, fumbling around for his wand.

Harry might have snorted, but couldn't seem to manage that.

Draco's fingers finally closed on his wand. It took him a couple tries to cast *Finite* on the blindfold.

Harry lifted his head and blinked his eyes quite a few times. "I can't do much with my arms either," he said, giving the handcuffs around his wrists a shake. His arms were still above his head.

"I don't remember the unlocking spell for them," Draco sighed.

Harry gave a weak huff. "Well, what do I do then?" he asked, looking at Draco with slightly raised eyebrows.

"You're the one who can do wandless magic," the blond said, closing his eyes again.

"Are you kidding?" Harry asked. "I can hardly move right now." He groaned again.

"Same here," Draco mumbled. "I think we used too much of that potion."

"*You* used too much," Harry replied. "I don't think it's meant to be used as *massage* oil."

Draco chuckled weakly. "Felt s'good though," he slurred, still feeling high.

Harry smiled and nodded. "Very," he said.

"You seem more awake," Draco groaned. "Can you get us to bed?"

"Dracooo," Harry whined, not feeling like trying to attempt anything wandless at the moment, but he knew he would try. "How is it that I was practically covered in the stuff and I'm more awake than you?"

Draco smirked. "I always get double with you."

"Ah, right," Harry said, smirking just a tiny bit despite himself. He closed his eyes and concentrated very hard on moving his hands

and arms again. It took at least five minutes before the handcuffs finally clicked and he was able to free himself. "Ahh," he sighed, rubbing his wrists where he had been pulling against the metal.

Draco lay on his back, eyes half closed as Harry freed himself. He couldn't help but be pleased by the knowledge that Harry could get out of most restraints now.

Harry sighed heavily and tried to push himself into a sitting position, but only managed to lift himself halfway so that he was supporting his upper body with his arms. His entire backside was tingling. "All right, so how do we get to bed now?"

"Why do I have to know?" Draco complained. Then huffed. "Maybe a Cleaning Charm would get the stuff off of us? I don't know how long it is supposed to last but I can still feel it."

"I can too," said Harry with a rather large yawn.

"Can y'do the charm?" Draco asked.

Harry groaned again. "Let's not use that much anymore," he muttered, trying to concentrate on a Cleaning Charm now. Surprisingly, it took even longer than freeing himself had, but he finally managed to do one on Draco ... maybe. "Did it work?" he asked, feeling very weak.

"Touch my chest, carefully, and I will tell you," he answered.

Harry reached out a hand and tenderly pressed just the tip of his finger to Draco's chest.

Draco shivered at the touch, his over-stimulated cock twitching from just the small contact. "I am going to kill them," he muttered.

Harry groaned. "It didn't work?" he asked.

Draco gingerly brought a hand up to touch his own skin. It still felt more sensitive than normal but it wasn't oily anymore. "I think the Cleaning Charm worked, but the stuff has soaked into our skin," he said.

"Well, what do we do then?" Harry whined. "How long is it going to take to wear off?"

"How would I know?" Draco said, whining as well. "This stuff didn't come with instructions or a warning label!"

"Fred and George," Harry growled, frustrated. "Bloody, Merlin."

"If you want to explain the problem," Draco said, rolling his eyes, "you can Floo call them and ask. In the meantime, let's find a way

back to bed." Draco concentrated hard and managed a Cleaning Spell on Harry. Not his best, but he glistened less now.

"I'd rather them not know we used any of their bloody gifts," Harry said. "Think you can Apparate?" He wasn't so sure if he could himself.

"Not a safe idea at this point," Draco sighed "I could barely manage the fucking Cleaning Charm."

"I couldn't either," Harry said. "Should we try to walk?"

"Can you manage to *Ennervate* me?" Draco countered.

"Maybe," said Harry, but he was sick of using his energy trying to do wandless magic. "Where's my wand?" he asked before simply Summoning it, and even that seemed to take longer. He pointed his wand at Draco and muttered the spell, waiting to see if it worked.

"Ahh," Draco sighed. "That's a bit better." Of course, he also had little shivers from Harry's magic, even if it was weaker than normal. "Now we try to walk to bed?" he asked, rolling onto his side to attempt sitting up.

"Do one on me?" Harry asked. "If you can."

Draco raised an eyebrow but nodded. He managed to make it into a sitting position and then cast the spell on Harry.

Harry groaned again as he felt that slight rush of energy and managed to push himself up as well. "Okay," he said more to himself than to Draco. He braced himself on the floor and tried to get to his feet, wobbling all over the place.

Draco snickered at the sight, still sitting on his arse.

Harry scowled at Draco and fell down to his knees. He growled and, after another minute, finally stood. Now to make it from the fireplace to the bedroom

The blond picked up his wand and pointed in the direction of his lab. "*Accio Pepper-up Potion*," he said, and he held up his hand to catch the bottle.

"Is it safe for me to take all this?" Harry asked, suddenly worried about the potion from Fred and George.

Draco shrugged, taking a sip from the bottle. "I lived on these things for a couple months," he answered.

"I mean with the baby and all," Harry said, pressing a gentle hand to his stomach, still trying to stay standing.

"Oh, merde'," Draco cursed. "No, you shouldn't take the potion."

"What about Fred and George's potion?" Harry asked nervously.

Draco got shakily to his feet and laid a hand on Harry's belly, closing his eyes. Even the simple touch made him shiver but he focused on what he felt inside his husband. "He's fine," Draco said.

Harry heaved a sigh of relief. "Good," he said, also shivering from the touch.

Draco took Harry's hand with his silver one. Since Harry's hands had been bound and the silver one didn't have pores, he hoped it meant it was safe to use his hand to help him back to the bedroom.

Harry didn't feel too much of anything when Draco touched him with his hand and he tried to focus on making it to their bed, taking very steady, slow steps.

Draco could walk steadier now and was able to help Harry to bed, leading him along.

– CHAPTER SIX –

In the Dark

After what felt like an hour, they were finally in their room and Harry gently lowered himself to the edge of the bed, sighing with relief again.

Draco pulled down the covers. "Can you slide in? It might be easier to lie on your stomach since your backside is so sensitive," he said.

Harry nodded, pushing himself into bed gently and laying on his stomach like Draco had suggested. Now that he was still again, he felt like he could feel the air against his back. Not just the coolness of it, or the heat, but the actual air. They should definitely not use so much in the future.

Draco pulled the covers up to Harry's thighs. "It may only be comfortable to this level," he said, and then walked around to the other side, pulling the covers down for himself and lying on his back. He reached out his hand again for Harry's, feeling odd not curling up to him.

Harry frowned, thinking the same thing as Draco. "Despite the amazing sex, unless this wears off soon, I don't think I'm going to sleep very well tonight," he said, taking Draco's hand, his head turned towards him.

"I took Pepper-up Potion," Draco huffed, "so I'm not likely to sleep either."

Harry sighed. "Well, I might be out sooner than you, but we were both *Ennervated*," he said, "so I probably won't sleep for at least a little while."

"So what do we do in the meantime?" Draco laughed.

Harry grinned. "Is there any particular reason we can't touch each other?" he asked.

Draco grinned too. "I can't think of any other than it is likely to make us want to fuck again."

Harry snorted. And then smirked. "Well, it may not be the most coordinated fuck, but what else have we got to do? Maybe it'll push it out of our systems."

Laughing, Draco said, "Be my guest. You get to be on top."

Harry laughed too. "I hope you don't mind me lying completely on top of you then, because I doubt I'll be able to lift myself up much."

"Sideways?" Draco asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Sure," Harry said, chuckling at how they were planning out a fuck.

"I wonder what being sucked would feel like right now?" Draco asked, his cock filling quickly at the idea.

Harry grinned again. "Your cock was the one slathered with the potion," he said, wagging his eyebrows.

Draco spread his legs and smiled.

Harry let out a delighted laugh and began scooting down the bed on his stomach, moving towards the space between Draco's legs.

"Be gentle with me," Draco said softly.

Harry nodded, moving close and laying a very soft kiss to the skin of Draco's balls, smiling.

Draco shivered. It was such a strong sensation from such a light touch.

Harry kept eyes on Draco's face as he reached up and, as gently as he could, took Draco's erection in his hand, kissing it with that same softness as the first.

Draco gasped. "Yesss!" he hissed.

Harry raised his eyebrows and added just the slightest bit of tongue, dragging it lightly and slowly across Draco's skin.

Draco groaned, shuddering and grasping the covers.

Well, one thing was most definitely certain - this potion was very, very strong. Harry wondered if he should even suck Draco at all, not knowing if that might be too much for him.

"Don't stop!" Draco moaned.

Harry's heart began beating quicker with Draco's reaction. He kissed and licked the skin of Draco's cock, getting closer and closer to the head of it.

"Harry," Draco moaned again, his head thrashing. "Yes, yes!"

Harry pulled back and stared at Draco hotly for a moment before lowering his mouth very, very gently over the head of his cock, not doing anything with his tongue yet.

"I love your mouth, your tongue," Draco moaned.

Harry took that to mean Draco wanted his tongue. He pressed it into the slit, much softer than he would have normally, and sucked as gently as he could, barely sucking at all.

"Your tongue, yes," Draco encouraged. "Soft and slick. Lick me." He sighed, eyes closed as everything narrowed to those feelings.

Hearing Draco's words, Harry smiled around his cock. He swirled his tongue slowly along Draco's skin, loving the effortless pleasure he was giving him.

"So good," Draco crooned, reaching his hand up to stroke his own chest too.

"Mmm," Harry hummed in agreement, not even thinking of what the vibrations might do to Draco. He was lost in sucking him off, even if he was hardly doing anything.

"Gods!" Draco trembled. "So, so good!" He could feel Harry's hum all the way up his spine.

Harry moved his mouth down further, taking more of Draco in. He pressed his tongue just a bit firmer against his skin, giving his cock very gentle strokes with his hand at the base of it.

Harry's touch was soft and exciting. So maybe Draco wouldn't kill Fred and George. "Yes," he said, running soft fingers through his lover's hair.

Harry moaned again as Draco touched his hair. His own cock was hard and throbbing and Draco was the most gorgeous sight he could imagine. He sucked his cock like it was a delicate sweet of some sort as he moved teasing, dry fingers to rub against his entrance.

"Yes, oh Gods!" Draco gasped, and pushed against the fingers.

Harry had no idea where the sudden energy to do nearly effortless wandless magic was coming from, but then again, sex did always seem to have quite an effect on him. No matter how he did it, his fingers were suddenly slick and he pushed them gently past that tight ring, loving the feel of it.

"Ahhh," Draco sighed, reaching his left hand up to pull on his

own nipple as Harry's mouth and fingers made him shudder.

Harry pushed his fingers in and out of Draco with a bit more force than he was using with his cock, as his cock was far more sensitive at the moment. He lifted his mouth off of Draco and looked up at him with dark eyes. "Still up for a fuck?" he asked, his fingers buried inside Draco's arse.

"Oh, please, yes," Draco answered, opening his eyes to look down at his beautiful husband.

Harry grinned and removed his fingers before crawling back up the bed and lying on his side, facing Draco. He reached his hand down and coated his own cock in lube as he leaned forward to kiss, shivering at just the simple feel of the sheets and mattress against a bit of the back of his body.

"Facing me or should I roll over?" Draco smiled, shivering.

"Whatever you think you can handle," Harry said, grinning.

Draco was panting, his cock twitching. "Facing." He smiled again, knowing that doing it this way would cause Harry to rub against his sensitive skin and cock.

"As you wish," Harry said quietly, a soft smile on his face as he moved forward to capture Draco's lips with his own again, sighing at the contact.

Draco licked and kissed at Harry's mouth. He bent his leg, spreading himself for his lover. "I want your cock inside me, your body sliding against me," he whispered against his lips.

Harry nearly moaned just from the sound of Draco's voice. "Yes," he whispered in return, moving closer so that their skin was touching. He wrapped an arm around Draco's back, positioning him for an easier entry.

The feeling of Harry's chest against his made Draco arch and shiver. He could even feel the soft hairs on Harry's belly.

Harry slid down Draco's body a bit and grasped his own cock, moving his hand from Draco's back down to his arse and pulling him forward a bit more to move up and inside him. He closed his eyes and gasped as he entered his lover. And knowing what all this sliding around was doing to Draco seemed to heighten his own pleasure.

Draco moaned at the feel of Harry's cock pushing inside him and his skin sliding over his, both sensations intense. He slid his arm

around Harry to caress his back.

"Oh, fuck," Harry whispered as Draco's hand made contact with his back, sending shivers along his spine. He thrust forward, fucking Draco with slow strokes.

"Yes, fuck me, beautiful," Draco gasped as he rubbed against Harry. He ran his hand along his lover's spine, feeling the muscles of his back.

Harry smiled gently at being called beautiful. It never ceased to amaze him that Draco thought he was. He gasped and moaned as those fingers ran down his skin, almost more intense than having his cock inside Draco - almost.

Draco shifted so that his cock rubbed against Harry's belly more at each thrust of his lover into him. He reached down, cupping Harry's arse and squeezing the firm flesh.

Harry cried out, clinging to Draco. "Yes," he gasped. "Merlin, yes, Draco." He continued thrusting into him, trying to rub as much as he could against his chest.

The skin of his chest and his nipples almost felt on fire. Every thrust from Harry sent the magic inside him crackling, and the press of Harry's belly against Draco's oversensitive cock was amazing. Draco reached as far as he could, grateful for longer arms, and pressed his finger into Harry's entrance.

Harry very well might have gone cross-eyed. "Oh, fuck!" he cried, throwing his head back. His hole convulsed around Draco's finger and he knew a few more thrusts would finish him off.

"Yessss!" Draco hissed, gasping as Harry's magic rippled inside him and over him, pushing him over the edge. The feeling of his own hot come shooting between them was almost too much and he moaned, thrusting his finger deeper into Harry.

Harry came not a moment after, the feel of that one finger in him was enough to make him tremble and pant and moan. "Draco!" he screamed with one last thrust of his hips, shaking in his husband's arms.

Trembling from his own orgasm, Draco was rocked again by Harry's magic as he came too. Sensation blurred into white heat until he no longer could feel one part of his body from another.

Harry was once again left feeling weak and oversensitive, panting

and holding on to Draco like he might never let him go.

Draco wasn't sure if he passed out or not. He felt like he was floating, warm, secure and happy in Harry's arms.

Harry's breathing evened out until it was almost as if he was sleeping, but he was still very aware of Draco surrounding him in every way possible. "I love you," he whispered, not knowing if Draco would be able to hear him or not.

"Mmm, yes," Draco murmured at the sound of Harry's voice and his breath against his face.

"I'm tired," Harry whispered next, finding that it was very true.

Draco's finger slipped back so that his hand rested comfortably on one cheek of Harry's arse and he relaxed, feeling himself drifting off.

Harry didn't even bother moving at all. He simply stayed right like he was: pressed closely and happily to Draco's body, and very soon, he was asleep as well.

Draco's eyes popped open with a start, his breathing fast and his muscles tense. Harry's body was still pressed against him, if not into him anymore. Draco was shivering and he thought maybe it was just that they had fallen asleep uncovered. Yet, he was sweating too. Another damn nightmare, he realised. They had been getting more frequent and more intense. He breathed through his nose, trying to calm himself down.

Harry cracked his eyes open slowly and blinked a few times, wondering what exactly had woken him. He saw Draco right in front of his face with his eyes open and figured it must have been him - then he noticed the shivering and the sweating. He frowned worriedly and brought a hand up to smooth Draco's hair from his face. "Okay, love?" he whispered.

Draco took a deep breath and smiled. "Cold," he said. "Let's pull the covers up. I think the potion has worn off."

Harry somehow didn't think that being cold was all that was the matter with Draco, but he nodded, reaching down and feeling around for the blankets. He covered them both up and moved close to Draco again. "Sure you're all right?" he asked, voice quiet.

"Fine," Draco said, snuggling under the covers.

Harry frowned again and was silent for a few moments, almost deciding to leave it, but he knew Draco would never leave anything when he was suspicious of there being something wrong with Harry. "Would you lie to me?" he asked, voice quiet again.

Draco huffed. "Never about anything that I felt you needed to know," he replied softly, closing his eyes.

"So then you admit you're lying to me now," Harry said with a small sigh.

"I didn't say that," Draco said. "Go back to sleep."

Harry frowned at Draco for a few more moments and just stared at him, a crease between his eyebrows and one on his forehead. "Git," he whispered, closing his eyes, but the frown didn't leave his face.

Draco waited to see if Harry would let it go or press further, pretending to be asleep in the meantime.

Harry huffed when Draco didn't answer and simply lay there awake, trying to get back to sleep like he thought Draco had.

Harry's rapid breathing and heartbeat told Draco that he was not asleep and probably angry. He sighed. "It really isn't anything important," he said softly.

Harry opened his eyes again. "Then what's the big deal about telling me?" he asked.

Draco's face coloured, and he gave a small shrug. "I had a nightmare," he whispered. In the back of his mind he could hear his father's voice chastising him for being afraid of his own dreams.

Harry sighed and hugged Draco closer. "I know all about those," he said quietly, kissing his cheek. It was what he had figured had been wrong with Draco, with the cold sweat and all. "What about?"

"Tonight?" Draco shrugged. "Just fears I guess."

"You have them often?" Harry asked, petting Draco's hair.

Draco's breathing hitched at the question. He was afraid to admit it. "Father said they showed I was a coward," he said.

Harry frowned angrily. "That's stupid," he said. "You don't have control over your own subconscious. And if what he said was true, then I would be quite the coward."

"I thought yours were from Voldemort," Draco said. "That's different."

"I have regular nightmares too," Harry countered. "They are quite my own."

Draco looked into Harry's eyes as if measuring and he saw no deceit in them. He frowned. "What are they about?"

Harry gave a small shrug. "Sometimes fighting, sometimes the old one of my mother screaming, sometimes just plain old nightmares about Voldemort that don't come from him. I don't enjoy them, but ... you know, I expect to have them. I'm not afraid of him ... but I am, I guess, in some ways. It's hard to explain."

Draco nodded, thinking. "I have always been ... prone to them," he said, still flushed at admitting it.

"It's nothing to be ashamed about," Harry said softly. "I've always had them."

"Even before you started Hogwarts?" Draco asked.

Harry nodded. "I didn't exactly have ... a wonderful childhood," he said. "I mean, I know some kids had it far worse than me, but it was far from great, or anything close to being great."

Draco's fingers stroked dark locks off Harry's face and watched him as he spoke. "You were raised by the Dursleys?" he asked. "Were they always like that?"

"Like what?" Harry asked. "Arseholes?"

Draco nodded, not quite sure how much he wanted to know, but wanting to understand his husband. He had always wondered about his life outside of Hogwarts.

"Yeah," Harry said quietly, nodding. "They've always been that way."

"What did they do when you had nightmares?" Draco asked, remembering his own punishments.

"They yelled at me if I cried," Harry said quietly. "Ignored me. Locked me in my ... in the cupboard until I stopped."

"Cupboard?" Draco asked.

Harry gave a very small humourless laugh, realising that he'd never talked to anyone about this. "Yeah. The cupboard under the stairs. I was locked in there all the time until I was eleven." He made it sound like it wasn't a big deal, and he'd grown used to living there himself, but thinking of letting his own child cry after a nightmare in the dark where there were creepy crawly bugs and spiders disturbed

him quite a bit.

Draco was speechless for a minute, unable to think of an appropriate reply. He remembered the cupboard where he had found Mrs Dursley after the attack and couldn't imagine Harry as a small child locked in there. "It's probably a good thing you didn't tell me this before we went there," he finally said, "because I think I would have killed them myself."

Harry was a bit surprised at Draco's reaction. "It wasn't ... *that* bad," he said. "I got my own room when they found out I was a wizard. I think they were afraid of me, or maybe afraid of Dumbledore." Harry didn't say how they had locked him in the room too.

"I was only locked up when I was bad," Draco said. "I told my nanny that I had a nightmare. She held me and told me it was all right. She must have told Father, because by suppertime she was gone and I was locked in the root cellar for the night." Draco told it all staring off at nothing, remembering.

"A cellar?" Harry asked, mouth slightly open. "At least I was in the main house." He held Draco even closer.

Draco nodded. "I think I preferred the beatings to the cellar. It was dark and full of spiders."

Harry winced. "So was the cupboard," he said. "You were beat for having nightmares?" he asked quietly.

"Not too much," Draco said. "I learnt not to talk about them. Mostly I was punished for being cowardly or too willful."

Harry glared, but not at Draco. "I guess we were always more similar than we thought," he said quietly. "Well, it's not really the same, but some things are, I suppose. I was never punished for being too cowardly; I actually got in trouble when I fought back. I was punished a lot for things I didn't understand, like turning my teacher's wig blue, or making my hair grow back. I didn't know what was doing that, but they locked me up and Uncle Vernon did hit me sometimes."

Draco kissed his forehead. "Your wild magic started young then?" he asked. "It's very impressive."

Harry gave him a gentle smile. "I think I even managed to Apparate once."

"Really?" Draco's eyes widened and his eyebrows shot up. "What happened? When?"

"In school," Harry said with a small shrug. "Dudley and his friends were having a game of 'Harry Hunting'. It was not a very fun game and often included my glasses being broken and a black eye. I went to leap behind a bin to get away and suddenly I was on the school roof. No idea how I got up there."

Draco laughed. "Did you know how to get down again?" he asked, feeling that swelling in his heart that was his admiration for Harry.

Harry snorted. "The teachers found me. They were so bloody angry. I thought the wind caught me mid-jump and carried me up there." He laughed at his own childish idea.

Draco's fingers continued to stroke his husband's hair and trail over his cheeks and jaw. A look of adoration was in his grey eyes as he gazed at Harry. "Has anyone ever explained to you how your magic is different from most wizards'?"

Harry shook his head no. "I didn't know it was," he said. "I've never really been able to do anything *amazing*. My marks aren't nearly as good as Hermione's, or yours for that matter."

"Grades?" Draco snorted. "I get nearly perfect grades and still can't do the things you can."

Harry snorted too. "I didn't know I could do them," he said. "I suppose you awoke some sort of beast in me," he said, his eyes sparkling.

Draco smirked. "The sleeping lion, I suppose," he whispered. "For most of us, even if magic is there, it takes work to use it. I suppose it is a lot like learning to walk or talk. We have the ability but not the training to make it happen. With you, the magic happens. It is more like you say, trying to tame the wild beast."

"I don't know why it would be that way," Harry said with a shrug. "I'm nothing special."

"Nothing special?" Draco shook his head. "Raised in a cupboard by imbeciles, but still kind and strong. Not trained in magic until you are eleven and already able to do things most wizards will never achieve. Harry, if you are nothing special, then we are all worthless."

Harry smiled gently again. "That's another thing Dumbledore said

about me." He paused. "He said that I'm amazing because I'm still able to love after the life I've had. I don't know what's so amazing about that." He leant in and pressed his nose to Draco's. "I think it's pretty easy to love."

Draco smiled, eyes closing as he inhaled the scent and warmth of his husband. "Definitely your greatest magic," he whispered.

"And what Voldemort has none of," Harry said, closing his eyes as well and squeezing Draco.

– CHAPTER SEVEN –

Muggle Problems

Draco was still feeling a bit sleepy when he and Harry made their way down to the dining room at noon. Once there, he froze for a moment at the sight that met his eyes – Mrs Weasley, Mrs Granger AND Mrs Dursley, all sitting together.

Harry froze as well, utterly shocked. Aunt Petunia had hardly left her room at all in the time she'd been here. He'd known that Hermione's mother had been talking with her. Perhaps she'd made more progress than he'd thought.

"Oh, hello, dears," said Mrs Weasley when she spotted Harry and Draco.

"Er, hello," said Harry a bit awkwardly.

Draco took a breath and pulled himself together. "Good morning, ladies," he said in a properly polite voice. He noticed food was set out on the table, buffet style, so that probably meant the house-elves were still staying out of sight. He went straight for the tea, pouring cups for himself and Harry.

Harry gave a small smile to all three of them and moved to sit down, piling food on his plate. The awkwardness must have shown on his face, because Mrs Weasley asked, "Are you feeling okay, Harry?"

"Oh, I'm fine," Harry said, trying to smile more normally. It was strange to have Aunt Petunia there, even though she'd been there for the last couple days, she still hadn't really *been* there.

Mrs Granger and Mrs Dursley both said polite hellos but seemed nervous as well. Frankly, Draco was nervous. He hadn't been so uncomfortable with Mrs Dursley before his discussion with Harry about their childhoods the night before. Now he wanted to grab the woman and demand an explanation. Instead, he set Harry's tea and his own on the table and then put a bit of food on his plate.

Harry glanced at his food and then at Draco's and he didn't know

whether to scold him for eating too little, or be embarrassed for eating so much himself. "Where's everyone else?" he asked, trying to make conversation.

"Oh, they're around here somewhere," said Mrs Weasley, easily the most talkative of the bunch. "Arthur and Bill have gone to headquarters, but I just saw Ron in here a bit ago."

"Hermione was here too," said Mrs Granger quietly.

Harry nodded, thinking about how he hadn't really talked to his friends too much over the last couple days.

Draco sipped his tea and poked at his food. He was glad to see Harry eating well. He listened, nodding. It was so odd to have a lot of people in the Manor. The place was more than big enough, but it had only been the four of them for the last several months.

Harry ate quickly, not bothered by Mrs Weasley or Mrs Granger but He stuffed his bread in his mouth and then another piece and slurped some soup down.

"You're certainly hungry," said Mrs Weasley, staring at him.

Harry coloured a little and gave a small shrug. "I guess," he said.

Draco covered a knowing smirk by taking a bite out of a sausage. He had to suppress the urge to stroke Harry's belly again. It was amazing to him how much he delighted in this.

"Well, a growing boy should eat," Mrs Weasley continued. "I certainly know all about that." She gave a small laugh.

Harry smiled and nodded, feeling like he just wanted to get out of there pretty much.

Draco ate a bit, but mostly pushed his food around and sipped his tea, making sure Harry had time to eat. After a little, he said, "I'm going to check in with Hermione and Ron. I will be back."

"No, I'll go with you," Harry said, perhaps a bit too eagerly. "Haven't had a chance to talk to them much," he said in explanation to the others at the table.

"All right, boys," said Mrs Weasley. "We'll be in here, I imagine."

Mrs Granger smiled and nodded softly.

Draco frowned. "Are you sure you are finished eating?" he asked.

"Are you kidding?" said Harry. "I ate half the food here." He took Draco's hand to further indicate that he was ready to go.

Draco hesitated and then nodded, taking his hand. "If anyone

needs anything," he said, "please let us know." Once out in the hall, he called for Leakey and asked where the other two were.

"They be in the usual sitting room, sir," the elf squeaked.

"Thank you," said Harry, and he turned to Draco when Leakey had left again. "Why did you want to leave me in there?" he asked.

Draco rolled his eyes. "I never want to leave you," he smiled, "but I do want you to get enough to eat. You know why."

"But I did eat enough," said Harry, starting on his way to the room he thought of as the discussion chamber.

Draco smiled and followed Harry. After the Order meeting, he'd realised that the four of them needed to talk over their Horcrux search and how events would affect them.

Harry led Draco by the hand to the sitting room and Ron and Hermione were indeed there, curled up on one of the couches together. Harry wondered if they wanted him and Draco in there at all.

Hermione looked up at them and smiled gently.

Harry was happy to see that they didn't spring apart. He liked that they could be more open and comfortable, at least around him and Draco. "Hey," he said, moving into the room.

"Hi," they said in unison.

Draco sat down in one of the larger plush chairs and pulled Harry into his lap. "Quieter now," he observed.

Hermione nodded. "Yes, quieter," she said, staring out of the window.

Harry sighed.

"What's up?" asked Ron, drawing patterns on Hermione's arm absently.

"Nothing," said Harry. "Just haven't talked a lot lately."

"There's hardly been time," said Hermione, turning her attention back to the room.

Harry gave a little shrug.

"Your mother seems to be doing better, Hermione," Draco said, "and she is welcome to stay as long as you like."

Hermione nodded and opened her mouth to say something, but then seemed to decide against it.

Harry sighed again. He knew this would be very hard for

Hermione.

"So many people are dead," she said very quietly after a few moments.

Draco's first impulse was to say that it would get a lot worse, but he knew better than to give voice to that at this moment. "Yes," he said quietly, unsure how to start the conversation they needed to have.

"Seamus," Ron nearly whispered. "And Dennis Creevey."

Harry frowned sadly and plucked at Draco's sleeve, laying his head on his shoulder and nearly pressed into his neck. He'd been trying not to think of that, but he had known he would have to eventually.

"I am sorry for your loss," Draco said, his arm curling around Harry's back and holding him tighter. "There is a lot to deal with. Refugees. Funerals. Clean-up."

"I know," said Hermione, her voice very small, and then she sighed. "And we all know this isn't the only thing we have to deal with."

Ron looked at her with eyebrows pulled together in a frown, as if he wanted to tell her to not worry about that, but he was silent.

Draco nodded. "After things settle a bit, we will need to resume our search," he said.

Hermione nodded as well. "Yes, we do," she said.

"We don't even know what it is," Harry said, finally sitting up a bit straighter. "And we still haven't taken that brooch in to see if it's the real thing."

"We should contact Snape too." Draco nodded. "See if he has any real leads."

"He never does," Harry said a bit bitterly. He hated seeing Snape, even if the man hadn't been so bad the last few times. "But I suppose you're right."

"He saved lives by sending us that letter," Draco reminded him.

"Yes," Harry said, feeling a bit of respect for Snape despite himself. "He did do that."

Hermione sighed again. "I very much hope he knows something," she said. "I feel like we're coming to a dead end."

"I have another matter to bring up," Draco said quietly.

"What?" Harry asked, sitting straighter still and raising an eyebrow.

"I am reluctant to bring it up, because I am unsure how I feel about it," Draco said, "but I am aware that we have a large place here that is warded. That we are safe while others are not."

"What are you proposing?" Harry asked.

Hermione stared at Draco with quiet interest.

"I am not sure what to propose," he said, frowning. "I want us to be safe, and bringing in outsiders makes that a little more difficult. But I feel awkward sitting in an Order meeting where we are trying to figure out where it is safe to house people."

Harry nodded, frowning thoughtfully.

"Well, is there any way to set it up so that certain places in the Manor are warded so that only certain people can enter? Like the lower levels?" said Hermione.

"Well, there are the outer buildings," Draco said, frowning. "They haven't been used in a long time, but they could be made ready pretty easily. When this place was a Manor for the locals, it was meant to house people in times of war."

"Well, that's perfect then," said Harry. "We could house people here in lower England, and then Hogwarts can deal with the people up north in Scotland. I know it isn't perfect and that not everyone lives close to either place, but it will work for many, I'm sure."

Draco smiled at Harry, resting his face against the other man's hair. "So the next question is who stays here? Who needs to be here?" he said.

"What do you mean?" Ron asked. "As far as Muggles? Or other people?"

"Yes," Draco said. "First, we are going to have to teach the Muggles who stay here about magic. Since they are related to magical folk, I suppose the restrictions about telling them don't apply?"

"No. They already know about it. It has to be told to them. They just don't know exactly what's going on with all of it. Mind you, my mother knows quite a bit though from what I've told her," said Hermione.

"So, my proposal is this," Draco said, taking a deep breath, "people we know and trust, such as Order members, and their

families, can stay here or at headquarters. Others who need help can be housed in the secondary buildings on site. Harry and I have the money, and with the help of the house-elves, I think we can handle it."

"Yes, so do I," said Harry. "So how do we go about setting this up?"

"We will need to look at the secondary buildings and see what they need to make them habitable," Draco said. "And, Hermione, I will need your help. I really don't know what Muggles need to make a place habitable. You know we don't have wires in the walls and the like. For them, it might be like living pretty primitively."

Hermione was actually, *really* smiling, something she hadn't done for the past few days. "Yes. It will feel like that to them, but they'll just have to get used to candles. We're going to need to give them plenty of matches or lighters. And they're also going to need things to do, since there won't be any televisions ... and food, and we'll probably need to set up charms for them to keep the food cool, unless the elves help with that and bring food to them everyday ... and they'll also need" She went on and on, listing item after item, suggestion after suggestion.

Harry thought it would probably be good for her to get her mind on something else for a while, and he was glad she seemed so enthusiastic. He himself was happy to be helping with the situation.

Draco nodded, but let her continue, kissing the top of Harry's head. "Mmhmm," he would say occasionally, smiling.

"... and it's really just loads of things to get ready," she finished.

Ron was looking at her with an expression of mixed surprise and amusement.

"I certainly think we'll do just fine with you helping, Hermione," Harry said, face looking much like Ron's.

"Please feel free to make lists, so that I can reference it," Draco said. "Maybe your mother and Harry's aunt would like to help."

Hermione nodded.

Harry did too, although he wasn't sure if Aunt Petunia would, but he didn't say anything. He wasn't sure of anything with that woman.

Just then, Fred and George came striding into the room, eating sandwiches. They each leant over the couch Ron and Hermione were

sitting at.

"What are you lot doing?" George asked, swallowing his mouthful.

"Just talking about how we're going to keep Muggles here," said Hermione enthusiastically.

"And Order members," Draco added.

"Mmhmm," said Hermione.

"Brilliant," said Fred taking another bite. "I know the Ministry's having a cow trying to figure out what to do in this mess. Quite a situation they've got on their hands."

George nodded next to him. "Wouldn't be surprised if they gave you an Order of Merlin, Draco," he said. "Maybe not first-class, but hell, why not?"

Harry shrugged and then went to take a deep breath and stretch - but he stopped suddenly. "Oh, Merlin, what is that *smell*?" he asked, making a face of utter disgust.

Draco snorted at George's words. Then he frowned and looked at Harry, shrugging.

Ron, Hermione and the twins looked at Harry too, confused, sniffing.

Ron shrugged. "I don't smell anything, mate."

"Ugh," Harry groaned. "I think I'm going to throw up," he said, covering his mouth.

Draco, whose lap Harry's was sitting in, looked alarmed. "I think it's your sandwiches," he said to the twins quickly, "so out with them."

Fred and George gave each other puzzled looks.

"Since when does tuna make you feel sick?" George asked.

Harry groaned again. "Oh, hell. Yes, that *is* it," he said, hand still covering his mouth. "Out. Please, out!"

The twins threw two last confused looks before shrugging and retreating quickly with their awful tuna.

Harry got weakly out of Draco's lap, prepared to run for it if he had to.

Draco took out his wand and Transfigured a small figurine into a bowl, handing it to Harry.

Harry took it and faced away from everyone, retching as quietly

as he could. He sat down on the floor, still looking disgusted.

"What the ...?" Ron asked, raising an eyebrow.

Hermione pinched him.

"Well," Draco said smugly, "it's official."

"Ugh," Harry said, wiping at his nose. "What?"

"It isn't just my sensitivity that tells us your condition." Draco smirked. "Now you are acting pregnant." He dispelled the mess with his wand.

Harry scowled. "Acting pregnant?" he said.

Ron turned a bit red. "Oh," he said very quietly.

"First symptoms. Nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to smells," Draco listed, sounding like Hermione lecturing. "I looked it up a couple weeks ago."

"Thank you for telling me," Harry said sarcastically, still feeling a bit sick.

"I thought you knew," Draco said, shrugging again.

"How the bloody hell am I supposed to know?" Harry snapped.

"Irritability is another one," Hermione said, and Harry could tell from her voice that she was trying not to smile. It only served to annoy him more.

Draco did more than smile, he chuckled. "If you want to know more, just ask," he said. "Of course, some things may not work the same with you, given you don't have a womb."

Harry glared at him slightly.

"You know, I have been thinking some more about that," said Hermione. "I wonder what the baby is enclosed in Because Draco's right, you don't have a womb."

"No," Harry said with mock surprise. "You're kidding!"

Draco grinned. "It's okay, love," he soothed, stroking Harry's hair. "We are just trying to help."

"Yeah, well" Harry couldn't think of anything to say to that, so he simply huffed.

"The baby draws on his body," Draco said to Hermione now, "because I can feel it when he doesn't eat enough."

"It still must have some sort of protection around it," said Hermione. "Probably some sort of magical replacement for an amniotic sac."

Harry made a face. "That sounds disgusting," he said. "What the hell is that?"

"The books I read said it is a flesh protection around the baby that cushions it, and there is a flesh tube that connects to the mother to feed it," Draco said.

"It's also filled with fluid. The baby floats in it for the nine months," Hermione said.

Harry made another face. "Exactly how many books have you read, Draco?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Everything we have here," he said. He shook his head. "You never pay any attention to what I am reading unless you are trying to distract me from it."

"So then ... what else am I supposed to expect?" Harry asked. "When do I start getting ... big?" He said it as if it were the worst word in the entire world.

Hermione rolled her eyes at him.

Draco smirked, colouring slightly. He had no idea why this whole thing delighted him so. "A woman would start to show around five months," he said, "but my guess is you will show sooner than that."

"Yes, you have a rather thin frame," Hermione said, looking Harry over. "And very narrow hips compared to a woman's. I expect it might be a lot of strain on your back as well."

Harry looked horrified.

"Maybe we shouldn't tell him any more." Draco looked worriedly at Harry.

"I would rather not be taken by surprise, thank you very much," said Harry indignantly.

"Coming from you, that's amusing," Draco said, lifting an eyebrow. "So what else do you want to know?"

"What else is there to know?" Harry said. "I don't even know what to ask. I've never even been around anyone pregnant before."

Draco looked taken aback. "Really?" he asked.

"Well, I've seen pregnant women, but I've never actually known one and been around them long enough to learn anything."

"Plus, you're male and therefore probably wouldn't have cared anyway," Hermione offered.

Harry shrugged, thinking she was probably right.

"The good news is that the nausea goes away after a while," Draco said, "but then you will have back trouble. Your ankles may swell and you may have some problems with other parts of your body."

"Other parts?" Harry asked, thinking that sounded rather ominous.

"We don't know how your body will react," Draco said, "so we will just have to handle things as they appear. I have some potions I want to make to help as well. In fact, I really need to start doing more potion work. We are going to need a lot more supplies than we have on hand."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked, once again thinking that sounded rather ominous.

"What do you think, Harry?" said Hermione.

"I have already used many of the Healing Potions I had," Draco pointed out.

Harry took a very deep breath. "How's he coming out?" he asked, even though he'd already asked Draco this before. "Because I don't think I have anywhere for that to happen." He swallowed, his throat suddenly dry.

"Do you really want to talk about this now?" Draco asked.

Harry groaned. He really didn't want to talk about it ever. He knew that day would come when all of these questions would have to be answered, but he felt like he was going to be skinny and pregnant forever, not like he was going to get any bigger.

Draco saw they were still alone and called a house-elf to bring Harry something to drink, hoping it would help settle his stomach. Then he reached to pull him back into his lap.

Harry gingerly climbed back into the chair with Draco and laid his head on his shoulder again after drinking some water. "What if I get sick all over you?" he asked, tracing Draco's jaw with a finger.

"Then I will do a Cleaning Charm," Draco said, petting him again.

Harry sighed and closed his eyes, pressing a very gentle kiss against his neck. "If anyone comes near me with tuna again, I'll kill them," he mumbled into his skin.

Draco chuckled, shaking his head. "No tuna," he assured him.

"But, love, if you keep protesting loudly, it is going to look a bit ... odd."

"I know," Harry said quietly. "I suppose I'll just get up and leave the room from now on. I just didn't know what was going on."

"Just let me know what other changes you experience," Draco said. "I want to make sure we do the best to take care of you."

Harry sighed again and nodded. "Okay," he said quietly.

"Back to the guest situation," Draco said. "Will your mother be staying with us, Hermione? And your aunt, Harry? If so, we should probably tell them about house-elves."

"My mother already knows about them," said Hermione. "And ... she'll need to have some way to get to work eventually ... so I don't know how long she'll stay. But for now she's staying here."

Harry shrugged. "I don't know what my aunt wants to do. I suppose she can stay here if she wants to."

Draco nodded. "And there is the matter of the funerals. I would like to make an offer," he said.

Harry, Ron and Hermione looked at Draco. "What?" asked Harry.

"I would like to pay for them," the blond said.

"For my ...?" Hermione trailed off, looking to the floor for a moment. Ron took her hand.

"For both?" Harry asked, leaning back a bit to look at Draco's face better.

"Yes," Draco said quietly.

Harry sighed. "Well, yes, I suppose that would be We could do that."

"Draco, you really don't have to," Hermione said. "I mean ... it's going to cost ... a lot, and -"

"Hermione," Harry cut in quietly, "I'm sure he doesn't mind."

"More than that," Draco said. "Malfoy money financed the Dark Lord's rise and return to power. We owe it."

Hermione closed her open mouth and nodded. "Well ... thank you," she said oddly, but not without gratitude.

"We should probably be taking both your mum and my aunt home for them to ... plan these," Harry said. "There's probably going to be police work too, but I think the general thing with that is to use

magic to get out of it. That's what the Ministry's been doing according to Mr Weasley anyway."

Ron nodded. "They're mostly just Confunding them," he said.

"Muggle papers have been reporting some of the mass deaths as attacks by some Muggle Irish terrorists," Draco said.

Harry sighed. "It's all a big mess," he said.

Ron nodded to Draco. "IRA, I think they're called," he said. "Some Muggle paper reported it as a possibility and the Ministry latched onto it and started spreading it as a cover. Fred and George said Dad told them."

"Our war could start a war in the Muggle world," said Hermione quietly.

"Well, I'm sure something will be done to try and prevent that," said Harry, "but our war has *already* leaked into the Muggle world. It was inevitable."

Draco frowned, thinking. He had never before considered how much his world impacted that of the Muggles. The worlds were never as separate as his kind wanted to believe.

The four were quiet for a bit and then Hermione let out a small sigh. "Well, I'll go and let Mum know about the money," she said. "When do you think we'll be taking them home?"

"Tomorrow if we can," said Harry. "I would think it needs to be done as soon as possible."

"Yes," Draco agreed, hoping they had time to bury their dead before the next attack came. Because it would come, and they needed to be ready for it.

Hermione nodded and got to her feet and Ron followed after her.

Harry remained seated in Draco's lap and just stared at his face for a bit before kissing him gently. "I should go tell my aunt," he whispered.

"I will owl Wyndham and get the process started," Draco said, kissing him back.

Harry nodded. "I love you," he said with a small smile as he kissed Draco again. Then he got reluctantly to his feet and was glad that his stomach seemed to have settled.

Draco squeezed his hand. "I love you," he said, and watched

Harry leave the room before going to the writing desk to pen his letter to his solicitor.

– CHAPTER EIGHT –

No Excuse

Harry was dressed in nice black clothes. They weren't Muggle brand, but one couldn't tell. After having taken Aunt Petunia and Mrs Granger home to speak to police (which had indeed been helped along quite a bit with magic), and to plan the funerals for Uncle Vernon, Dudley, and Mr Granger, the day had finally come for one of the funerals to actually take place. Dudley's and Uncle Vernon's. Harry had insisted on paying for everything after Draco had said he would, and Aunt Petunia had tearfully accepted, though she had been doing everything tearfully. Harry didn't even truly know why he was doing all this for her.

Hermione had helped him order a Limo to take Aunt Petunia, Draco, and himself to the funeral home, and Aunt Petunia had been silent the entire ride there. In fact, she hadn't truly opened her mouth since the day she'd come to stay with Harry. As they pulled up and Harry looked out the window, he could see Aunt Marge blubbering into a handful of tissues. He took a very determined breath, hardly able to believe he was about to willingly enter into this, but he was. The driver got out to open the door for them and Harry helped his aunt out, taking another deep breath as he shot a glance at his husband, wondering if he looked as out of place as he felt.

No one would be surprised to find that Draco had never spent much time around Muggles. Nor, probably, that it made him exceedingly uncomfortable. He sat quietly beside his husband. That was the point of this, after all, to be there for Harry. Harry was kinder to his aunt than most would be under the circumstances, and certainly kinder than she deserved given their past, but that was no surprise to Draco. He would back Harry no matter what, even if it meant attending a Muggle funeral for two of the most obnoxious people he had ever met. So be it.

Harry walked Aunt Petunia to the door, where some of the

funeral directors were standing, looking sombrely around at people, like they probably did very often.

The parlour of the place was rather ornate, and filled with people Harry recognised. He saw Aunt Marge again, of course, and friends of Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon. He also saw Dudley's friends and their parents. Piers threw him a filthy look when they made eye contact, as if it were Harry's fault that his best friend was dead. Harry wasn't surprised. He had expected to be looked at like that here.

Draco stood close, just beside and slightly behind Harry's left shoulder. Some of it was training, leaving Harry's wand-hand free if needed. The rest was being as close as he dared but letting Harry take the lead.

A few people looked confused to see Harry there at all as they came to give their condolences to Aunt Petunia, and they all looked confusedly at Draco, eyeing him suspiciously. Harry could tell from the looks what they were all thinking, and he wanted to shout at them all that, yes, he was with a bloke, but he only trudged through it, nodding as people gave him falsely polite greetings.

He held very still as Aunt Marge's still-blubbering form came over to hug Aunt Petunia tightly. She was almost Hagrid-like with her wailing and Harry prayed that she wouldn't notice him. But, of course, she did.

"What are *you* doing here?" she asked him in a carrying whisper. "You don't have the right to set foot on this floor. Disgracing your aunt like this, after all she's done for you." She gave Draco a look similar to the one she was giving Harry.

Harry merely clenched his teeth and looked away.

"Marge, it's fine," Aunt Petunia said quietly. "He's here by my request."

Both Harry and Aunt Marge gave Aunt Petunia surprised looks.

Draco had been scowling and considering whether or not he could non-verbally hex the woman and get away with it, when Petunia spoke up. He cocked his head, waiting to see what would happen next.

Aunt Marge's surprise turned into a somewhat angry confusion within a few seconds. "Petunia, what-"

But Aunt Petunia shook her head firmly without another word,

tears brimming in her eyes as they often did.

Harry was confused too and could hardly believe his eyes when Aunt Marge simply gave him a dirty look and stepped away from Aunt Petunia, still obviously shocked.

"It's not the time for that now," Aunt Petunia said seemingly to herself as she dabbed at her eyes, but Harry got the feeling that that wasn't the only reason she'd stopped Aunt Marge. He was once again feeling very out of place, and entirely unsure how to act. He wanted to reach for Draco, but didn't want to start anything here, and he knew it was possible that doing anything even remotely resembling 'couple behaviour' would indeed start something.

Soon, they were let into the actual room with the caskets. Aunt Petunia began sobbing and was immediately comforted by the surrounding people and Harry was able to step back. He didn't want to get too close to the bodies at all. They looked stiff. Makeup had been put on them to try and help conceal death, but they looked very dead to Harry. He felt anger at their deaths. Killing them had been pointless and he couldn't think it enough. Completely pointless. They weren't people who were close to him. They weren't people that had been any danger to Voldemort. They weren't even people Harry liked, and yet they'd been killed, thoughtlessly.

Draco had wanted to say something to the rude Muggle or Harry's aunt. But it wasn't his place. His place, he reminded himself, was beside his husband. Husband and child. He stood straight with his head held high and right hand ready in case of trouble. He looked everyone over. He probably looked arrogant, but that was fine with him.

Harry sat with Draco near the back, which he was glad of. He was in the room if Aunt Petunia ... needed him, but far enough that he could be out of the way, which most of these people preferred. He let out a quiet humourless snort when he thought about the fact that most of these men and women, if not all of them, thought him to be a troubled, deranged person from St. Brutus's. At least he could sit close to Draco through the long service, listening to the sniffing and then the - Harry couldn't help thinking it - ridiculous eulogies about how great Dudley and Uncle Vernon were. But he sat there quietly, he and Draco having paid for the entire thing and not even able to

touch each other.

Draco sat beside Harry, hand almost itching to slide around and stroke his belly. It was such a compulsion now that he had to focus not to do it. He made a fist and tried to keep his eyes on the room. The words he just tuned out.

Harry wasn't sure how long they had actually sat there, though it felt like forever. There was to be a lunch served afterwards, but Harry didn't want to go, and not only that, he didn't want to ruin things with his presence. It was a wonder to him that two people had died, and everyone still found it in themselves to judge him, even now. He was going to suggest to Aunt Petunia that he and Draco leave to eat somewhere else after dropping her off and then come back to get her with the car later.

As everyone milled about in the parlour room after the service, Harry approached Aunt Petunia when a group of her friends dispersed and cleared his throat quietly. "Erm, Aunt Petunia?"

"Yes?" she answered meekly.

"I thought it might be better if Draco and I went somewhere else for lunch. I won't go anywhere if you don't want me to, but I just ... well, like I said, I thought it would be better."

She stared at him.

"We can drop you off and then come to pick you back up when it's over," Harry continued. "I thought you might just like some time alone with ... everyone."

Draco cocked his head again, watching the exchange and keeping an eye on the nearby door. This may have been the longest he had been in a room with Harry without touching him since they had gotten married, and it was wearing on his nerves.

Harry waited for an answer, eyes on his aunt.

"You can drop me off, but after that ... I'm just going to go home," she said finally, not quite meeting his eyes.

Harry frowned. "But you're very welcome at my place, and you'll be safe there," he said.

"No," she said, a slight flush on her face. "I'm going to go home."

Harry frowned again.

"I ... thank you for ... everything you've done" And then she promptly began crying again.

Harry's eyebrows shot up and his eyes widened. He stood completely still for a moment before he began trying to awkwardly comfort her.

Draco frowned. He had no reason to comfort the woman. He didn't even particularly like her.

Just as suddenly as she'd started crying, Aunt Petunia stopped, though tears were still falling. She stood nearly as straight as Draco, looking firmly at a spot on the floor a little past Harry. "I thank you for everything you've done," she said again, voice oddly quick. "But after the lunch there won't be any need to pick me up. Mr and Mrs Polkiss are going to take me home. I need to go home." There was a small bit of emphasis on the word "need".

And then Harry understood. The flush on Aunt Petunia's face made sense. Obviously, he couldn't be sure, but it seemed that she was ashamed to stay with him. Ashamed to take what he was willing to give her. He was silent for a few moments before simply giving a nod. "Okay."

She met his eyes then, and he could see that what he thought was right. Her flush deepened a little. "Thank you," she said again, voice still odd. And Harry realised that that was probably as close to an apology as he would get. The only one she knew how to give. He nodded, walking over to the door to open it for her. She quickly made her way out, eyes on the ground again as more tears escaped her without a sound.

Draco watched her leave, and with a sigh, reached for Harry. All the relatives had left now and they were alone in the room.

Harry wrapped his arms around Draco and closed his eyes. It had been a rather long morning for him.

One arm came up around Harry's shoulders, silver fingers cupping the back of his head and the other hand, Draco slid between them to rest on Harry's belly, bending his head to capture his mouth with his own.

Harry sighed, kissing Draco back and wishing they didn't have to leave the room just yet, even though they were standing in a funeral home.

Draco pulled back from the kiss to smile down at his husband. "May I pay my last respects?" he said with a kind of evil smile on his

lips.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "What?" he said, only a small bit wary.

"Wait here if you like," Draco whispered.

Harry's forehead wrinkled with his frown and he wondered what Draco could possibly mean. "What are you going to do?" he asked.

"You don't trust me?" Draco asked, smirking.

Harry rolled his eyes a bit. "Of course," he said.

Draco kissed Harry's forehead and stepped back, turning and making his way past the chairs to where the bodies were.

Harry leant on the door frame, watching Draco curiously.

Draco stood looking down at the two dead men. First, he stepped up to Dudley and scowled. "You may not have deserved this, but you never earned better either," he told the dead face. Then he moved to Vernon's. "You did deserve this and worse," he said softly. "You took into your home an innocent child who was given into your care, and you treated his trust with contempt. I met that child. There is absolutely nothing that excuses your abuse. Your life was a waste." He took a deep breath and spat on the corpse before turning and walking back to his husband.

Harry's eyebrows were very slightly raised, but he didn't say anything. He pulled Draco to him and simply hugged him for a few moments. "We should probably get going," he said quietly.

They made their way out of the building and to the waiting Limo. Draco's fingers itched and he knew they were being watched. He hoped it was only the Muggles.

Harry climbed into the car through the door the driver was holding open again. He sat far enough away from Aunt Petunia for her to be comfortable, but also for himself as well.

It took a short while to get to the restaurant, and Aunt Petunia and Harry stared at each other for what felt like a long time before she went to get out. "Goodbye, Harry," she said, and Harry figured it was probably the last time he would ever see her. He watched her head in through the doors out the window and then sat back against the seat.

Their chauffeur closed the door again when it was apparent that they weren't going to get out and then lowered the divider between the front and back seats when he got in himself. "Where to, chaps?"

he asked, looking in the rear-view mirror.

"Just back to where you picked us up from," Harry said with a sigh.

The man nodded and began pulling out, heading onto the road again.

"Raise the divider and don't interrupt us until we say so," Draco added, and the driver did as he was told.

Harry turned his head to look at Draco then, eyebrows raised again.

"I have had hours of not touching you," Draco said, beginning to unbutton his own shirt.

A slow smile spread across Harry's lips, his eyelids dropping a bit. He raised his hands to begin unbuttoning his shirt too. "Good thing it'll take a while to get home," he said, voice already gone deeper.

Draco stripped quickly, his pale skin contrasting with the dark interior of the car. He watched Harry hungrily, his own cock hardening quickly at the look in the other man's eyes.

Harry tossed his shirt, wriggling out of his trousers as fast as he could without injuring himself in the enclosed space. He crawled across the seat to Draco on hands and knees before kissing him. Good thing the windows were tinted, or else everyone passing by would be getting a very good view of Harry's arse.

Draco arched into Harry, lips against his lover's and hands reaching to caress his back and arse.

"Mmm," Harry sighed, running his tongue inside Draco's mouth and moaning again as his skin was touched.

Draco moaned, the feeling of Harry's tongue inside his mouth exactly what he needed. Well, the beginning at least.

"Is there anywhere we haven't fucked?" Harry asked, kissing hotly along Draco's jaw now.

"Haven't done moving vehicles, yet," Draco whispered. "Should make a list and work on it."

Harry hummed with amusement. "Is it possible on a broomstick?" he whispered, licking Draco's earlobe now.

Draco chuckled. "With you, anything is possible," he said. "But you still owe me something on a train."

Harry smiled, licking back along Draco's jaw to his mouth. "Yes,

I suppose I do," he said against his lips.

Draco licked Harry's lips, running his hands along the curve of his back and then squeezing his arse again.

Harry smiled slyly as his tongue swirled with Draco's. "Is that the signal for 'fuck me now', or are you wanting my arse?" he asked, breathing into Draco's mouth.

"Oh, yes, please fuck me," Draco answered. Drawing back enough to smile at him, he said, "I know I am a wicked Slytherin, but I kept wanting you to bend me over and fuck me in front of those uptight sanctimonious arses at the funeral."

"God, I love how hot you are," Harry said, laughing a bit at the imagined looks of the faces in his head if he had really bent Draco over and fucked him. He lubed his fingers with the spell, moving his hand between their bodies to prepare him.

"Hot for you," Draco said, smirking and spreading his legs more to give Harry better access.

Harry smiled, loving Draco's ability to make him feel better no matter what. He was very much enjoying this verbal, playful sex after his dull, awful morning. He slipped fingers inside Draco, still smiling, but giving a short moan too at the feeling.

Draco spread his legs so far that one leg was up on the back of the seat and the other stretched onto the floor. He gasped and his cock bobbed at Harry's touch.

"You look fucking good like this," Harry told him, moving his fingers. "Maybe we should buy a car just so we can fuck in it."

"As you wish," Draco said, and then moaned, arching his hips up.

"Mmm, as I wish," Harry whispered, spreading himself over Draco as his fingers slipped out and then slicked his cock to slip that in. "I get the feeling you'd do anything I wished," he said into Draco's ear.

"Yes, yours, remember," Draco said, moaning again when Harry's fingers pulled out. "Yes, take me anywhere, anytime."

"Of course, I remember," Harry said, rubbing his cock against Draco's entrance and letting out a groan.

Draco gasped again, trying to arch up enough to impale himself on that teasing cock. He opened darkened grey eyes to look into Harry's face.

Harry bit his lip at Draco's look, sliding gently inside him with a long moan. "You have no idea how good you feel," he breathed, eyes locked on Draco's.

Draco's eyelids fluttered and he moaned along with his lover. "How could I feel with you inside me?" he finally managed.

Harry smiled again, his lips parted as he panted. "How could you feel anyway?" he asked. "Unless you've - mmm - got some very special powers, I'm pretty sure you can't fuck yourself."

Figuring out how to answer that was too much for Draco at the moment, his body clenching and writhing with Harry's cock inside him. "More, please," he begged.

Harry lowered his lips to Draco's as he thrust with his hips, cock twitching inside and heat spreading out through his body.

Draco smiled up at the sunroof, watching the January sky slide by the glass behind his husband's head. "Gods, yes," he said, relaxing his body against the leather seat.

Harry looked with adoration at Draco's face as he fucked him, moving his hips at a steady, slow pace, his back arching a bit with each smooth slide in.

There was something gloriously sensuous about the rocking movements of the car as a complement to the rocking of his husband's hips as he fucked him.

Harry could've watched Draco forever. There was just ... *something* about his face right then. Something so beautiful it made Harry's heart ache. "I'm mad for you," he whispered. "Completely mad."

"Yes," Draco said with a smirk, hands still clutching at Harry's back. As green eyes shined down on him there were flashes of memory from what seemed like a lifetime of wanting that gaze on him and he was arching up, coming hard.

Harry gasped as Draco came, not having expected it. He thrust harder into him, quicker. And within a few minutes, he was coming too, managing not to shout too loudly.

When Harry thrust hard, body shuddering, Draco wrapped his legs around his hips and held on. Harry's cock and magic filled him again, the power rolling through Draco. He rode it, Harry's orgasm prolonging his own.

Harry laid his head on Draco's shoulder, panting and sweaty. He

kissed his husband's salty skin and smiled, feeling perfect.

Draco lay beneath him, petting Harry's sweaty back and carding long fingers through his messy hair. "I meant it," he said softly.

"Meant what?" Harry asked, eyes closed as their bodies were gently rocked with the car's movements.

"It was wrong, very wrong what they did," he whispered.

Harry took in a deep breath of Draco's skin and nodded against it. "I suppose," he said quietly. "I've said it, but it was wrong how you were treated too." Harry thought Draco was treated even worse than himself, but he didn't say so.

Draco ran his fingers through Harry's hair again. "Not suppose, know it," he said.

Harry took in another breath and gave another nod. He kissed Draco's skin once more, hoping they still had a while in the car.

– CHAPTER NINE –

Media and Muggle Protection

Amidst all the funeral dealings, Draco set up the interview and the guidelines with the newspaper as he had before. This time the discussion would be about the situation with Voldemort and the Death Eaters, so there weren't as many restrictions for the reporter. They Apparated into the office and were met by a much grimmer-looking Robert Dwyer.

Harry stepped forward, not so nervous about this interview at all. "Where are we doing this?" he asked, holding out his hand for a simple, short greeting.

"I arranged for the same room as last time," Robert said.

Draco noticed the man looked considerably more rumpled, like he hadn't been sleeping well. He imagined reporting on the crimes of the Christmas Eve Massacre had to be stressful.

Robert led them into the side room that was set up as a sitting room, though the colours seemed more sombre this time.

Draco sat with Harry on the sofa. And they accepted the offered tea from one of the staffers.

Harry heaved a great sigh and rubbed his eyes underneath his glasses, as if readying himself for this. He was grateful for the tea; he felt like he was going to need it.

"Well, Harry," Robert said, "after all this time, it seems you have been right again about the dangers of You-Know-Who and his followers. How do you feel about that?"

Harry sighed heavily again. "Well, I can't say I'm happy to be right," he said, stating the very obvious and making sure his voice showed that, "but you're correct. I am right. He's beyond dangerous."

"Did you know he would do this?" Robert said.

"I didn't know he would do exactly what he's done, but I did know that he was certainly capable. I regret that I wasn't more on my guard, that he managed to lull everyone into a state of false security,

not that it was hard for him to do with the current attitude of the wizarding world."

"In your opinion, what is wrong with wizarding attitudes?" Robert asked.

"Sure, we've all taken a bit of notice since last year. The Ministry handed out leaflets on how to keep safe, but is everyone truly prepared? No. The hundreds dead are proof of that. It's still being treated like Voldemort's going to simply disappear again. He's not going to. We were not prepared for this attack, not prepared in the least," Harry replied.

"What do you think wizarding folk can do about the situation?" Robert asked.

Harry frowned. "They need to stop pretending like this is all going to just go away if they hide long enough. And they need to know that this isn't a war with a middle. Everyone is going to need to fight eventually, at least in some way. They need to know that now. I wasn't here for the first war, but it's not as if it were ages ago. Only sixteen years. People need to remember what it was like then and know that it's going to be worse this time."

"But that doesn't really tell people what they can do, does it? Be prepared? How?" Robert pressed.

"If I may," Draco said. "One thing people can do is start to hold the Ministry leadership accountable for their failure to keep convicted criminals in custody. They relied on Dementors and now that they don't have them anymore, they don't have standards for who is keeping these criminals locked up."

"Weren't several members of your own family those that escaped?" Robert asked Draco.

"It doesn't matter who they were," said Harry, "just that they were Death Eaters who got out and shouldn't have. Half of those caught - if not all, will get out if something isn't done about the situation in Azkaban. Aurors are already limited and they are being sent on pointless missions to catch people who are not true threats. The Ministry should be held accountable for that as well."

Draco schooled his features not to smile. Harry was definitely learning how to handle journalists. He nodded.

"Any other areas you would like to see changes in?" Robert said,

his expression showing he was very interested in this track of conversation.

Harry snorted. "Let's talk about the laws on Muggles, shall we? Half our population are Muggle-borns and half-bloods, myself included. Where is the protection for their families? The Muggle-borns are listed with the Ministry, but without wizard parents, they are left unprotected. And the families of half-bloods are left out of that too. Very obviously, being Muggle does not exclude them from this war. Yet another thing the Ministry has failed at. Although this should have been brought up by the people long ago."

"Do you blame the current administration under Minister Scrimgeour for this?" Robert asked.

"I'm not placing blame," Harry said. "I'm not trying to create hostility between the government and the public, but I'm not saying the Ministry is doing a good job either, because they're certainly not. Changes definitely have to be made if we are to get through this. It's time to stop messing about, time to stop worrying about the image, stop creating false security."

Robert nodded and then looked at Draco. "Reports say that you were one of the first people to respond Christmas eve," he said. "Can you tell us how you knew before Magical Law Enforcement?"

"Miss Granger was visiting us that evening," Draco said. "We checked in on her parents and found the attack in progress. I only regret that we weren't able to save her father."

Harry nodded sadly. "As do I," he said. "If protections and precautions had been in place, none of this may have happened."

"So are you suggesting that the wizarding community needs to put magical protections around non-wizarding homes?" Robert asked.

"Yes," said Harry. "There's some risk involved, of course there is, but truly, what is that to a life?"

"Won't that put the wizarding community in danger of being discovered by Muggles?" Robert asked.

"It would be hard work," said Harry, "but there is a whole department just for Obliviation. There are Concealing Charms, Secrecy Spells, all of that stuff specifically for being undetected. The Muggles we protect will need to be educated on what exactly is going

on, and learn how to keep it inconspicuous."

"So what do you think You-Know-Who and his followers will do next?" Robert asked.

"There's absolutely no telling," Harry replied. "Anything is game, but things are going to get worse before they get better. That sounds obvious and cliché, but it's very true."

"Do you have anything to add about this that I haven't asked you about?" Robert added.

"I would like to see everyone, including pure-bloods, ask themselves - Do you want to be following or aiding people who slaughter children in their beds?" Draco said. "Because it is time to stand against this type of violence and hatred."

Harry gave a firm nod. "Together is the only way we will win. We will crumble from within if there isn't unity."

Robert smiled brightly. "You two are a good interview." Then added, "So, I know this article isn't about your relationship, but I have to ask. How are you two doing? How is married life?"

Harry gave a small smile. "I'd have to say it's pretty great." He took Draco's hand and kissed it lightly.

"Suits me well." Draco smiled. "I have never been happier than with Harry."

"It shows," Robert said to both of them. "Can I contact you if I have more questions?"

"Sure," Harry said. "Although I don't want anything bothersome. Anything about what we've discussed today I would be happy to elaborate on, but that's pretty much it."

Robert thanked them and walked them back to the Apparition area. "I wish my predecessors in this job had listened to you, Harry," he said.

Harry sighed and nodded. "Thank you. So do I," he said.

After a short while, they Apparated back to the Manor and Draco pulled Harry into his arms, giving him a deep kiss.

Harry kissed him back, fisting a hand into Draco's hair and resting one against the back of his neck. He marvelled at how safe he always felt in Draco's arms, even if it was him who always wanted to do the protecting.

Draco held his husband close, enjoying the comfort and pride he

felt in him. He finally pulled back enough to look into his eyes. "You were amazing today," he said.

Harry gave a quiet snort. "Was I?" he asked.

"Yes." Draco smiled, pride shining in his grey eyes.

Harry laughed softly and kissed Draco's neck. "If you say so," he said, smiling as well.

"And I am right, as usual." Draco smirked.

The smile remained on Harry's face. "Yes," he said. "You do seem to be right an awful lot."

"And is there any reward you would like for being so amazing and recognising the truth about me?" Draco grinned.

Harry grinned as well and stuck his tongue out at the corner of his mouth, pretending to think. "Well ..." he began slowly, "I did hear, from someone very close to me, so close we're almost the same person," he grinned again, "that you give amazing head."

Draco smirked. "Only the best for you, my hero." He pressed his thigh against Harry's crotch, pulling him tighter.

Harry wagged his eyebrows. "Do I get a little extra for being your hero as well?" he asked playfully, grasping Draco's arse.

"Whatever you want," Draco promised, pressing his growing erection against Harry's hip.

Harry smiled widely and squeezed Draco's arse, pressing against his thigh. He leant in for a kiss, mouth already open slightly.

"Bloody hell," said someone's amused voice. "Your place is full of people, you know."

Harry turned his head quickly to see Fred standing there, having apparently just exited the nearby bathroom.

Draco blushed, dropping his head to Harry's shoulder.

It was sad that Harry's first thought was, *At least it's only one of the twins*. He gave Fred a sarcastic smile and held Draco tightly before Apparating them to their bedroom.

Draco should have been expecting the Apparition, but he gasped, having been too distracted. He laughed softly, face pressed to Harry's neck.

"I don't so much like being caught by them," Harry said quietly, smiling, "but I adore your reaction for some reason."

Draco decided to respond by nuzzling Harry's neck, kissing and

licking the skin below his jaw.

Harry smiled, one side of his mouth turning up, and closed his eyes, tilting his head. "I adore you all the time," he said, hands caressing Draco's back.

"Mmm," Draco hummed against his neck, sucking and nibbling now.

"I agree," Harry said breathlessly, biting his lip.

Draco sucked hard, leaving a dark red mark on Harry's neck then licking at it again.

"I still look like I have skin disease," Harry said, sounding like he didn't mind it at all, his head still tilted to give Draco as much room as he wanted.

"Nothing new there," Draco murmured against his skin, "but if you want them where no one can see, you should take your clothes off."

Harry smirked. "And what is your wish, my love?" he asked. "Shall I strip quickly with a flick of the wrist? Or would you like to do it?"

"This is your reward, love." Draco smiled

"Ah, right," said Harry, smiling at Draco with bright eyes. Quite suddenly, Draco was wearing nothing. Harry smirked and took a step back from him. "My, aren't you the sight?" he said, looking him up and down before stripping himself as well.

The feel of Harry's magic suddenly flowing over his body made every part of Draco tremble with excitement. Then the sight of Harry, naked and looking at him with even more naked desire, made him moan.

Harry shivered at the sound Draco made, his cock jumping. He turned slowly and made his way over to the bed, climbing atop it. He sat back, propped up a bit on the pillows and smiled smugly. "Get to work then, I suppose," he said, indicating his body with a sweeping gesture.

Draco ginned, lifting an eyebrow. "Any place you would like me to start?"

"Well," Harry began, "I would like you to kiss me all over, and tell me that you love me, and about how amazing I am," he smiled playfully, "and then it would be very wonderful for you to suck me

off, because you know how much I love that, and then if I'm still coherent, I'll think of something."

Draco chuckled, climbing into bed and admiring the bold man he had married. "As you wish, my hero," he said, kneeling beside him and leaning over to kiss him.

Harry smiled against Draco's lips, smoothing one hand down his back and then back up to his shoulder, feeling the amazing skin and muscles there, still amazed that he had ended up with someone so beautiful.

Draco licked and sucked on his husband's lips, then began moving down his jaw. "I love you," he began, whispering, "all of you. Every time I think I know everything about you, you still manage to surprise me."

"Mmm," Harry hummed, delighted by Draco's soft words and touches. He fought to keep his eyes open, wanting to look at that pale hair and white skin.

Draco's hair had come loose, the hair-tie stripped with his clothes, and it fell around his face like a soft white curtain. He ran lips and tongue along Harry's jaw to his ear, nibbling on the lobe. "Today you reminded me again that you are a leader. And I can't begin to tell you how much that turns me on. I will just have to show you."

Harry's breath hitched and his eyelids fluttered. His skin tingled where Draco touched and he stored away the info Draco had just given him. "Yes," he answered in a whisper.

Draco's lips, tongue, and teeth worked down Harry's neck. He breathed in the scent and taste of him. "I would know your smell anywhere. I would rather starve than go without tasting you," he whispered as he sucked along the flesh over Harry's collarbone.

Harry let out a breathy moan and loved how utterly romantic Draco could be, loved hearing his voice when it was low or when he whispered, loved feeling like the only person in the world. He could have stayed there forever. Draco always made him feel that way.

Silken hair followed in the wake of his mouth as Draco made his way down Harry's chest, pausing to tease and suckle Harry's nipples. "I love you," he said again. "I love your passion, your fire."

Harry certainly felt on fire right then, still watching Draco with

half-closed eyes. He gasped as Draco teased his nipples and then he ran fingers through his soft hair.

"Mmm," Draco sighed happily at the feel of Harry's hands in his hair. "I love how gentle you can be one minute and how fierce the next," he said, nipping at the muscles of Harry's chest.

Harry's body twitched under Draco's mouth and he sighed happily, still touching Draco, pressing his hands gently to his scalp and moving one down to his neck again. Merlin, he loved this man.

Draco rubbed his face against the soft hairs and skin of Harry's belly, a jolt of pleasure not only from his lover but from the extra magic there. "I love that we are a family. That your magic has allowed us the chance to be more than I ever thought," he whispered, kissing that spot reverently.

Harry smiled at that and couldn't agree more, even if it scared him sometimes. Whenever he thought about what their child might look like, what he might be like when he got there, he felt warm all over. He loved that he was able to make Draco so happy, even if he hadn't meant for it to happen. He wanted it badly as well, wanted to be a father, wanted to watch what Draco would be like. His smile grew at the thought.

Draco's hands slid down Harry's sides to rest on his hips, exploring the valley where the man's legs joined his body. He kissed along that ridge line on each side. "I love the way every part of you excites me. That you look at me like I am some kind of sweet you want to eat."

Harry nearly arched as Draco kissed along his skin and hips. Draco *was* like a sweet to Harry. He couldn't get enough of him. Not ever. Nothing would ever change that and Harry loved that he had that knowledge, that he was so sure of it.

Draco inhaled again, the musky scent of Harry making his mouth water and his own cock twitch again. He continued down Harry's legs, kissing his muscled thighs. "I love the way you touch me, the way you hold me. I love that you listen to me, even when you have no idea what it is I am going on about."

Harry laughed, but it sounded more like a moan as Draco was kissing so close to his throbbing erection. He wanted his mouth, but he also didn't want what Draco was doing to stop. "Yes," he

whispered again.

Continuing down, Draco kissed Harry's calves, stroking the thicker hair on his legs. "I love the contrast between us, like some kind of alchemical balance. I love that you seem to revel in those differences now."

Harry did. He loved that he and Draco were opposite. He felt like they were even more perfect for each other in that way. He loved their make-up sex after rows and how they were never bored with each other. He loved that they seemed like each other's fuel, because Draco was certainly what kept Harry going. He almost chuckled at his own corny thought, but was, once again, quite distracted with Draco's mouth.

Draco slid his hands up and under Harry's knees, lifting up so that he encouraged his husband to bend and spread his legs for him. "I love how wanton you are when I touch you or even look at you sometimes. I love that I am the only one who has ever done this to you."

Harry's breathing was slightly heavy now and his heart felt bigger than it was. His cock twitched and he whimpered, looking down into Draco's face, feeling exactly like Draco had just said he could make him feel.

Draco kissed his way up the soft skin of Harry's inner thighs, sucking and nibbling and shivering at the lovely sounds Harry made.

Harry felt lightheaded with love and need. Draco's lips on his sensitive flesh made him tremble and he finally had to close his eyes, moaning and whimpering again.

The scent of Harry was stronger now and it made Draco moan and have to concentrate to continue to go slowly, licking at the very sensitive skin where Harry's legs met his perineum, his soft sac so close to Draco's face, he could feel the heat.

Harry took a shuddering breath and moaned long and loud, his back arching slowly. He wanted to beg for it, but he remained quiet, also wanting Draco to keep moving slowly, which wasn't usual for him.

Draco's cheek grazed the edge of Harry's scrotum and he couldn't resist. He turned his face to lick and kiss that lovely sack, fingers pressing into his lover's thighs. Words were forgotten for the

moment as he used his tongue to show how he felt.

Harry threw his head back, the waiting making the touch even more pleasurable than it usually was. "Draco," he whispered. His name was so beautiful; everything about him was beautiful.

Draco's hands slid inward, pressing close, framing and holding Harry's groin. He was on his knees, arse in the air, while his face pressed against his lover. He slid his face against him, over Harry's bollocks and up his shaft.

Harry hissed and arched again, tossing his head to the side. "Yes," he groaned, fisting the blankets. "Yes, Draco."

Soft, silken hair pooled around Harry's groin as Draco stroked his lover's cock with his cheeks before going back to the base and placing the flat of his tongue on the underside and beginning a long, slow, firm lick up his length.

Harry clenched his teeth and pulled harder at the blankets, his breath coming in gasps now. "Merlin," he let out in a slightly strained voice. "Yes, please, yes."

Draco's tongue stopped just before the crown, his hot breath blowing against the red, sensitive flesh. Then slowly, with delight, he ran it around the rim of the head.

"Fuck," Harry whimpered. "Oh, fuck." He gasped and trembled and covered his face with his hand before having to hang onto something again and grasping the headboard behind him.

Harry's whimpers made Draco's cock twitch in delight and he kept his tongue circling, moving it slowly inward on the head of the other man's cock until he came to that glistening pre-come at the tip. He ran the tip of his tongue along that slit, moaning deeply at the taste.

Harry couldn't seem to stop whimpering. His breath was broken and ragged and he felt like his cock was about to explode. His toes curled and he squirmed and covered his face again with his free hand.

Now Draco let his lips slide forward, pressed against the crown like he would kiss Harry's lips. The tip of his tongue teased and swirled over the head as he pressed down, taking the head inside the heat of his mouth.

"Draco," Harry moaned, voice strained again. He threw his arm out and grasped the covers again, unable to keep still lest he thrust up

into Draco's mouth. "Fuck, yes," he breathed. "Oh, yeah, please yes."

Draco's hand still held Harry down as he lost himself in the texture of flesh in his mouth. Slowly he began to move down and then up again, taking a little more with each downward slide.

Harry couldn't believe how bloody good this felt. He wanted to look down at Draco, wanted to see those gorgeous lips around him, wanted to look at his beautiful hair and skin again, but he knew that if he did he would come and he didn't want to yet. He wanted to savour this a little longer, wait until he couldn't stand it anymore.

Draco's hands moved inward, his right one gently cupping Harry's bollocks in his palm and the silver fingers curling around the base of his cock as he took more of him inside his mouth.

"Fuck, yes!" Harry shouted. "Oh, hell!" He was confident that no one could drive him crazy like Draco could. He couldn't imagine anyone else having a tongue like that or a mouth so hot. *Look at him, look down at him*, his brain seemed to chant at him. But he couldn't, not yet.

"Mmmmm," Draco hummed around that thick flesh, panting now from his own arousal. He could feel Harry's magic crackling over his own skin like a hot caress. Slow was abandoned now as he pushed down until the head of Harry's cock grazed the back of his throat, where muscles squeezed around that flesh.

Harry gasped sharply and his eyes flew open. Draco's hair was all over the place, messed up and gorgeous. His skin and cheeks were flushed with arousal and, sweet Merlin, his lips, oh, his lips were the most wonderful thing about him right then. He looked like pure, utter *sex* and Harry was coming. He held onto the headboard and blanket as tight as he could, crying out as he arched.

Draco pulled back enough to swallow, throat and lips milking his lover's cock as he gently pressed his bollocks in his hand. He struggled for control as Harry's magic flared over him, running like hot fingers over his skin and making his body shudder.

Harry lay panting and still staring down at Draco, his mouth hanging open. Merlin, if that man wasn't the most wonderful, amazing person on the planet, he'd eat Buckbeak.

Draco sighed, slowly sliding his mouth off of Harry's softening cock. He grinned, sitting back up on his knees and throwing his hair

off his face. He sat with hands on his hips and his cock jutting proudly as he admired his panting husband.

"Fuck, Draco," Harry said with a crooked grin, his heart still going faster than normal.

"Is that commentary or a request?" Draco teased with a raised eyebrow.

Harry chuckled weakly. "Whatever you want it to be," he replied, still grinning.

"Was that the reward you were hoping for?" Draco smiled proudly, wrapping the fingers of his right hand around his own aching cock, his breath hitching on contact.

Harry smiled cockily, eyes following the movements of Draco's hand before slowly making their way back up to his face. "I rather think you did a pretty good job," he said.

"Pretty good," Draco drawled. "Well, Potter, if you think you can do better"

– CHAPTER TEN –

Marked

Harry smirked. "I'm never one to back down from a challenge," he said, licking his lips.

Draco smiled, still stroking himself and waiting to see what Harry would do.

Harry enjoyed the view for a few more moments before pushing himself up and getting to his knees before Draco. He wrapped an arm around his waist and pulled him forward, meeting his lips with his own and trailing a hand down his chest.

Draco rose up on his knees to meet Harry, gasping at his touch and opening his lips to his.

Harry moved his hand further down. He grasped Draco's wrist gently to stop him from stroking himself. "I believe that's mine," he whispered.

"All yours," Draco whispered eagerly, and he let go of his own flesh.

Harry's lips curved softly upward and he replaced Draco's hand with his own. "I love that this is mine," he said, giving Draco's cock a gentle squeeze. "And I love that this is mine." He ran his hand up Draco's back. "And this." He kissed Draco's lips. "I love it."

"Mmm." Draco shuddered. "Oh, yes, yours."

Harry stroked Draco slowly, licking his lips with the same speed.

Draco was trembling. Harry's tongue, and his breath on his face, and his hand on his cock made him whimper.

"I love the sounds you make," Harry whispered. "I love how you look at me like I'm the only person in the room - in the world even." He began backing up on the bed and pulling Draco with him so he could lay him down.

"Yes, only one in the world who makes me feel like this," Draco whispered, following him. He loved it when Harry took charge.

Harry lay Draco down and pressed his tongue flat to his jaw. He

licked along it before returning to his lips. His hand never left Draco's cock and he continued to stroke him slowly, squeezing lightly over the head.

Draco swallowed hard, mewling against Harry's lips.

"So beautiful," Harry whispered. "I've never seen anything so gorgeous." He kissed down Draco's chin and neck, mirroring how Draco had moved with him.

Draco spread his arms wide, gripping the covers. "You are beautiful," he whispered.

"No, you are," Harry countered. "In all senses of the word." He moved lower, licking the skin at the centre of Draco's chest and around his nipples.

"Tell me," Draco said, his nipples hardening before even being touched.

Harry smiled against Draco's skin. "You're gorgeous, but you already know that, and if you don't, you're blind." He moved closer to one of his nipples. "Everything about you is beautiful. You love me, and you've come to care about the people close to me, even though you didn't have to." He licked the skin of that hardened flesh. "I love how happy this child makes you. I've never seen anything as beautiful as your face when we talk about him. I love how much you care about me no matter how crazy it makes me sometimes when you're right about my safety." He paused and his smile widened just a bit. "And you have no idea how much I hate admitting it. You're the most beautiful person I've ever met."

Draco was panting, Harry's words and touch making him moan in desire. It meant so much to him that Harry understood, that Harry saw him and listened to him.

"Merlin, I love you so much I can't even believe I'm capable of it sometimes," Harry continued. "You really have no idea. If you took all the times I've told you I love you and multiplied it by the highest number you can count to, it still wouldn't be enough." He latched onto Draco's left nipple, licking and kissing.

"Yes, yes, I love you," Draco responded, arching.

Harry smiled again, moving lower and tonguing his way down. "I fucking love that you fancied me in school. Nothing turns me on more than imagining you at Hogwarts thinking of me, and I don't

even know why, but, fuck, it makes me so hard."

"Yes, always watching you, always wanting," Draco said, his stomach muscles jumping as Harry's tongue moved over them.

Harry moaned against Draco's skin, dipping his tongue into his navel and then kissing and pulling on the hair below it with his lips. "I love this hair too," he said, licking it. "And what a prize it leads to."

"Your prize," Draco gasped, spreading his legs.

"And I love it when you do that," Harry said, letting go of Draco's cock to rest both hands on his thighs. "When you spread yourself for me. Fuck, could you be any hotter?"

"Hot for you," Draco said, pressing his hips up against Harry's hands, enjoying the feeling of them.

"Mmm," Harry hummed. "Hot for me," he repeated, and he lowered his face and licked the skin so close to that throbbing heat.

Draco whimpered again, his cock twitching.

"I love this cock inside me," Harry said, licking it with just the tip of his tongue. "And I fucking love watching it," he licked again, "when I'm fucking you."

Draco moaned loudly, totally turned on by Harry's words and trembling under his tongue.

"Mmm, and your voice makes me feel like coming all over again." He flicked his tongue quickly over the head over and over again, moaning at the taste of Draco.

"Yessss," Draco hissed, pushing against Harry's hands again.

Harry laid a hot open-mouthed kiss to Draco's cock before bringing one hand up to lightly take hold of that amazing flesh. "I could ride this for hours," he whispered against it. "Suck it for hours - longer if we could last, but we're just too fucking hot." He smiled, mouth still open as he breathed hotly against Draco's cock.

"Oh, Gods, yes," the blond cried out. "Please do it."

Harry played his tongue up the length, licking and sucking as well. "You taste so good, Draco," he said, licking away more pre-come that had gathered.

"So good," Draco echoed, silver hand balled into the bed covers and his right hand trembling and reaching for Harry's hair.

Harry lowered his mouth over the head of Draco's cock and

sucked gently on it, raising up again and kissing. "So beautiful," he whispered before moving over him again.

Draco's fingers reached into those soft, dark locks and he ran them through Harry's hair.

"Mmm," Harry hummed happily, sucking gently again. He ran his tongue around the head before moving down and meeting the top of his own hand with his mouth.

Draco's fingers curled, pulling at Harry's hair, and his hips jerked up. He was so close to coming. He wanted to last, but like Harry said, it was just too hot.

Harry pressed down on Draco's thigh and sucked harder, moving his lips and mouth over Draco's cock. He looked up at him through his lashes and moaned at the sight of him flushed and panting.

"Harry, almost ..." Draco cried out, shuddering.

Harry was breathing heavily through his nose already, but he doubled his efforts, lost in the taste, smell, and feel of the man he loved. *Yes, Draco, Merlin, yes. Come in my mouth*, he thought desperately.

"Harry!" Draco shouted, coming and pulling his lover's hair.

Harry moaned as his mouth was flooded and his hair pulled. There was nothing else like moments such as this one, absolutely nothing else like it. He sucked Draco clean, not wanting to let him go but doing so anyway, panting.

Draco kept pulling Harry's hair. "Come ... up ... here," he panted.

Harry lifted himself and crawled up beside Draco on his hands and knees, lowering himself again so that he was lying pressed nearly on top of Draco's side.

Draco held on to Harry's hair until he could pull his face to his own, looking into his eyes. "You are amazing," he whispered fiercely.

Harry smiled, his eyes bright with love and happiness. He didn't truly know what to say, but he was happy that Draco thought him amazing.

"I feel safe with you," Draco said. "No one else makes me feel like that."

"Good," Harry whispered, cupping the side of Draco's face. "I want you to feel safe with me."

Draco smirked, still pulling Harry's hair a little, keeping his face above his own. "Do you remember the woods?"

Harry looked confused. "The woods ... ?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Forbidden Forest, first year?" Draco smiled, grey eyes glittering.

"Ah," Harry said. "Yes. Detention that *you* got us landed in." He smiled and shook his head a little.

A big grin spread across Draco's face as he still held Harry's hair. "I was following you," he said. "Gods, you were so clueless."

Harry snorted quietly. "You have to admit you were a prat," he said. "Besides, I was eleven. I wasn't thinking about such things. Although, I don't know what my excuse is for third year and up." He snorted again.

"Did you know how frightened I was of that fucking forest?" Draco whispered.

"You looked pretty scared," Harry said, racking his brain and thinking back to that night. It felt like forever ago.

"I had never been in the woods before, not even in the daylight," Draco explained, running his fingers through Harry's hair.

"You must have been terrified," Harry said. "I was scared a bit too."

"I wanted to hold your hand," Draco whispered. "I couldn't tell you that I was happy it was you I was there with."

Harry smiled a slightly sad, regretful smile. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"Sorry that I was happy to be with you?" Draco smiled "I was glad it was you. Do you understand?"

"I'm sorry that you couldn't hold my hand," Harry said. "But I am glad that you wanted to, even if you did pick the dog over me." His smile grew.

"I ... I couldn't let you know," Draco said.

Harry kissed Draco on the cheek. "Is that why you scared Neville then?" he asked. "Because you didn't want to go with him? Or were you just being mean?" he asked in a mock-parenting voice.

Draco rolled his eyes. "Ah, both?" he said. "And I didn't like anyone who you liked more than me. Which was bloody well everyone!"

"Well, I wouldn't go *that* far," Harry said. "I never truly hated you. You just ... made me so bloody angry all the time. You wouldn't stop.

No matter what. You were always there whenever I messed up or made a fool of myself. *Always* there. You made fun of me a lot. It bloody pissed me off." He stroked Draco's face and kissed him again.

"I wasn't just there when you messed up," Draco whispered, kissing him too. "I was there when you succeeded, when you triumphed," he continued. "I was always there, watching you."

"Well, I didn't know that," Harry replied. "You only made sure you said anything when I failed at something. And, oh, Draco, the bloody Dementor stuff in third year. Merlin, what were you thinking? Half the stuff you did was absolutely insane."

Draco laughed, falling back. "Actually, that was pretty funny. Damn, you turned me on when you got so fucking mad. I came so hard that night, I thought I would pass out," he explained.

Harry looked at Draco, highly amused. "You got up on Crabbe's shoulders and threw a bloody cloak on and then I shot a Patronus at you, and that made you come?"

"Later," Draco smirked, "but yes. Do you have any idea what you look like when you do that spell?"

Harry laughed quietly. "I've never done it in a mirror," he said. "So, no."

Draco rolled his eyes. "You couldn't see or feel what I do even if you did." He smiled. "When you look like you do to someone like me, how could I want to look anywhere else?"

Harry smiled widely. "God, it's still so hard to believe that all those times we fought, it turned you on. I just - wow." He was silent for a moment, thinking. "Oh - remember that fight during that Quidditch match? You couldn't have been turned on by that. No way."

Draco blushed, rolling his eyes again. "Why the hell not?" He laughed.

"I hit you in the face!" Harry exclaimed, eyebrows high on his forehead. "It was no slap either. I full out punched you right in the jaw and a lot of other places too. And George as well."

Draco turned his face, attempting to hide his blush in the pillow.

"You're embarrassed?" Harry asked, moving so that Draco couldn't get away from him. He grinned down at him and kissed the very spot he had bruised his knuckles on.

Draco couldn't believe it, but he was getting turned on just remembering, blushing so hard his ears felt like they burned.

Harry grinned so wide at Draco's blush, he thought his lips might split. "I have no idea why you're so embarrassed right now, but I am thoroughly enjoying it."

Draco covered his eyes with his hand, panting, and his cock was getting hard. Hell, he had only come minutes ago and yet he wanted Harry.

Harry wasn't aware that Draco was getting hard. He was far too delighted with his flushed face and didn't even know why. Draco was utterly adorable in that moment.

"I didn't" Draco gasped, "I mean, I wanted ... oh, hell."

"What?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow confusedly again.

Draco chuckled, still hiding behind his hand.

"What?" Harry asked again, pulling gently at Draco's hand.

"I didn't want them to heal it," Draco hissed, his blush staying bright.

Harry's mouth dropped open slightly and a delighted smile lit up his face. He couldn't hold in a few small laughs and he hugged Draco tightly, pressing his face into his neck. "You. Are. Brilliant," he said.

"You know why?" Draco asked, confused and shuddering at Harry's face against his neck.

"I'm guessing because you didn't want to remove a mark I made?" Harry said, hoping he wasn't wrong and beginning to feel a little embarrassed himself if he was.

"Yes," Draco said, still blushing but happy that Harry understood. "Because you touched me."

"Merlin, Draco," Harry whispered, smiling. "That's absolutely mad."

Draco looked into Harry's eyes, longing and adoration plain in his own. "Yes, mad," he whispered back.

Harry leant in and kissed Draco softly, still smiling. "So I'm married to a madman then?" he asked, smoothing Draco's hair back.

"I think you knew that already," Draco said. "I like your marks on me."

"Well, you've certainly got a surplus," Harry said with a small chuckle.

"Gods, you think I am mad even now, imagine what you would have thought if you had known then," Draco whispered.

"Oh, I don't think you're mad," Harry said in a teasing voice. "To be honest, I don't know what I would have done back then, but it doesn't matter, because I love it now."

Draco smiled, raising an eyebrow. "Yes, I was a total prat," he said. "You should punish me for that sometime."

"Hmm, sounds promising," Harry said, smiling as well. "I thought I was the kinky one."

Draco's breath hitched at Harry's approval. "I never said I wasn't," he whispered.

"Nor have you ever proven otherwise," Harry said with a small laugh, his eyes lit up. "I seem to remember *me* being tied up, *me* with a knife at my throat and *me* gagged. Perhaps it is you who are the kinky one and you have pulled a fast one on me with your sneaky Slytherin ways."

"Kinky one? I think that no one would be surprised to find I am kinky, Harry. But you, their hero, that's a different story." Draco smiled.

Harry laughed. "Yes, I suppose you're right." He sighed. "Again."

"Of course, I am." Draco smirked, still panting a bit with his arousal.

Harry grinned and leant in to kiss Draco again, running his hand back along his jaw.

Draco kissed back, his tongue thrusting into his lover's mouth and his hand reaching to stroke down his back.

Harry hadn't been expecting a kiss quite like this one, but he happily and very readily accepted it, twining his tongue with Draco's.

Smooth skin under his hand was lovely and Draco ran his fingers down Harry's spine, exploring muscle and bone beneath.

Harry sighed happily through his nose, pressing himself more firmly against Draco without even knowing he was doing so, just to feel that much more of him.

Harry's thigh softly brushed Draco's hard cock as he pressed against him and the blond shuddered, sucking on his lover's tongue.

Harry moaned very quietly and pulled back just the slightest little bit for just the smallest amount of time. "Are you hard?" he asked,

voice amazed and delighted. He felt Draco's cock, but he wanted to ask him anyway.

Draco blushed again, nodding.

Harry was getting aroused again himself and he couldn't help but smile again at Draco's blush. He moved forward, pressing his lips to Draco's once more.

Draco's hand slid down to cup Harry's arse. He opened his mouth, licking his lover's lips.

Harry moved to straddle Draco, throwing his leg over him and pressing their groins together while they kissed. The pendant Harry never took off hung around him and rested against Draco's skin.

Draco moaned into Harry's mouth, thrusting up against him, both hands caressing his back.

Harry pressed just as firmly down into Draco, his cock hardening quickly. "What ... shall we ... do ... now?" he gasped and moaned, rocking against Draco's erection.

"Fuck," Draco gasped by way of answer.

"How ... do you ... want it?" Harry panted, kissing and nipping along Draco's jaw and neck. "Me ... or you?"

"Fuck me, Harry," Draco begged, arching and rubbing himself against his husband.

Harry gasped and groaned, sucking on Draco's neck as he continued to thrust down against him.

"Yours," Draco gasped again. "Your hands on me, your cock inside me."

Harry reluctantly pulled his mouth from Draco and moved off of him to get between his legs. He lubed his fingers quickly with the spell and pressed them into Draco, moving over him to kiss him again.

Draco lifted his legs, bending his knees so that he could spread himself open for Harry. He opened his mouth and his body, wanting Harry inside him.

Harry stroked Draco's prostate and slipped his tongue inside his mouth, using his free hand to press one of Draco's legs up, grasping it tightly.

"Mmm," Draco hummed, sucking Harry's tongue and arching against his hand.

Harry moaned at the feel of Draco's mouth and he moved his fingers more firmly inside him. "I love this," he whispered. "Love fucking you, hearing you, feeling you squeeze around me."

"Yes, always want you," Draco gasped, his muscles clenching and relaxing.

"Mmm," Harry moaned, loving Draco's reactions as always. He hardly wanted to remove his fingers, but he did and slicked his cock with them before pressing hands to both Draco's legs now and pushing them up.

"Oh, yes," Draco moaned, his hair tangling as he thrashed his head and pulled his legs up as far as he could toward his chest.

Harry felt weak just looking at Draco and knowing that he was his. He was still so fucking amazed by that and had a feeling he would always be. He moved forward, letting Draco's leg go for a second to guide himself into him. He slid slowly inside the tight heat of Draco's body, gasping as he did.

"Yes, perfect inside me," Draco gasped again, shuddering as he felt the length of his lover pressing inside.

"Perfect," Harry whispered, fully pressed into Draco and staring down at him.

Draco looked up into those green eyes. His breath caught. "Fuck me," he breathed. "Love me."

"Always," Harry whispered, keeping eye contact with Draco as he slid back and forward again.

Draco could feel his lover's cock as it slid inside him, filling him, and his own body gripping him as he slid out. He never tired of that sensation, this ability to take part of the man he loved inside himself.

Harry gasped quietly and moved quicker, watching the way Draco's body was rocked with his thrusts, the way his face looked as he made love to him.

Draco met his lover's thrusts as he watched the man's face and upper body as he moved. He could feel Harry's bollocks against his arse each time he pressed forward and the soft hair of Harry's belly against his thighs. And amidst it all was that swirling power that radiated out from him.

The look and feel of Draco's body accepting him into it was amazing, always would be. There were almost no words to describe

what it felt like, how it felt to be made love to while making love, because that's what Harry felt like they were doing. Draco was as much giving to Harry as Harry was giving to him.

"Harder, deeper," Draco encouraged. "Fill me."

Harry was panting now as he worked to comply with Draco's words. He thrust hard into him, crying out and clutching at his legs.

Harry's cries were beautiful and Draco felt total joy at his deep thrusts. He was claimed by the one person he had always wanted. Magic rippled around his body, his husband's magic combining with his own.

Harry could feel himself getting close, could feel that telltale tingling heat in his belly and the tightening of his balls. "Fuck, Draco, fuck!" he gasped, knowing it would be only seconds before he came.

Magic flared and Draco was coming, feeling the heat of his lover inside him. His body clenched around Harry's cock as Draco's orgasm shot his seed over his own belly and chest.

Harry gasped again at the gorgeous sight of Draco coming. It pulled his own release from him and his back arched as he filled his lover. Then he slumped forward, making small whimpering noises between heavy breaths.

Draco's eyes were closed as he lay there feeling the sensation of Harry buried inside him and their combined magic flowing in the warm currents of air around them. He smiled dreamily.

Harry tried to take steadying breaths and pulled out of Draco very gently after a few moments. He took his place pressed closely to his side again and laid a hand on his sticky chest.

Draco's legs dropped to the bed and he felt tired and sated. He made a small pleased noise when Harry pressed beside him again and his arm came around to hold him.

Harry sighed happily and yawned, closing his eyes. "I love you," he said quietly. "And I want to get under the covers but I don't feel much like moving."

Draco couldn't move, not even if Harry hadn't been pressed against him. "Call an elf," he suggested.

Harry huffed. "No," he said, moving his hand around to feel if there were any loose blankets he could pull over them.

Draco felt warm and happy, drifting into sleep without caring

about blankets or house-elves.

Harry eventually gave up and simply pressed closer to Draco, wrapping arms and legs around him. He pressed his face into his neck and held him tight. Within a few moments, he was asleep as well.

– CHAPTER ELEVEN –

Four Funerals and a Baby

Harry felt very odd as he began to wake. First, he was not covered up and his arse was cold. Second, his head was not on a pillow but nearly hanging off the edge of something. Third, there was something on his hand, and fourth, he felt a bit sick. He opened his eyes with a slight groan and lifted his head to look around. His legs were flung out over Draco's and he was lying nearly horizontally to how he should be and he didn't really know how he had got that way. He pushed himself up and found that his arm was asleep where he had been lying on it, and his head hurt from being pressed to the edge of the bed. All in all, he did not wake up feeling terribly good.

Draco murmured softly in his sleep as Harry moved, his left hand reaching for him.

Harry groaned again and moved his legs off of Draco to crawl back to his side. He pulled roughly at the covers and got under them, wishing the unpleasant churning in his stomach would go away, and that his head would stop throbbing.

Draco's hand met covers instead of flesh and he frowned, peeking one eye open. He was lying on top of the covers and Harry under them. He sighed, sliding his hand up to touch Harry's hair instead.

Harry closed his eyes to keep the light out and it didn't help much, but Draco's touch made him feel a little better. "I feel like ... ugh," he said.

"What?" Draco opened his eyes and looked worriedly at Harry.

"Like shit," Harry murmured.

"Colourful, but not helpful," Draco replied. "Is it the nausea?"

Harry nodded, but quickly stopped. "Yes, and I have a headache," he said.

"Headache Potions aren't usually safe for pregnant ... people," Draco said. "Do you want water or something?"

"I don't know," Harry said. "Yeah, I guess."

Draco Summoned water and a cold, wet cloth, pressing the folded compress against his lover's forehead.

"Thank you," Harry mumbled, trying to sit up more. He took the water from Draco and sipped it.

Draco slid his hand down Harry's skin to rest on his belly, feeling for that spot.

Harry rested his head back against the headboard and closed his eyes again, taking deep breaths to keep the feeling of needing to vomit at bay.

Draco rubbed his hand in slow circles on Harry's belly, happy despite Harry's discomfort.

Harry heaved a sigh and cracked his eyes open to stare at Draco. "How long will it be like this?" he asked, a disgruntled frown on his face.

"I don't know," Draco said quietly. "With a traditional pregnancy, the nausea usually goes away after the first trimester."

"And how long is that supposed to take? And why did I just all of a sudden start feeling like this?"

"Normal gestation for humans is nine months," Draco said. "So that means the first three months. And it means that your body is shifting the balance of vital humours to meet the baby's needs."

"Right," Harry responded, not really knowing what Draco was talking about.

Draco sighed. "Your body is trying to change itself enough to take care of the baby," he explained, "and that happens to pregnant witches too."

"Well, I hope it doesn't change too much," Harry said, sounding wary.

"I know you don't feel well, but you do need to eat," Draco said, bending over and laying a kiss on Harry's belly.

Harry sighed again. "Just give me some toast or something then, please, because I don't want bacon or sausages or, ugh, anything like that."

Draco called for a house-elf and Babb showed up. He ordered that breakfast be brought to them, wanting toast, fruits and porridge, as well as tea and juice.

Harry picked at his food once it was there, eating tiny little bites and chewing thoroughly. "What's up for today?" he asked.

With a pop, Leakey appeared bearing a silver tray piled high with parchment and the *Daily Prophet*. "Masters, Miss Granger insisted I bring these to you as soon as you got food," he said.

Draco took the tray from the elf and asked him to tell Hermione that they would look them over immediately.

"Interview already in it?" Harry asked, staring at the *Prophet*. He knew it would be.

"Potter Blames Ministry for Death Eater Attacks," Draco drawled.

Harry sighed again. "Of course it's worded that way," he said, unsurprised.

Draco skimmed over the article, turning the page to follow it and nodding. "Not a bad piece, considering," he said.

"Good," said Harry, taking a small bite of porridge. "What's all that?" he asked, indicating the rest of the parchment.

Draco handed the paper to Harry and picked up the pile of letters. "Oh, my, but you are popular today," he said, laughing. "They are addressed to you and some of them have the Ministry seal," he said.

"Wonderful," Harry replied, skimming the paper as Draco had done.

"Shall I open them?" Draco asked, fingering the seals.

Harry shrugged. "Sure."

Draco opened a very official-looking one. He laughed then opened a second one, still laughing.

"What?" Harry asked, leaning over to try and get a look at the letters.

Draco handed them over. "The Minister wants to see you - urgently." He smirked. He began opening more letters.

Harry raised an eyebrow and snorted at the hidden heat of the words in the letter. "Merlin, he has some nerve, doesn't he?"

"Oh, and these are fan and hate mail," Draco said, reading through the others. "This one is for me," he said. "I am a blood traitor who should be ripped to pieces."

Harry scowled. "Pure-blood?" he asked.

"Unsigned," Draco said, tossing it aside.

"Well, it's not surprising, is it? I'm certainly not new to either kinds of mail."

"Some of these are thanking you for what you said," Draco pointed out.

Harry leant over again. "I'm glad," he said. "Means it got through to at least a few people."

"The note from Hermione says you have more downstairs." Draco chuckled.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Even better then," he said, giving a little smile.

"Operation Sod Off the Ministry seems successful," Draco said, laughing again.

Harry laughed with him. "So now there's the matter of getting the Muggles here," he said after a few moments.

"I will work with Granger on that," Draco said. "Will you meet with Scrimgeour?"

"Do you think I should?" Harry said. "I mean, I suppose I should if it's me who wants changes, or at least brought them up."

"Yes," Draco said. "Do you want me with you?"

Harry shrugged. "Well, I don't *not* want you with me. What am I even supposed to say to him, I wonder? Do this right now? Seems sort of stupid, and it's not like I have any authority to make him change things. All he wants to do is yell at me and glare."

"Give him a couple days of mail and let him suffer, then make the appointment," Draco said.

Harry smiled and nodded, happy to have someone who knew what they were doing in situations such as this.

Miserable. That was how Harry felt. It was how he had felt for most of the week. After the Dursleys' there had been two more funerals and they had just returned from a third.

Hermione's father's had been first. Watching her had been ... awful. Watching her face as everyone there had been made to believe that such a young, healthy man had died from a heart attack to hide it from the Muggles, when he had been murdered, was a terrible thing to witness. What was worse was Harry knew there was nothing he

could do to make her feel better, or to show those people the truth. And like Aunt Petunia, Hermione's mother had decided to go home too to live with her sister for a while. Even their separation had been hard to watch.

Seamus's had come next. Harry was hardly able to look down into the casket holding his friend. Seventeen and he had been killed. Harry had been hardly able to bear it when Seamus's mother had dropped to her knees beside the casket, sobbing and crying out, "My baby!" over and over. And seeing Dean there had been as hard as anything. Harry'd had to look away to hide his tears.

Little Dennis Creevy's had been that day's. Looking at Colin's normally bright, excited face, now deadened, as he stared down at his little brother's casket made Harry want to scream and rage and hit something. It filled him with despair and hatred for the people who had done this to his friends. He clenched his fists, remembering, as he sat in his own safe, comfortable sitting room with Draco, Hermione and the Weasleys.

He was sitting in a chair beside a window, staring out over the grounds and the slightly melting snow. Everything looked wet and cold and grey. Dead.

Draco had kept his face sombre, but with little emotion showing through most of the day. He held Harry's hand, passed him handkerchiefs when he cried, and did anything he could think of to be supportive. He didn't miss the looks of suspicion he got at the wizard funerals. Once they got back to the Manor, he made sure everyone got food and kept playing his role as good host. He was wound so tight inside, he was afraid to let go.

"Might anyone be up for some more tea?" Mrs Weasley asked, voice quiet. She looked like she was trying to be cheerful, but not really succeeding.

Harry sighed and was silent for a few moments before calling a house-elf for her. He went back to staring out the window, lost in his own thoughts, the quiet voices in the room like a humming in his ears.

Draco stood behind Harry, placing his hand on his shoulder. "Can I get you anything, love?" he asked quietly.

"Hm? Oh, no," Harry muttered, looking over his shoulder for a

second before turning to the window yet again. He watched a bird fly by in the cold and strangely found himself wondering where Fawkes was. He sighed and wished that Dumbledore was there. He didn't know why, he just wanted him. He wanted his comforting words that always made it seem like hope would never be lost.

Draco walked around the front of Harry, and after only a glance at the others in the room, dropped to his knees in front of him, placing both his hands on his lover's knees.

Harry looked down at Draco and gave him a small smile. "Sit up here with me?" he asked, taking Draco's hands and pulling on them gently.

Draco crawled up his lover's legs and into the chair with him.

Harry pulled Draco into his lap, facing him so he could look up at the man he adored. "Thank you," he said very quietly, resting hands on the small of Draco's back.

Draco smiled back. "At your service," he said, looking into those green eyes.

Harry wrapped his arms around Draco and sat up straighter to hug him tightly. "No, really. Thank you, love," he whispered.

Draco's face was now pressed against the side of Harry's and his arms came around his neck to hold him. "I wish I could do more," he whispered back.

"It's enough," Harry said. "All of what you've done has been ... more than I ever thought ... more than I ever expected. You didn't have to do any of it and you have and I - I don't even know what to say to you. You amaze me and I love you."

"Flattery will get you anything you want, Potter." Draco smirked, pulling back to look at him and raising an eyebrow.

Harry smiled a real smile. "Merlin, I love you," he said, shaking his head, his eyes soft.

"Anything you want?" Draco continued to look at his husband.

Harry laughed quietly. "Everything I could ever want, you've given to me," he whispered, bringing their foreheads together. "Just a few more things I need to take care of and then I will be an even happier happiest man on earth."

Draco snorted. "I mean you need to eat something," he said, smirking again.

Harry smiled and gave Draco a gentle kiss. "If you say so," he said quietly.

Draco climbed off his lover's lap and held out his hand to help him from his spot by the window. "Come eat then," he said.

Harry took Draco's hand and pulled himself up. He walked over to where the room was crowded with redheads and took a seat at the sofa there, reaching out for a chocolate biscuit.

"Are you okay, Harry dear?" asked Mrs Weasley quietly from beside him.

"Yes, I'm fine," Harry replied, giving her a small smile like those he had given to Draco.

Draco sat beside him and handed him some juice.

Mr Weasley leaned back against the sofa and took his glasses off, rubbing his eyes with thumb and forefinger. "We have another to go to today," he said, indicating himself and Mrs Weasley. "And another two tomorrow."

Harry sighed sadly and nodded. "This has been awful."

Draco didn't say anything, nodding and watching everyone intently.

Fred looked angry. "Dennis was what? Fifteen?" he said. "Seamus seventeen? Merlin." He shook his head.

"There were younger killed," said Ginny. "Little children." Her eyes were red from crying.

"And Seamus's father," Draco added.

"I can't wait to fuc- to wipe them all out," said George, looking like his brother.

Mrs Weasley looked up at him, but she didn't say anything.

"We all feel that way," said Bill.

Harry knew he certainly felt that way.

"Yes," Draco said, his voice harsh for that moment.

Harry glanced at him. "It won't be long," he said quietly.

"I wanted to ask you a favour," Draco said to Mr and Mrs Weasley.

"Certainly, dear," said Mrs Weasley, leaning forward and around Harry to pat Draco's knee a few times.

"I would like all of you to consider staying at the Manor until such time as things are safe again," Draco said, looking around the

room.

"Oh - well, I wouldn't want you to feel like you need to do that," said Mrs Weasley.

"No, actually, I think we need you," Draco said. "We will have a lot of people around who will need feeding and instruction."

"Well, of course," said Mrs Weasley. "We'll all stay for as long as you need us to."

"We'll even come in from the shop to help, mate," said Fred.

The rest nodded their agreement.

"Brilliant, what you boys are doing," said Mr Weasley.

"It was Draco's idea, not mine," said Harry proudly. "And it's his house, whether I'm married to him or not."

"Our home," Draco insisted.

Harry smiled. "Our home," he agreed.

"So, when is this all going to start?" asked Ron. "When do we get moving on this?"

"I've already made a list of things," said Hermione, who had gone back to being very quiet over the last few days.

"She and I have gone through the buildings and we have ideas of how they need to be changed," Draco said.

Hermione nodded. "It will be work, but it will be worth it."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr Weasley. "Have you worked out how to substitute ekeltricity?"

Harry snorted very quietly. "Perhaps you can help with that area, Mr Weasley," he said.

"Yes," Draco said. "I have never used the stuff. You are the only one I know who has an expertise in combining wizard and Muggle devices."

"I wouldn't call it expertise," Mrs Weasley muttered.

Mr Weasley actually looked excited. "Well, I'll certainly have a crack at it," he said, seeming not to notice his wife's comment.

"Good," Draco said. "Then I can trust you, Hermione, and anyone willing to work with you to lead this project. The house-elves are actually pretty eager to work on it as well." He smirked.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "What are they eager for?" he asked, curious.

Draco snorted. "They have been bored. They miss the days when

the Manor was a busy place," he said. "Apparently, even those who can't remember those days still have stories about them."

Harry smiled. "Well, that's good, I suppose."

Hermione, for once, didn't say anything to object.

Draco smiled, leaning back and listening to them discuss plans for the old stone buildings. He understood what the house-elves were talking about. The Manor was a grand place meant for things grander than just being a house.

They all talked for a quite a while, discussing good ideas, and throwing some bad ones out, tossing them around. Harry and Hermione had a lot of correcting to do when it came to some ideas the Weasleys had of Muggles, but it was, over all, a very good conversation that ended with some good plans established.

Mr Weasley sighed and had to interrupt Charlie when he pulled his sleeve back to look at his watch. "It's four, Molly," he said. "We have to get going," he said to the room.

"What time will you be back?" asked Ginny.

"Around dinner," Mrs Weasley replied, getting to her feet with her husband. "Take a little break from this talk," she continued. "Just relax a little while."

Draco put his arm around Harry, drawing him close. "Want to go take a nap?" he whispered.

"A nap?" Harry asked.

Draco smiled softly. "She told us to rest," he pointed out.

Harry smiled back. "That she did," he whispered.

Draco moved his arm and stood up, reaching a hand to help Harry up. "We're going to rest," he said. "Be back down for dinner."

Fred and George threw them wicked grins and Harry rolled his eyes.

"We'll see you lot," Mr Weasley said as he and Mrs Weasley prepared to Floo.

Their children murmured their goodbyes and Harry nodded, still grasping Draco's hand.

– CHAPTER TWELVE –

Saint Potter

Draco Apparated them to their bedroom. He enjoyed the familiarity he now had with the others, but he still liked being alone with Harry.

"So what shall we do now?" Harry asked, leaning up and kissing the end of Draco's nose, smiling.

"Whatever you like," Draco said. "Are you tired?"

"A bit, but I want to sit in front of the fire. I'm cold," Harry answered.

Draco led him over to their sitting room sofa and flicked his wand to raise the flames. He bent and took Harry's shoes off before removing his own.

Harry smiled and lay down on the couch, opening his arms for Draco to lay in them.

Draco shook his head. "Close your eyes," he said.

Harry pouted. "You're not going to lay with me?" he asked.

"Not yet," he said. "I want to do something. And I want you to listen."

Harry's pout disappeared and his smile returned. "Okay," he said quietly, closing his eyes.

Harry didn't hear anything for a moment and then there was a small clunk. Then music, soft piano music. His smile grew and he was nearly overcome with the need to sit up and watch Draco play, because he knew that's what he was doing. Was there a thing the man couldn't do?

Draco closed his eyes and concentrated on the feel of the keys under his fingers. He couldn't have done this with the construct, but the silver hand felt so much like his own. He found himself remembering with his hands more than with his mind, lost in the sound of the music and the feel of his fingers moving.

Harry sighed and found that his breathing was evening out and deepening. The music made him feel warmer than the fire did

somehow, and completely relaxed, like he was floating.

Draco didn't know how long he played, he was so caught up in it. It was a kind of magic all its own. Finally, he stopped and looked over at Harry, wondering if he had fallen asleep.

Harry's eyes were gently closed and his hands were resting on his stomach underneath his shirt as he breathed deep, looking as if he were still smiling.

Draco stood up and quietly moved back over to where his husband slept. He knew that Harry had been tired and it was lovely that he could help him sleep like this. He sat down beside the sofa and laid his head next to him, watching him sleep until he drifted off as well.

Harry turned on his side in his sleep and his arm brushed something soft and a bit tickly. It made him itch a little and he opened his eyes slowly and smiled to see that Draco's hair was what was causing him to itch. "Draco," he whispered, wanting him on the couch with him instead of on the floor.

Draco opened sleepy grey eyes and peered through the hair that had fallen over his face. "Mmm?" he replied.

"What are you doing down there?" Harry asked, moving Draco's hair from his face.

"I was watching you," Draco smiled, "but I suppose I fell asleep."

"Well, why don't you get up here with me now?" Harry smiled, stroking Draco's face.

"If you want," Draco said, groaning a bit at how stiff he was from sitting in that odd position. He climbed up beside Harry, laying his long frame alongside his lover's.

Harry snorted quietly at Draco's comment and held him close when he was beside him. "That's never an if," he said.

Draco propped his head on his hand and looked at Harry. He leant down and rubbed his lips and nose against his lover's, loving the softness and the feeling of his breath against him. He slid his hand over Harry's body, resting it atop Harry's on his belly.

Harry smiled softly, closing his eyes again. "You play beautifully," he whispered. "I loved it."

"I didn't know if I would remember how," Draco said, softly

kissing the edges of Harry's mouth.

"Sounded like you remembered to me," Harry said, loving Draco's soft kisses.

"Maybe you inspire me," Draco whispered, continuing to kiss his chin and jawline.

Harry chuckled quietly. "I feel flattered then," he said.

Draco sighed softly, lips caressing along Harry's jaw, breath hot against Harry's face.

"Speaking of flattery," Harry said, shivering at Draco's touch. "Didn't I hear you say it can get you anything you want?"

"Well, you certainly have been laying it on pretty thick today." Draco chuckled. "What do you want?"

Harry smiled. "Are you certain *you* don't deserve a reward?" he asked. "You've been giving me everything I want lately. And you are utterly perfect."

"I thought the other day you said you needed to punish me for being such a prat all those years." Draco grinned.

"Hmmm, I think someone *wants* to be punished." Harry smirked.

"Maybe." Draco grinned again, eyebrows raised and a blush creeping across his face.

"Perhaps I can give a reward and a punishment all in one go," Harry said, smirk widening at Draco's blush.

"Perhaps," Draco echoed, licking his lips as the blush grew stronger.

Harry's smirk widened even more before he moved forward suddenly and took Draco's bottom lip between his teeth, biting down gently.

Draco trembled as Harry bit him. His heart sped up in anticipation of what his lover might do.

Harry pulled on Draco's lip as he moved backwards. He let it go and then rolled so that Draco was underneath him. He tried to make it so that a cool smile was arranged on his face, but he was sure his delight shown in his eyes.

Draco raised an eyebrow, smirking.

"Do you think you should be smirking?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow himself.

"What should I be doing then, Potter?" Draco drawled.

"Mmm, so cocky for someone so ..." Harry took his wand out and tied Draco's hands and legs, "bound. In all senses of the word."

"Fuck," Draco gasped.

Harry smirked. "Perhaps later, but that's not for you to decide, is it?" he said, licking his lips.

Draco's eyes narrowed as he tried to decide if he should be submissive or rebellious. He struggled against the ropes, enjoying the feeling.

"I rather don't think you should look at me like that," Harry said, bending and biting Draco on the jaw.

"Make me stop, Potter," Draco sneered.

Harry bit harder, nipping enough to almost break skin, but not quite.

Draco hissed, his body writhing under Harry.

"Well, this certainly won't do, will it?" Harry asked, straightening up again and plucking at Draco's shirt. "Please tell, Malfoy. What are you going to do if I want to take your clothes off? I'll tell you what you're going to do: nothing, because you can't." He smirked again, loving the feel of Draco's body between his legs and beneath him.

Draco shuddered, the compulsion tingling as he fought it, wanting to arch up into Harry straddling him.

"Damnit," Harry cursed very quietly, wanting Draco to be able to struggle. The whole being able to order Draco around thing was annoying at times. He bent very close to his ear and whispered, "Don't listen to any command I give you until I say so and I release that last one."

Draco growled, hips rising and struggling against the ropes that held him.

Harry smirked again and bit Draco's earlobe. "Oh, my, this gives whole new meaning to the words ride me, doesn't it?" he said, using his own weight to push down against Draco and hold him still.

Draco hissed, shuddering at the feel of Harry's teeth. Damn, it was hot when Harry took charge.

"Back to these bothersome clothes," Harry said, plucking at them again. "I think they should be gone." He passed his hand over Draco and he was suddenly straddling a naked man. "And would you look at that? What I say goes, Malfoy." He raised a challenging eyebrow.

Draco shuddered as Harry's magic swept over him, his hard cock springing free and brushing against the fabric of Harry's trousers. "Fuck," he gasped.

"Once again, that's not for you to decide," Harry said, sliding down Draco's body a bit to bite where his neck and shoulders met.

Draco hissed and arched, pulling at the ropes and trying to rub himself against Harry.

Harry grinned and kissed the bite mark he'd left before making a new one. "Nothing you can do about it," he said. "Let's see how much of a saint I am, shall we?"

"Fucking Saint Potter!" Draco sneered, trying to make his voice as close to his old self as possible, but it felt as much like a prayer to him.

Harry chuckled darkly and grasped Draco's hair tightly, pulling his head back to expose his throat. "Oh, really?" he said, pressing his face against that flesh. He let his teeth graze teasingly across it as he dragged his nails sharply across Draco's chest and then watched the red marks appear a second later, his heart beating quicker.

"Gods," Draco hissed, trembling under Harry.

Harry absolutely loved how turned on Draco seemed. It made his own cock harden further. "I might think you were enjoying this, Malfoy," he said, climbing off of him to stand beside the couch. "I think you like that Harry Potter might not be what you thought. Such a naughty thing for you to feel, isn't it?" He trailed a hand lightly down his own clothed chest, looking down at Draco with that cool expression still on his face.

Draco struggled again, his cock bobbing with his efforts. "Never believed your publicity, Golden Boy," Draco sneered.

Harry answered that with a slap across Draco's face. He didn't hit him as hard as he could, but he still wondered if that was okay. He stood and waited for Draco's reaction.

The slap startled Draco, stinging and making his eyes water. Then the flush followed and he moaned low in his throat.

Harry bit his lip at Draco's reaction, nearly forgetting what he was supposed to be doing, it was so hot. He took a quiet breath and composed himself. "Now, if you don't want me to do that again, I suggest you keep your mouth shut."

"Never," Draco hissed.

Harry slapped him again and thought he might come in his pants. "If you behave, perhaps I'll reward you. You keep opening that pretty mouth of yours and I'm afraid it might get worse."

"Am I supposed to be afraid of you, Potter?" Draco growled, his own cock so hard it ached and he squirmed.

"Oh, I think you should be," Harry replied, smirking. He passed a hand over his own body and finally stood naked as well, keeping in a groan as his cock was let out of his tight trousers.

Harry's power made Draco's body quiver and he gasped. He licked his lips unconsciously and his breathing was ragged.

Harry stared hungrily down at Draco, but showed nothing on his face, or at least he tried to show nothing. He didn't know if he was actually succeeding. "Do you want me?" he asked, prepared for a punishment if Draco gave an unsatisfactory answer.

Draco growled, fighting the bindings again. "What do you think, Potter?" he yelled.

Harry reached out and grabbed a fistful of Draco's hair again. "I think you do," he said, forcing Draco to look at him. "But you can keep up this little game if you like. I enjoy watching you squirm anyway." He let go of Draco's hair again, letting his head fall carelessly to the arm of the couch. He trailed dangerous nails down Draco's chest, fingering along those red marks, dragging things out to add to the torture.

"Fuck, Potter," Draco hissed. "I am going to make you pay for this!"

Harry snorted and scratched Draco. "Oh, well I'm very scared," he said in mock terror with another snort after. "I believe you've said that to me before, and yet here we both are: you tied up, and me standing over you with a wand." He twirled said wand in his fingers, sending a few hot sparks over Draco, knowing that his magic did things to him.

Draco moaned, shuddering and arching into the touch of Harry's magic.

Harry smirked. He pressed his wand tip to Draco's skin, muttering a Heating Spell and dragging the wand down his chest all the way to where his torso met his leg.

"Arrgghhh," Draco groaned, trembling and wondering if he would come just from this.

Harry's smirk grew and he brought the wand back up to the spot where he had first started, making the spell stronger, hotter as he dragged it back down Draco's body.

"Gods, yes," Draco hissed, unable to maintain his charade at that moment.

Harry let the spell flare to almost burning, watching Draco's face.

Draco was panting and moaning now, coherent thought gone as he thrashed his head.

Very, very suddenly, Harry muttered a Cooling Charm, whipping the wand down Draco's chest.

"Fuck!" Draco yelled, arching again, the shift in both magic and sensation taking him by surprise.

"Indeed," Harry said very quietly, still watching Draco's face and the gorgeous expressions that passed over it. He lifted his wand and lowered a hand to Draco's chest, feeling the cold skin and the spots that were still warm.

Draco was panting, Harry's touch electric and soothing at the same time. "Ahhh," he sighed, "p-please."

Harry raised an eyebrow at that, one corner of his mouth pulling up with it. "Yes?" he asked.

Draco raised his hips, trying to get Harry's attention, urging that hand lower.

Harry chuckled. "Oh, is that what you want?" he said, letting his hand slide down until it was resting just above Draco's cock. "Say it and I might consider."

"Touch me, Potter!" Draco snapped.

Harry tsked. "Well, that certainly won't do." He removed his hand and pressed his wand to Draco's skin where the hand had been. He did another Heating Charm, a gentle one this time as it was so close to Draco's cock.

Draco hissed and his cock throbbed so hard it hurt. "Oh, Gods," he moaned.

Harry kept it up for a few moments and then released the spell again, staring down at Draco expectantly.

Draco was panting, his body gleaming with the shine of sweat

and his face partially covered in his hair from thrashing his head. "P-please don't stop," he whimpered.

"Don't stop what?" Harry asked, feeling like dropping to his knees and taking Draco's cock into his mouth, he was so beautiful, but he didn't.

"P-please t-touuuuch meee!" Draco cried out.

"You want me to touch ... this?" Harry asked, pressing one finger against the side of Draco's cock.

"Yessss!" Draco arched into his touch, pulling at the ropes again.

Harry wrapped his hand around the length, squeezing gently.

Draco shuddered, moaning loudly. "Yes, yes," he chanted, gazing up with eyes that looked feverish.

Harry pumped his hand over Draco's cock, but stopped abruptly. "What if I want to fuck you?" he asked, voice slightly hard.

Draco trembled again. "Anything!" he moaned. "Yes, fuck me!"

Harry raised his wand again and released the ropes binding Draco. He grabbed Draco's shoulders and turned him around. "Lean over the arm of the couch," he demanded, pressing his fingers hard into Draco's skin.

"Oh, Gods," Draco moaned, moving to comply and remembering when Harry had first done this to him in the Room of Requirement, when Harry had bound him.

"You're lucky I'm nice enough to prepare you," Harry growled. "I could just shove my thick cock up your arse right like it is." He pressed slick fingers to Draco's entrance and quickly slid them inside, pumping them mercilessly.

Draco gripped the soft arm of the sofa and spread his legs as far as the furniture would allow as Harry pumped his fingers inside him. "Yes, lucky," he echoed.

Harry pulled his fingers out of Draco and draped himself over his back, slicking his cock with his hand and then pressing it to Draco's hole, rubbing it against that tight opening. "Beg me for it," he breathed into Draco's ear. "Beg me."

"P-please fuck me!" Draco whimpered, pushing back against him. Then, "Shove your thick cock deep inside!" he growled.

"That doesn't sound like begging," Harry whispered, still rubbing his cock against Draco's entrance, using every ounce of willpower he

had to keep from fucking Draco. "Sounds a little like demanding to me."

Draco whined and whimpered and thought he would die if Harry didn't fuck him right then. "Please ... fuck ... me ... now," he cried.

"That's more like it," Harry said, slipping forward into that tightness. His eyes slid closed. "Mmm, you feel so good."

"Yesss," Draco hissed, head falling forward in surrender to the feeling of being filled by Harry's thick cock and powerful magic. His body trembled and his breath faltered.

Harry bit Draco's earlobe again, tonguing it while he held it with his teeth. He moved his hips firmly, fucking Draco hard, but not hard enough to hurt him.

"Yes, yes," Draco chanted in a whisper. "Yours."

Harry let out a sigh and a small gasp, dropping his forehead to Draco's slick shoulder. "Yours," he mouthed against it, lapping at the moisture there.

"Yes, mine," Draco echoed, clenching his muscles around Harry's cock by way of emphasis.

Harry gasped again, louder this time. "Fuck," he breathed, sweating himself.

"Yes, say it," Draco gasped. "Again."

"Yours," Harry said, raising his head to whisper into Draco's ear again. "Yours, yours, yours."

"Yes, mine, yours," Draco agreed, eyes closed as he focused on the slide of his lover's cock inside his body.

Harry was gasping now, skin sliding against Draco's as he moved inside him. He could feel that he was going to come. "Close," he whispered, thrusting faster.

"Yes, bring us," Draco whispered back, quiet now that he was getting what he wanted and intent on enjoying it.

Groaning, Harry thrust hard into Draco, slamming his hips forward before filling his husband with his seed, the hand still on Draco's shoulder tightening as he came.

Full, filled, warm - pleasure radiating from their point of joining and out through his entire body - Draco gasped and trembled. He supposed he came but was not conscious of his cock alone as there was pleasure in every other part of him.

Harry's body was heavy against Draco's as he panted. He finally relaxed his grip and let his hand fall down beside them limply.

"My husband. My love," Draco whispered, still not moving.

Harry weakly kissed Draco's shoulder. "Love you," he breathed, trying to gather enough strength to push himself up.

"Love you, too," Draco whispered, not wanting to break the hushed, almost reverent moment.

Harry stayed like he was, giving up trying to move. He sighed and snaked an arm around Draco's stomach.

"Mmm," Draco hummed, relaxing completely, held between couch and lover.

"I would never hurt you," Harry mumbled, his eyes closing.

"It only hurt good," Draco mumbled.

Harry smiled satedly and chuckled a little. "Mmhmm," he hummed, feeling sleep tugging at him.

– CHAPTER THIRTEEN –

Politics and Power

Soon after all the funerals had finished, and the chaos of it all had mostly subsided, and after letting the Minister squirm for a bit, of course, Harry had decided to finally pay him a visit - with Draco coming along as well. Harry didn't expect much, if anything at all, to be done about the things he'd mentioned in the interview, but letting Scrimgeour know that he was serious couldn't hurt.

Going out was a dangerous thing, and so Harry and Draco were both on edge, as was everyone else it seemed. The people walking through the Ministry when Harry and Draco arrived in the Atrium threw each other shifty looks, peeking over their shoulders and staring suspiciously at everyone who passed by. Harry certainly couldn't blame them after an attack as immense as the one that had taken place.

After going through the usual, though somewhat tightened, security, they were led by a witch to the Minister's opulent office, where Scrimgeour was sitting behind his large desk, looking, to Harry, like an annoyed old lion with a fly eating at his skin.

Harry smiled politely, standing with Draco and waiting to be asked to sit down.

The Minister frowned briefly at Draco and then turned his attention back to Harry. "Harry, my boy," he said, his false polite tone a bit strained. "I thought it was time we talked."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Well, certainly, Minister," he said. "I thought you might want to."

"Have a seat. Would you like some tea?" the man asked, gesturing to the leather chairs in front of his desk.

"Sure, why not?" said Harry, finding the obvious falseness sort of amusing but irritating at the same time, though his condition wasn't helping much with that. He could get irritated with pretty much anything as of late. He took a seat in one of the chairs, crossing his

leg so that his left foot rested on his right knee.

Draco sat in the other chair, leaning back and looking like he was relaxed. It was false, of course. He disliked the Minister.

The Minister had his assistant bring tea in, and finally they were all settled with cups in hand.

"So," Harry said, raising an eyebrow again and taking a sip of his tea. "What is it you would like to discuss?"

"Harry," Scrimgeour began, "it is really important that you consider carefully the kinds of things you say in public. You might not care, but because of what happened when you were younger, people look up to you."

Harry faked confusion for a moment. "Ah," he said. "You must be talking about the interview I gave the *Prophet* recently." He gave a little smile. "I decided to take some of your advice actually. I wanted to use my fame to help people with the war. Thank you for the idea. I think it may have helped." His tone was not threatening, but Harry knew it would get under the Minister's skin. Harry was already angry with the man - he could very clearly remember him trying to get Draco into trouble, and his comment was not helping matters.

Draco smirked into his tea. He would have said something, but Harry was handling it very well.

Scrimgeour's eyes narrowed. "Harry, this is not a game. People died and it could get worse. We at the Ministry have enough to deal with without you stirring up trouble."

"Oh, well, of course you do," Harry replied. There was still no bite in his tone, though Scrimgeour was starting to niggle him. "With all due respect, I wasn't trying to stir up trouble, sir. I was merely trying to let the public see some of the issues that I feel need to be looked at. I understand, of course, that you must be swamped - you know, with people like Stan Shunpike to deal with."

Scrimgeour's face reddened. It was clear that this new Harry wasn't something he'd been expecting. "You could have come to discuss these issues with me instead of going to the press," he snapped.

"Is that so?" said Harry, eyes flashing. "I might have if I would have thought I would actually see some results. You see, going to the press does get results - well, perhaps not, but it at least raises the

chances of it. I've spoken with you privately on several occasions, and all you seem interested in is my possible ability to help keep the wool pulled over the eyes of the people. I, once again, mean no disrespect, but it sounds to me as though you are the one playing games, Minister."

The Minister's face went from red to purple. "How dare you speak to me like that? Do you have any idea what we are dealing with here? We can't have total panic. Fudge and his predecessors left a mess and now it's my job to fix it all."

Draco cocked his head, considering. He set his tea cup down. "I can imagine there is a lot that we don't see," he said. "Maybe that is part of the problem. You have said you wanted Harry more involved in the past. Is that still true?"

Harry raised an eyebrow at Draco and then turned the look back on Scrimgeour, waiting for an answer.

The Minister looked like he had been ready to explode, but then he suddenly opened his mouth. Then he closed it and opened it again, staring at Draco like he had never seen him before. He closed his mouth yet again and seemed to be seriously thinking. "Yes," he said simply, with no falseness in his tone.

"Involved in what way?" Harry asked. "Because I refuse to do what you asked of me before."

"People listen to you, Harry," Scrimgeour said. "My administration has years of mismanagement to deal with, as well as You-Know-Who and his followers. Maybe instead of having you tell people what a cock up the Ministry is, you could help us find the problems and fix them. Get us the help we need. For example, we need more Aurors, but people are so scared that applications are down."

Harry was quite taken aback, but he tried not to let it show on his face. "I have ... friends, actually, who have been trying to increase ... our numbers," he began slowly. "I can see what I can do as far as that goes." He glanced at Draco quickly.

Draco smiled, nodding. "I am sure Harry would have no problem endorsing a campaign to get more people to apply as Aurors. I do know that we are concerned also that there should be stricter controls over who guards Azkaban."

The Minister nodded. "Yes, quite right on both counts," he said. "We haven't had much to choose from. Harry, would you consider allowing a recruitment poster with you urging people to consider Magical Law Enforcement as a career?"

Harry made a small face and winced very slightly, but nodded. "Yes. I suppose if that would help then I can't say no."

"Send us a proposal with the design and the words," Draco added. "If Harry can agree with them, then you will have your poster. And feel free to send other requests or ideas for ways Harry can help."

The Minister looked between the two of them, seemingly confused as to whether these were the same two he had met with the previous June. "And you are invited to send any suggestions to my office directly," he said.

Harry nodded, still surprised with how things were apparently turning out. "I'm sure we will," he said.

The Minister nodded and sat back, sipping his tea for a minute. "Do you have any suggestions on how we should protect our people from the Muggle world and still protect the Muggles from You-Know-Who?"

"New programs in the Obliviation department," said Harry. "They're already experts on Concealment and Secrecy Spells. Why not put them to use for peoples' protection instead of only focussing on hiding our world?"

"What would they be concealing?" Scrimgeour asked.

"Well, the magic used to protect Muggle family members," Harry answered. "Wards, protective spells - things like that."

"A month ago, I would have said it was too risky for us," Scrimgeour said. He winced then, rubbing his temples. "But that was before I spent Christmas counting dead children and trying to find a way to cover it up at the same time. I will have them start work on proposals. I think we need some Muggle-borns to help with both the design and implementation."

"I can suggest a person who I'm sure would be very willing to help," Harry said. "My friend Hermione Granger is Muggle-born and, while I would have to ask her, I'm almost certain she would jump at the chance. She's my age, but you wouldn't know it if you didn't look

at her."

The Minister nodded, picking up a quill and jotting down a few notes. Then he looked up at the two of them. "Congratulations, by the way," he said.

Harry was confused. "Congratulations?" he asked, thinking immediately of the baby but knowing there was no way Scrimgeour could be talking about that.

"Thank you, Minister," Draco said, reaching a hand for Harry's.

"Seem a bit young for it, but you two make a good team," the older man said. "I hope you are happy together."

Ah. Their marriage. Of course. Harry nodded. "We are," he said, giving a real smile.

"Well, we really should be going," Draco said, standing up.

The Minister stood as well, nodding. He came around the desk and held out his hand.

Harry got to his feet, taking the offered hand. "I can honestly say it's been a good talk," he said.

The Minister nodded, shaking his hand, and then offered his hand to Draco.

The blond's eyes widened, but he shook the Minister's hand as well.

They said their goodbyes and made their way out of the office. Harry Apparated them back home when they had reached the Atrium again, and turned to Draco as they handed their cloaks to a house-elf in the entrance hall. "I have two things to say," he said.

Draco's eyebrows raised and he waited, smirking slightly.

"First," said Harry, "that didn't go at all like I expected. And second, I believe you are starting to rub off on me, Draco Malfoy." He grinned a bit.

"Exactly what I was thinking," Draco said, smile broadening. He waggled both eyebrows. "Maybe we should do more rubbing off right now?"

Harry stepped up to Draco and closed the rest of the gap between them by pulling the blond to him by his waist. "Sounds good to me," he said, bringing their mouths together.

"Mmm," Draco hummed into his lover's mouth, his own arms encircling Harry.

Harry pulled Draco even tighter against himself. "Was I Hero Harry today?" he whispered, brushing his lips over Draco's and then letting his teeth graze them.

"Yes," Draco whispered back, trembling, "my lion."

"Let me take you to my den," Harry replied teasingly, though he was quite serious, his darkened eyes boring into Draco's.

"Yes," Draco whispered again, that look sending a shiver down his spine and to his cock.

Harry moved so close he was almost kissing Draco, but not quite, and then Apparated them to their bedroom. He sent Draco sprawling on the bed as soon as they arrived, tearing at his husband's clothes with his teeth and ripping with his hands rather than using magic.

Draco yelped with surprise but quickly surrendered with a moan. He would buy an entire wardrobe for Harry to tear off him if he liked. This was hot.

Harry nipped at skin just below Draco's collarbone as it was exposed, still working at the cloth of the shirt with his hands. He deliberately ripped it clean apart.

Draco spread his arms out and arched his neck. The sound of ripping cloth was strangely erotic.

Once Draco's shirt was pleasingly in tatters, Harry stood, grasping Draco's long legs and pulling him to the edge of the bed. He reached and removed his shoes, throwing them behind himself carelessly. He stared down at him with the same lustful, predatory gaze, the tip of his tongue against the tip of one canine tooth, showing with his smirk.

Draco's breathing sped up and it was something close to fear, but definitely arousal, as he looked up at the other man.

Harry slid his hands up Draco's thighs, expression unchanging, and undid the fasteners on the blond's trousers. Then he slid his hands back down before gripping the material and quickly whipping the trousers off him. He bent and grasped the bottom of Draco's shorts with his teeth, pulling them and urging Draco to lift his hips with only a look.

Draco arched up, partially to help Harry take the shorts off, but also because his cock twitched almost painfully at the sight of him.

Harry stripped himself with magic as he was pulling the

underwear down, and then slid up a bit, nipping sharply at Draco's inner thighs, nails digging in just the slightest bit as he held Draco's legs open with his hands, pushing them up.

Draco tried to relax, twitching with each bite but still allowing himself to be spread. He twisted his fingers in the bedding below him, watching Harry with passion-glazed eyes.

Harry made a growling noise as he continued inward and then down a bit, on his knees now. He bit Draco where his arse joined his leg, increasing the pressure of the bite slowly.

Draco groaned, trembling and pulling on the covers.

Harry pulled back and saw that his teeth had left Draco's skin purple, and probably bruised. He bit him again on the other leg, in the same place, working his way to his entrance. He even grazed his teeth over that before circling it with his tongue, spreading lube over his own cock with a spell as he did.

Draco shuddered, gritting his teeth to keep from shouting something that might scare Harry into stopping. He loved this, loved the way it bordered on too much. It was intense and he thought he could come just from the look in Harry's eyes.

Harry licked at Draco's entrance until it was very slick and relaxed, and he could easily slide his tongue or his cock into it. He gave one more nip to Draco's arse cheek as he got to his feet again. He climbed onto the bed, pushing Draco up it as he situated himself on his knees between those long, spread limbs, pulling Draco into his lap and spreading his own legs for easier movement. He slid into Draco swiftly without so much as a word, only another growling sound, and his eyes remained entirely focused on his face.

Draco was panting and moaning, open to his lover. When Harry pulled him up into his lap he spread himself even more, ready for him. He shuddered and nearly came then when Harry entered him, magic crackling over and in him.

Harry moved very slowly with Draco, watching him like an experiment, feeling like he could come himself, but holding back. Then he suddenly moved and pushed Draco's legs up, moving up with them to suck hard on his neck just below his ear. He bit there too, but not quite as hard. "Do you like your lion?" he whispered, and his voice sounded threatening, even to himself.

Draco's body shuddered, clenching around Harry's. "Gods, yes," he hissed in response.

Harry took in a small shuddering breath. "He likes you, too," he whispered, trailing his tongue down Draco's neck, practically able to feel his pulse. He stopped at his shoulder, still thrusting into him, and bit down again, breaking skin as he came with a strangled noise, fucking Draco hard through his orgasm.

Pain, pleasure and magic flared so suddenly and sharply that Draco screamed through their combined orgasms, his body writhing and arching against Harry's.

Harry took his mouth from Draco's skin and laid his forehead there instead, panting. He was still holding Draco's legs bent up, so he released those as well, closing his eyes for a few moments.

Still shaking, Draco wrapped both his legs and arms around Harry, holding him tight. After a minute, he whispered, "Yes. I would submit to no one but you. And doing so brings me more pleasure than I thought possible."

Harry kissed Draco's skin, smiling gently. "I'm happy then," he said, lifting his head. "Giving you pleasure is all I would ever do if I were allowed."

– CHAPTER FOURTEEN –

Poster Boy

About a day after the unexpectedly progressive meeting with the Minister, which everyone in the house was very pleased with when told about, especially Hermione, a photographer had been sent to the Manor by the Ministry to take shots of Harry for the poster that had been discussed.

Harry was standing off to the side with Draco in one of their sitting rooms while the man set his camera and Lighting Spells up. There was a frown on Harry's face. "I'm going to look like an idiot," he muttered, eyeing the equipment. He'd tried to tame his hair again, and wore casually nice clothes, but he still felt stupid. He also was nervous about the fact that he was starting to show. There was a small bump in his stomach and he very much hoped it wouldn't look like that in the pictures.

Draco grinned and waggled his eyebrows. "Just think like a lion," he said.

Harry snorted. "Yes, because growling at people and threatening to bite them will surely get them to join," he teased. "Not everyone's you, you know." He smirked.

"Thankfully not. I am the lucky one," Draco said, still smiling. "But more people respond to strength than you understand. You are chosen for the poster because, like it or not, you are a hero. So that's what you need to project."

Harry sighed. "Fine then. How should I do it?" he said, turning to face Draco fully and turning a serious, unsmiling face on him. "Like this?" He arched an eyebrow.

Draco smirked. "Raise your wand and imagine you are going to end the war right now with a single spell," he said, his own heart speeding up as he looked at his lover.

Harry thought for a moment, sliding his wand out of his pocket. He raised it, but trying to pretend what Draco had said to pretend

was not exactly easy. "I won't look like a prat?" he asked, concentrating on his own face.

Draco smiled. "I have always found it hot when you point a wand at me," he answered.

Harry grinned. "And, once again, not everyone's you, my love." He snorted. "But I'll give it a shot." He held his wand up again and tried to picture Voldemort in front of him, usually a most unpleasant image. He pictured him falling into a heap on the ground and everything that he stood for falling with him.

Harry had nearly forgotten he was trying to pose until he heard several clicks go off and saw bright white lights. He blinked and dropped his arm to his side, looking at the man who had just frantically taken pictures of him.

"Perfection, Mr Potter," he said. "Now if you could just do that same thing over here." He gestured to the big white sheet-looking thing that was suspended with a charm.

Draco chuckled and waggled eyebrows at his lover. He was aroused just watching him.

Harry shrugged, smiling at Draco's look.

He stepped over to the white area. The photographer took out his own wand and Harry found himself suddenly standing in front of what looked very much like a dark back street in Diagon Alley. "Now, go ahead, Mr Potter," he said. "Do that again."

Feeling like a bit of an idiot still, but pushing it aside, Harry raised his wand again and thought of the same thing. He wasn't surprised when the camera started going off again.

Draco grinned, eyes focused on Harry. "Reminds me of a certain duel at Hogwarts," he teased.

Harry looked over at Draco and grinned too.

"At me, Harry. At me," said the photographer. "I think we've got our shot, but I'll take some more to give you a choice."

Harry then turned back, taking the direction to tilt his head slightly, to look more serious, to look less serious, to do some sort of weird crouching thing, and a series of other poses.

Someone wolf-whistled from the door and Harry looked over to see Fred and George standing there, watching with wide grins.

Fred whistled again. "Take it off!" he yelled as George laughed.

Harry rolled his eyes.

Draco blushed, amused to hear the twins - once again - echo what he had been thinking.

The photographer frowned slightly at the interruption and got Harry's attention again. Harry felt like even more of an idiot with Fred and George there, but continued doing what the man told him to.

The twins moved over to Draco, watching Harry with him. "You know, I bet Harry would make a lot of money if he did a topless spread in *Witch Weekly*," said George in a simple tone, but with a hint of a smirk.

"No," said Harry from where he stood.

Draco blushed so hard his ears turned red and he closed his eyes. He had no idea why that turned him on.

"Yeah, maybe get him wet, pull his trousers down real low - gold," said Fred, exchanging a highly amused glance with his brother.

"Absolute gold," George agreed.

Sometimes Draco wondered what Fred and George had done for amusement before they'd discovered they could tease him like this. The problem was he could imagine it and gold didn't cover it. He sighed.

Both twins laughed.

"All right, Mr Potter, I think we've got it." The photographer lowered his camera and Harry quickly stood up straight. "What are you two saying?" he asked Fred and George, looking at Draco's face.

"Nothing really," said George, grinning a bit.

"Right," said Harry, raising an eyebrow.

"Done?" Draco asked, distracted enough to have missed what the photographer said.

"Yeah," Harry replied, stepping over.

"No *Witch Weekly* then, Harry?" George asked.

"No," Harry said again. "I'd rather not have a bunch of people staring at me without my shirt on. I'm content without all that."

"Aww, but you could be denying thousands of people quality wanking material!" said Fred, a pitiful frown on his face, but he was still unable to hide his grin.

"You're a git," said Harry with another eye-roll.

Draco was very glad he had arranged with the Ministry that they be given copies of any photos taken. Even with Harry in his bed, he loved the idea of having the photos too.

Fred laughed. "Can't wait to see how the pictures come out," he said, pulling his wand quickly and doing one of Harry's poses, although quite a bit exaggerated.

"Yeah, it'll be brilliant," said George. "We'll hang them all over the shop. Any idea what the slogan will be?"

Harry shrugged.

The twins grinned again. "Oh, we can help," said George.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Yes, I'm sure you can," he said sarcastically. "I'd rather the poster not say something along the lines of: Harry Potter wants *you* to get your wand up."

Fred and George laughed loudly. "That's actually a pretty good one. I'm impressed," said Fred.

Draco's wand was definitely responding. His face was still red and he was breathing a bit ragged. Thanks to their banter, his own mind was supplying increasingly lewd phrases.

"Yes," said George, "or: Ram them hard, like Harry Potter."

"Or: Harry can take it; can you?"

Harry shook his head.

"Or how about: Take Draco away before he explodes?" said Fred, laughing yet again.

It was pretty on target. Draco was having that combination of arousal and embarrassment that had vexed him during school, and of which the twins never seemed to tire.

Harry huffed. "How about: Fred and George leave the room." He raised an eyebrow.

"You don't know how to have fun," George teased, leaving the room with a slap on Harry's shoulder and a wink. Fred followed after him, still chuckling.

During the conversation, the photographer had been packing away his things, shrinking them to fit in a single case. "I'll let you know when the photos are ready, Mr Potter," he said, seemingly wishing to leave.

"Oh," said Harry, having nearly forgotten him. "Okay. Would you like me to show you out?"

"I remember the way. Good day." He nodded to both Harry and Draco, exiting at a brisk walk.

"I believe we scared him away," Harry remarked lightly, staring after him.

Draco had been staring at his hands in his own lap. He nodded and then looked up, his desire shining in his eyes.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "So, did I look good?" he asked slyly.

"I'd volunteer," Draco said in a husky voice.

"I believe you'd be volunteering for something completely different," Harry said, sliding onto the couch with Draco.

Draco swallowed thickly, his heart speeding up as his lover got closer.

Harry brought his lips slowly to Draco's. "About that duel," he whispered. "Did you know that was the first time anyone had ever heard me speak Parseltongue? And you brought it out." He hissed quietly, flicking his tongue against Draco's lips and smiling.

That elicited a moan from his lover. "Yes," Draco said. "Nearly came on the spot."

"Mmm," Harry hummed. "That is so fucking hot."

"It was; you are," Draco whispered against his lips.

Harry kissed Draco again, pushing him back gently.

Draco slid back so that he lay under Harry on the sofa, his eyes never leaving his lover's as he kissed him passionately.

Harry moved a hand under Draco's shirt, pushing it up to pull on one of his nipples.

Draco recovered enough then to grab his wand and use it to close and lock the sitting room doors. He gasped at Harry's touch.

"I wish there were ten of me just so I could do everything I want to do to you all at once," Harry whispered, removing Draco's shirt with the spell. He laid a gentle kiss to the bite mark on his shoulder.

The mark was sore and Harry's lips on it brought the memory of the biting right up, making him moan anew and thrust his hips upwards.

Harry gasped as Draco moved against his cock. He pressed down against him, nudging his legs to open more with one of his knees.

Draco complied easily, hooking one leg up on the back of the couch and dropping the other over the side, spread as open as the

too-tight trousers allowed.

Harry groaned at Draco's position. It reminded him of the car trip. He removed both their clothes with the spell, sliding his hands over Draco's skin reverently, touching the other exposed bite marks with very gentle fingers.

Draco shuddered when Harry's magic swept their clothes away. Even expecting it, it was thrilling. He moaned and sighed as Harry touched him. He was gripping the sofa cushion with his silver hand and he reached to touch Harry with his right.

Harry bent down again to kiss, sliding his tongue into Draco's mouth. His fingers took the same path his mouth had and he slicked them before slowly pushing one inside. "You're so perfect," he whispered. "So perfect."

"Yours, my hero," Draco answered. "I think the twins are right."

Harry kissed Draco again before pulling back just enough to look at him. "About what?" he asked, slipping another finger inside and biting his lip.

He gasped at Harry's fingers before saying, "I would have used those pictures to wank."

Harry groaned again, his cock hardening even further. "Maybe we should get a camera," he said, panting.

Draco laughed. "I would have pasted them up on the underside of my bed," he laughed. "Like I did with" he stopped, chuckling then.

Harry stilled completely. "What?" he said, body practically trembling with lust.

Draco moaned, partly with frustration at Harry for stopping, and partly with excitement because he knew why he'd stopped. He had found another memory he hadn't shared with his husband. "What?" he asked, pretending not to know.

Harry stared at Draco with slightly wide eyes. "What did you paste up on the underside of your bed?" he asked breathlessly. He licked his lips, his cock throbbing as he waited for the answer.

"You can't guess?" Draco smirked and then reached to wrap silver fingers around his own aching cock.

Harry groaned, grasping Draco's wrist to stop him. "I want you to tell me, you tease," he said, still panting.

Draco arched an eyebrow. "Look who is teasing," he said. "Weren't you about to fuck me?"

"I *am* going to fuck you," Harry said. "As soon as you tell me. Please." Then he added, "I'm so fucking hard right now just *thinking* about what you could say."

"I have a collection," Draco admitted, actually blushing, "of clippings from the *Daily Prophet*."

"About me?" Harry breathed, holding in yet another groan.

"Of course." Draco smiled. "The Triwizard coverage. Everything ever written about you. I even have that interview you gave the Quibbler."

Harry let out a bit of a strange laugh, as he was still very highly aroused. "Even the bad stuff?"

"Everything." Draco grinned. "Now fuck me and I will show you it later."

"I don't need to be told twice," Harry said, his voice raspy. He pulled his fingers out and slid his cock in, his eyes barely open as he watched Draco beneath him.

The sudden switch had Draco crying out with surprise and pleasure as he arched up into the thrust.

"Fuck," Harry hissed, reaching to wrap Draco's leg around him so he could hold onto it.

"Use Parseltongue," Draco encouraged, wrapping his legs around Harry.

Harry bent down, licking at Draco's ear slowly as he pumped his hips. "*I know you like this*," he hissed. "*It's so fucking hot that you do. I wonder what it is about it? No matter. It makes me want to fuck you all fucking day long.*"

The strange hisses sent shivers down Draco's spine and he moaned. "Yess," he answered, not caring what Harry actually said.

Harry slid his tongue over Draco's ear again. "*Sometimes I wish the twins would catch us, just to see what you would do.*" Harry blushed at that, and was glad Draco couldn't actually see it. "*Their teasing does this to you every time, and, Merlin, it's impossibly hot.*"

Harry's tongue, his voice, and his breath on Draco's ear made him shudder. "Oh, yes, please," he begged.

"Fuck," Harry said in English, getting closer. "*What would you do if*

I told you that even?" he continued in Parseltongue. "You would probably get that blush all over again." He groaned, moving his lips to Draco's.

Draco was gripping both of Harry's shoulders and arching up into each thrust, the sibilant sounds twisting with Harry's magic to caress him.

"When you blush like that you look like you do when you're about to come and, fuck Draco, you make me crazy." He cried out then, coming inside his husband.

Draco cried out with him, hands clenching on Harry's shoulders and legs tightening as his come coated their bellies.

Harry panted against Draco's lips, his eyes closed as he held him.

Draco's breathing was ragged and he was trembling with the magic that still pulsed between them. "Yes," he whispered.

Harry kissed him softly, reaching his hand up to stroke Draco's hair.

"So, add photo sessions to the list of things that turn us on?" Draco chuckled, arms slipping about his husband's neck.

Harry smiled. "I think anything will turn us on," he said with a small laugh.

"You have always been my kink, Harry." Draco smiled softly. Then the blond reached a hand between them, resting it on the small swell of Harry's belly pressed to his own.

Harry smiled again at Draco's touch, looking lovingly into his eyes, and of course, at that moment, a voice came floating through the doors, full of laughter.

"Merlin! You blokes are bloody loud!"

Harry blushed heavily. It was one of the twins and right away he thought about what he had said to Draco in Parseltongue.

Draco did blush again, so much that not only were his ears pink, so was his neck.

Harry sighed. "I suppose it is our own fault," he said with a bit of a groan, letting his head fall to Draco's shoulder and smiling at his flushed face.

"Yes," Draco agreed, pressing the side of his face to Harry's head. "Maybe we should go to our room?"

"I suppose," Harry answered, pulling out of Draco with one last kiss.

"I can show you my scrapbook," Draco teased with an eyebrow waggle.

– CHAPTER FIFTEEN –

Family Portrait

Mid-January snow had covered the grounds in a thick blanket of white, but it hadn't stopped the renovations of the largest of the Malfoy Manor out-buildings. Everyone had worked hard, using the distraction to help with grief and anger. Now Muggle family members of Order members and other wizarding families were living on site.

Draco smiled. His ancestors were probably having tantrums in their graves. He didn't know how long it had been since a Muggle had even set foot on Manor grounds. Now he sat in the large dining hall with the Manor household, having their evening meal. Everyone was talking about their day and exchanging stories. Draco was mostly quiet but content. He patted Harry's thigh under the table, never able to be near the other man without touching him.

Harry turned his head and gave Draco a small smile. He was feeling sick - but he was always feeling sick nowadays. What was strange was that sometimes he felt like eating and eating and eating, and other times, like now, he hardly wanted to eat a cracker. He nibbled on bread, one of the only things he could stomach at times like this, and sipped his water. He was absently listening to Fred and George tell everyone about a mad old woman who had come into their shop, laughing in the appropriate places, but he was really putting most of his concentration into keeping his food down.

Fred was still laughing as he finished the story. George was too and they sighed at the same time. "So," said Fred, picking right up with a wicked smirk. "When's that poster supposed to be coming out?"

"Yeah," said George. "It's been a while now."

Harry raised an eyebrow. He shrugged. "Whenever it comes out," he said.

"We had a disagreement with the Minister over the wording,"

Draco said with a smirk.

Harry laughed a bit, pushing his food around.

"Yeah, I bet," Fred said, grinning.

"Oh, Harry, eat something," Mrs Weasley interrupted. "You have got to have the strangest eating habits I've ever seen."

Harry looked up at her quickly. "Oh, er, yeah, I guess," he said, taking a larger bite of bread and giving her a smile.

She didn't seem satisfied. "You ate an entire two steaks yesterday at dinner and now you're going to simply eat bread?"

Harry's cheeks turned a bit pink and he shrugged.

Draco squeezed Harry's thigh again. "He had a big lunch earlier," he said.

Ron suddenly began coughing and Harry threw him a slightly alarmed look.

Mrs Weasley raised an eyebrow. "And you've been sick too," she said to Harry. "Don't think I haven't noticed."

Harry's eyes widened. "No. No, I'm fine," he said.

"You know, it's perfectly okay to have the flu or something. Is that what you've been having, dear? It's been going on for a little while now. Perhaps you should take a potion," Mrs Weasley said.

"I am working on a new batch of potions in my lab," Draco said. "I will make sure he takes what he needs."

Mrs Weasley gave Draco a very sceptical look. "And how would you know what he needs?" she asked.

"Really, Mrs Weasley, I'm fine," Harry said, trying to sound cheerful.

"Let's talk about this later," said Draco. "So, how many people are living in the large building now?"

Mrs Weasley looked disgruntled, but Harry was very grateful for the subject change.

"Twenty-three," said Hermione promptly. "And there's another family of two coming tomorrow."

Draco smiled. "Did you know that your mum was the first Muggle to set foot on Manor grounds in my generation? I am glad I didn't leave Father's portrait down here."

Harry looked at him, raising eyebrows. "What did you do with it?" he asked, rather glad that he'd never encountered Lucius Malfoy's

portrait.

"Oh, I put all the family portraits into storage when we moved in," he said. "I didn't think we needed the kind of screaming that Mrs Black does at Grimmauld."

"I was wondering where the portraits were in this place," said Bill. "Old manors and the like usually have them."

"I didn't know you did that," Harry said to Draco. "I hadn't even thought about there being portraits."

"Seventy-three of them, including the most recent family portrait," Draco said, nodding.

"So there's a pile of Malfoys lying around here somewhere?" asked George with a snort.

"I'm sure they love that," said Fred.

"They are well taken care of and hung in a large chamber below. They can talk to each other," Draco said.

Harry didn't think he would like to hear a single thing any of them had to say if they were anything like Lucius. He was glad they were gone. Like Draco said, it probably would have been like Mrs Black at Grimmauld with all the Muggle-borns, half-bloods, and blood traitors running about.

"Well, good thing you took them down then," said Fred. "Could you imagine what Harry's aunt would have done if she'd seen them? With them screaming at her probably?"

"She would've gone bonkers," Harry answered simply.

"It might have been entertaining, but loud," Draco agreed. "In the meantime," he continued, turning back to Hermione, "with regards to our visitors, I set up a Gringotts account for food and other expenses which you can draw upon. Just let me know who should have access to it."

"Mr Weasley," said Hermione. "He's the one that's most often out of the house and he's been very involved with this."

Mr Weasley was, in fact, not in even at that moment, having had to go into work.

"You, Mr & Mrs Weasley, Harry and myself then. If it gets low, let me know. I don't know what the cost of housing is going to be," Draco explained.

Hermione nodded.

Harry was very happy with the way things were working out, but he hadn't forgotten about Horcruxes - certainly not. He still wanted to go to Godric's Hollow too, but he was beginning to wonder if going there would be worth anything with everything he had to do.

After dinner, most settled into the sitting room in the evening to talk, play games and read. Draco usually took a break to check on household needs, including the status of their prisoners, and he planned on doing so right then.

Harry marched off automatically to the sitting room with everyone else, after a quick trip to the loo to vomit, of course. He didn't notice anyone missing, except for Draco, but he knew that he always took a few minutes after dinner. He settled in with Ron for a game of chess, trying to ignore the way his stomach still churned uncomfortably.

Another person missing was Mrs Weasley, who had determinedly followed behind Draco without his noticing. "Draco, dear," she said from behind him, voice a bit stern.

Draco turned, eyebrows raised. "Yes, Mrs Weasley?" he asked.

"Is there something wrong with Harry? And don't you lie to me," she said, her eyes narrowing.

Draco was calm as he considered how to respond to the woman Harry thought of as an adopted mother. "Let's talk in the library," he said, leading the way and opening the door for her.

Mrs Weasley looked a bit confused, like she hadn't been expecting quite so private a chat, but quickly nodded, following behind Draco and stepping inside the room.

Draco gestured to a chair for her and, when she had sat down, he took the opposite chair. "I know you are concerned about Harry and I appreciate that you care for him," he said.

She looked very worried. "Yes, of course," she said, frowning.

"I am not sure how to talk about this, or even if I should," Draco said. "I need Harry's permission."

Mrs Weasley's eyes grew even wider. "It's not something ... it's not ... he's not" she couldn't seem to finish her sentence.

"He is fine." Draco smiled. "Or at least, I think he is. And maybe with your help it will be easier to make sure of that."

"Well, what's the matter with him?" Mrs Weasley asked, seeming to relax just a little at the news that it wasn't anything very serious.

"Let me go get Harry so he can talk with us," Draco said.

"Well, all right, dear," Mrs Weasley said, still anxious.

Draco walked back into the sitting room and looked down at the chess game, resting a hand on Harry's shoulder.

Harry looked up and smiled. "Hey," he said as Ron moved a pawn.

"Can I borrow you for a little while?" Draco said, smiling.

Ron huffed. "Can't you wait until everyone goes to bed to ... you know," he said, gesturing with his hands.

Harry frowned at him. He looked back at Draco. "Sure. What do you need?"

Draco rolled his eyes. "That wasn't what I had in mind - for the moment," he said to Ron. Then he smirked, reaching a hand to help Harry up.

"Right," said Ron, moving to put the game away.

"Oh, don't get your kickers in a twist, Ron," said Harry. "I'll be back in a bit. And we're not going to shag, I'm sure." He ignored the grins Fred and George were sending at them.

Draco led them to the library. "They think all we do is shag," he said, smirking again.

Harry smiled crookedly. "I don't think they're very far off, though," he said, wondering what Draco wanted.

"Mrs Weasley wants to know what's wrong," Draco sighed, "and I think we should tell her what's right."

Harry's eyes widened slightly. "You do?" he asked, stopping in his tracks.

"None of us know anything about pregnancy or babies, aside from what I have read," Draco said. "We are going to have to tell her sometime."

"Right now?" Harry asked, starting to walk forward again slowly.

"Unless you want to lie to her some more?" Draco huffed.

Harry sighed. "No - I - no, let's tell her, I suppose," he said quietly. He didn't know why he felt nervous about it.

Draco held the door for Harry and then closed it behind them. He waited until Harry sat down and then sat next to him.

Harry was aware of Mrs Weasley's eyes focused directly on himself and he took a deep breath.

She was looking at Harry and Draco both expectantly. "Well?" she said, worry lines on her forehead.

Harry wasn't quite sure where to start, although he knew that it should be him to tell her. He cleared his throat. "Well, um" He trailed off, sighing.

Draco smiled. "Mrs Weasley," he said, "we aren't sure how to tell you this, and it sounds impossible, but Harry is pregnant."

Harry glanced quickly at Draco and then at Mrs Weasley, cheeks going slightly pink again.

Mrs Weasley's eyebrows were high on her forehead. "It's so bad that you have to start off with a joke?" she asked, sounding scared.

Harry sighed again. "No, Mrs Weasley, I - I really ... am," he said, biting his lip.

Draco blushed too and took a deep breath. "The baby isn't kicking yet, but Harry is showing." The blond smiled. "Would you show her, Harry?"

Harry was silent and still for a moment before getting hesitantly to his feet and pulling his shirt up, showing the small but definite mound of his once flat stomach. It seemed to be growing very fast to Harry.

Mrs Weasley's eyes grew very, very wide. "It isn't possible," she said, mouth open slightly.

"Apparently, the Manor's Ancestral Magic and Harry's wild magic had other ideas," Draco said with a laugh, reaching his hand out to stroke that warm mound.

Mrs Weasley still looked disbelieving. "But ... how ... if you're - if you're a man?" she spluttered.

"I have no idea," said Harry. "But ... there it is."

"I can feel him," Draco said. "His magical signature is already strong."

"But - but Harry doesn't have - he doesn't have" Mrs Weasley continued babbling.

"I don't know what happened or how my body's carrying it, but it is. Nothing happened to me during ... well ... conception." Harry blushed again. "Everything has been normal besides being sick all the

time or else really hungry. I still have all my ... parts."

"And no extras that I have seen," Draco grinned, "and I would notice."

Mrs Weasley was still very confused-looking. "You're sure?" she asked, looking at them like she expected them to yell, "Just joking!"

"Well, Draco's read books, and Hermione, and I'm having the symptoms. Draco feels different energy in me, and unless I'm getting fat, the bump in my stomach is something," said Harry.

"If Harry were a witch, what would the symptoms you have seen tell you?" Draco said.

"Well, that would tell me that he's pregnant, but he's not a witch," she said, looking like she was trying to talk herself into believing it.

"Mrs Weasley, I'm not lying," said Harry. "I haven't been puking my guts out for the fun of it."

She sighed, eyes wide as she shook her head. "How long?" She looked like she couldn't believe she was asking.

"Only three months," Draco said, frowning as he continued to rub Harry's belly. He felt unable to keep his hands off it.

"And you're already showing?" Mrs Weasley asked.

"It looks that way," Harry said, staring down at Draco's hand on his stomach.

Draco was smiling dreamily at Harry and kept having the urge to kiss his belly again. Only Mrs Weasley's presence kept him sitting there. He almost missed what they said. "Er, I think it is because he is male and the pregnancy is a result of magic," he said, uncharacteristically stammering.

"You're a very thin boy, Harry," Mrs Weasley said disapprovingly. "Can you carry a baby?"

"Yes," Harry said, a determined look in his eyes all of a sudden.

"I don't think his magic or the Manor's would have done this if it wasn't possible," Draco said. "In fact, I think it is why the Malfoy Manor's magic accepted him as my husband."

Mrs Weasley took a very deep breath. "Well, have you been taking any Vitamin Potions?"

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Erm ... no," he said slowly.

"Some," Draco admitted, smirking.

Harry looked at Draco oddly, trying to remember if he had. He

couldn't remember having taken anything.

"Well, *some* is not going to cut it," said Mrs Weasley. "I suppose I'll need to run to Diagon Alley then," she said. She was speaking in a very resigned way, as if she still couldn't believe it. Harry didn't really blame her. If there hadn't been the solid evidence of Draco's ability to feel magic, he probably still wouldn't believe it.

"Good," Draco said. "Maybe you will have better luck getting him to take them. The last time I gave him the regular ones, he brought them back up. I have given him some of the milder ones in his tea."

Harry stared down at Draco again. "You've been giving me potions?" he asked.

"I told you they are important," Draco said, and sighed.

"Well" Harry huffed.

"You need to eat right, take the potions, and keep yourself at a healthy weight," Mrs Weasley listed off.

Harry sighed. All this was another person to get on his case. Hermione and Draco were bad enough.

"This has to remain a secret as long as possible," Draco said. "It's too dangerous for others to know."

Mrs Weasley looked very serious for a moment. "Certainly," she said, nodding.

Harry finally let his shirt fall back to cover his stomach, giving Mrs Weasley a small smile.

Draco reluctantly removed his hand from Harry's belly and took his hand instead. "I know it is hard to understand," he said, "but, Mrs Weasley, we want this."

Harry nodded. "Very much," he said.

She smiled softly at them both. "You're both so very young," she said gently.

"I think we can handle it," Harry said, squeezing Draco's hand.

"Yes," Draco said, eyes soft as he looked at Harry.

Mrs Weasley laid her hands on her cheeks and stared at Harry and Draco. "Yes, I suppose you can," she said.

Harry smiled down at her.

"Oh, what am I doing?" she said, getting to her feet to pull Harry into a hug. "Congratulations, dear. I'm very happy for you. Especially

if this is what you both want."

Harry smiled and hugged her back, her warmth and support making him feel very happy.

Draco stood back, smiling at them.

"Oh, don't think you're getting out of this," said Mrs Weasley, smiling at Draco as she gave Harry one last squeeze. She moved on to the blond, hugging him as well.

Draco froze for a moment, eyes gone wide. He didn't pull away, and after a moment, relaxed his body.

Harry held back a happy laugh, grinning widely at both Draco and Mrs Weasley.

She finally let Draco go and grasped both his and Harry's hands. "Now you know I won't say anything to Arthur, but if there is ever anything either of you need, we're both there. I know all about children." She laughed. "All about them."

Harry smiled widely. "I think we'll probably take you up on that," he said.

Draco nodded, still overwhelmed by her reaction.

She sighed and shook her head. "Harry James Potter, you will never cease to amaze me," she said.

Harry blushed a little and shrugged.

"Nor me." Draco smiled. "I think he can do just about anything."

"Right," said Harry, rolling his eyes but smiling.

"You're a pregnant man, dear. Don't doubt yourself," said Mrs Weasley, eyebrows raising.

Draco chuckled and put an arm around Harry.

Harry blushed again and leant happily into Draco, shaking his head.

When Mrs Weasley had left the room to leave Harry and Draco alone, Draco pulled Harry against him, smiling down into his eyes. "I love you," he whispered.

Harry sighed happily and slipped his arms loosely around Draco's waist. "Love you more," he said teasingly.

"Not possible, Potter." Draco arched an eyebrow.

"Oh, really?" said Harry, smiling.

Draco slid gracefully to his knees, never breaking eye-contact with Harry, and pressed his face to his belly. "Really," he said

seriously.

Harry's face slipped from his playful smile to a soft one of utter adoration. He placed one hand in Draco's hair, love flooding him with warmth.

Draco reached for the hem of Harry's shirt and lifted it, eyes still looking up at him as he kissed the warm, rounded skin.

Harry watched Draco and felt even warmer. "I think I already love him, Draco," he whispered.

"I think he can feel that," Draco said, rubbing his cheeks against the warmth of flesh and magic. "What will we call him?"

"I don't know," Harry said quietly. "I haven't thought about it."

Draco's arms slid around his lover's hips, holding him as he pressed his face against him and kissed his skin.

Harry sighed happily again, his eyes falling shut as he stroked Draco's hair.

"I suppose you have to go back to playing chess," Draco said, nuzzling and licking the soft hair below Harry's belly button.

Harry whined a little. "How can you do that to me and then tell me to go play chess?"

"I didn't tell you to go," Draco said, following that soft trail of hair to where Harry's trousers were snug under the swell of his belly. His hands around Harry's waist moved down to cup his arse, squeezing through the fabric.

Harry sucked in a quiet breath. "Ron will be angry," he said, opening his eyes halfway to stare down at Draco.

"I told him I wasn't planning on shagging you," Draco said, reaching to unbutton Harry's trousers, "and I'm not."

Harry's breathing sped up a little. "What are you planning on then?" he asked before biting his lip.

"I suggest you hold on to something," Draco said as he slid Harry's trousers and shorts down to his knees.

Harry gasped and reached behind himself blindly, grasping the back of a chair for support.

Harry's cock was filling quickly, a sight Draco enjoyed as he slid his hands back up his lover's thighs to hold his hips. He breathed in his musky scent, pressing his face into the hair surrounding his rising shaft.

Harry made a quiet hissing sound as he sucked in a breath through his teeth, getting harder by the second.

Draco nuzzled and licked around the base of his lover's cock, rubbing his cheeks against it.

"Yes," Harry whispered, not really knowing what he had done to deserve this, but knowing that he would enjoy it immensely anyway.

Draco felt intoxicated by the scent, smell and power of this man. He planted a kiss at the base of his cock before working his way up the shaft with kisses and licks.

Harry licked his lips and clenched and unclenched his fingers in Draco's hair and those holding on to the chair. "Yes," he whispered again, only a very slight whimper at the end of it.

Softly, lovingly, Draco covered Harry's cock with his kisses, licking his way to the crown. At the top, he was rewarded with a sticky drop of fluid which he devoured as if it was the best sweet, running the point of his tongue into the groove there.

Harry moaned, biting his lip again and holding the chair even tighter. His toes curled in his shoes and he squeezed his eyes shut, bracing himself.

Draco slid his lips down over that silky skin, taking the head into his mouth as his tongue swirled around.

"Mmm, fuck," Harry let out quietly.

Draco was entirely focused on Harry, the rest of the world forgotten. His hair, loosened from its tie by Harry's hand, fell like a soft white curtain around his face as he took more of his husband's cock into his mouth.

Harry tried to take slow, even breaths to help steady himself, but it wasn't really working very well and his knees buckled. He wondered if it was normal to feel this way every single time during sex, but he knew there was no other way he could feel when with Draco.

Draco's hands on Harry's hips caught him so that he didn't fall, and he slid his mouth off to talk. "Sit down, love," he said, helping him ease into the chair behind him.

Harry got shakily into the chair, opening his legs for Draco when he was seated. "Please," he whispered, panting now.

"Oh, yes," Draco whispered reverently, bending and encircling

Harry's shaft again with his mouth. His right hand cupped his lover's balls as he began to move up and down, pressing lips to his skin.

Harry's hand found its way right back into Draco's hair and he spread his legs wider, throwing his head back against the soft back of the chair.

Draco bobbed his head faster, breathing through his nose as he took more and more into his mouth. He could feel Harry's magic prickling over his skin and his fingers clenching in his hair.

Harry sucked his stomach in, the pleasure pooling there rapidly. "Draco!" he cried, moaning and gasping.

Draco pushed himself down, taking Harry's cock into the back of his throat and using his muscle there to clench around the head.

"Fuck!" Harry shouted, squirming and writhing. "Fuck! Please!"

Draco pulled back enough to breathe quickly and then sucked hard while gently squeezing his lover's balls.

That did it and Harry was coming down Draco's throat, pulling his hair and wrapping one leg around his back, calling out his name again.

Draco swallowed semen and magic, the heat of both scalding and exciting. He felt his own heat curl and then a release as he swallowed everything Harry gave him.

Harry fell limply against the chair, panting and flushed, his hand still loosely grasping Draco's hair.

Draco licked his lips and smiled happily at his husband, laying his head on Harry's thigh and looking up at him.

Harry slowly opened his eyes and grinned goofily down at Draco, still panting slightly. "Wow," he said breathlessly.

Draco grinned back. "Exactly."

Harry heaved a large, sated sigh. "You're the amazing one," he said, still smiling like an idiot.

Draco chuckled. "You're the pregnant man," he pointed out, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes, but you got me pregnant," Harry retorted.

Draco shrugged. "I am a happy man because I am where I always wanted to be," he said with a contented sigh.

Harry snorted. "Between Harry Potter's legs?" he teased.

Draco laughed, wagging both eyebrows. "Exactly," he said

smugly.

– CHAPTER SIXTEEN –

Tempered

"Damn it, what the hell are we doing here?" Harry asked. "We're not going to find bloody anything! We've been through enough books on the founders that even Ron's an expert on them!"

"Hey!" Ron said. "Just because you're in a bad mood - which I might add has lasted the past few weeks - it doesn't mean you have to put it on everyone else!"

Harry scowled. "Well, I'm just wondering why the hell we're sitting here doing nothing when there are more attacks and we can't bloody find anything in this damn Manor."

"Harry, please," said Hermione firmly and loudly, rubbing her temples.

Draco scowled, fingers pressing into the bridge of his nose. Harry's temper had been bad and it was fraying all their nerves. Not to mention, his magic flared erratically with his anger, giving Draco a headache.

Harry huffed and slumped back in his chair.

"While I wish he wouldn't yell about it," said Hermione pointedly, "Harry is right. And we already knew there wasn't going to be anything here. We have truly hit a dead end. There's nothing on Voldemort in any records or books - or at least nothing on Tom Riddle, and that's really what we need. I've looked everywhere in this place. We all have."

"Well, I suppose it's off to Snape then!" said Harry, sarcastically joyful. "So he can give us loads of stupid information that won't even mean anything!" He adjusted his too-tight trousers and scowled even deeper.

"Yes, because his last letter was so pointless," Draco snapped.

Harry glared at Draco. "Every time we've gone there for Horcrux information, he hasn't had anything we couldn't have figured out on our own, or he tells us what we already know," he growled. "And the

last time we went, we were nearly bloody killed because he allowed himself to be captured by Bellatrix!" Harry knew he was being stupid and unfair, but he didn't much care.

"And he sent us the information that saved lives at Christmas." Draco huffed. "Potter! Stop yelling at us, we're right here in the same bloody room!"

Harry huffed again and closed his eyes. He clenched his fists when the huff made his trousers pull at his skin. He was getting so bloody angry with these stupid fucking *trousers*!

"Both of you stop!" said Hermione shrilly. "We're not going to get anywhere like this!"

Draco stood abruptly and nearly Apparated out of the room. "If one more person raises their voice," he hissed, "I swear I will cast *Silencio* on them."

Harry opened his eyes and glared some more. "Well, what do you suggest we do then?" he said, smiling sarcastically.

Draco walked to the window and looked out over the white landscape. It was turning into a long bloody winter. They had taken in more refugees at both the Manor and Hogwarts. More died every day and they were not closer to finding another Horcux. They didn't dare attack Voldemort directly with them still out there. "Snape may have something," he said quietly. "I want to check in with him, see what else he may know. I can go alone if you prefer."

Harry rolled his eyes, but Draco's quiet voice and comment softened his mood. He sighed. "No, I want to go," he said resignedly.

Draco nodded, still facing outward. "Then we go tomorrow," he said, then turned back to them. "Harry, we need to find you something else to wear. Traditional wizarding robes would work better to hide your condition," he suggested.

Harry sighed again. "Whatever," he said quietly.

Draco walked over to where his sulking husband sat and knelt in front of him, looking worriedly up at him.

Harry raised an eyebrow at Draco. "What?" he said in response to his expression.

Without turning from Harry, Draco said to the others, "Hermione, Ron, will you excuse us? Harry and I need some time."

Ron nodded quickly. "Go. Please," he said.

Harry scowled at him.

"Take all the time you need," said Hermione, sounding weary.

Draco took Harry's hands in his and stood up, pulling his lover up with him.

Harry obediently stood with Draco. "Where are you taking me?" he asked, no bite in his tone, just that same resigned note.

Draco tilted his head, a small weary smile on his face. He reached an arm around Harry's waist and Apparated them to their room.

Harry took a deep breath and let it out slowly before shuffling over to their bed and flopping upon it, staring up at the canopy.

Draco took out his wand and spelled away Harry's clothes and then his own. "Get under the covers," he said.

Harry obediently did that as well. He pushed himself up from the bed, pulled the blanket down, and then climbed back in, pulling the covers up to his chin.

Draco crawled under the blankets and reached for Harry. "Come here," he said gently.

Harry scooted until he was in Draco's arms and he felt better, but not all the way. He was sorry for shouting at him now though.

Draco kissed the top of Harry's head and then began petting his hair. "No more work today," he whispered. "No more hero today, just be my husband."

Harry sighed and nodded, closing his eyes. "I'm sorry," he whispered.

"No apologies needed," Draco said. "You push yourself too hard."

"I have to do it though," Harry replied. "I have to."

"Yes, I know," Draco soothed, "but not today. Tomorrow."

Harry didn't know why, but he suddenly felt like crying and that made him angry. He wasn't a bloody girl, but he bloody felt like one, and all he wanted to do was cry and he hated it right then. He hugged Draco closer.

Draco held him tight, making soothing noises and petting him. "I wonder what you were like as a baby," he said quietly.

"I don't know," Harry whispered, trying to swallow the stupid lump in his throat.

"Those big green eyes," Draco said. "I bet you were bloody

adorable."

Harry sighed. "I have a few pictures," he said very quietly. "From when I was really small, with my mum and dad."

"I would like to see them sometime," Draco said.

Harry nodded. "Whatever you like," he said, relieved that the need to cry was slowly leaving him. "What were you like?"

"Depends on who you ask." Draco smirked.

"What's that mean?" Harry asked, genuinely curious.

"Remember that my mother called me her greedy dragon?" Draco laughed. "Father said I was too emotional, which is probably true."

Harry didn't much want to hear about Lucius at all. "You haven't heard from your mother, have you?" he asked.

"No," Draco said, "which is probably for the better at this point."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"Because I don't know where her loyalties lie," Draco said.

Harry winced. "Oh," he said quietly. He was silent for a little while, thinking. "What will we call him?" he said. "You asked that day we told Mrs Weasley, but I really don't know."

Draco smirked. "Malfoy."

"Oh?" Harry said, raising an eyebrow amusedly.

"The Manor's magic wants a Malfoy heir," Draco said. "It makes sense."

Harry nodded. "I don't care what his surname is, as long as I have him." He smiled gently. "What about a first name?"

"Do you have ideas on that?" Draco asked with a smile, happy he had got what he wanted.

"I don't know at all," Harry answered. "How does one go about choosing a name for their child?"

Draco took a deep breath, thinking about it. "Well, there are different approaches, I suppose," he said. "You can pick a name that has a specific meaning, like mine. Or you can pick a family name, or a name of someone you care about."

"I think I want him to have his own name," Harry said. "Maybe one that means something. What should it mean?"

"My name means strong dragon," Draco said with a laugh.

"You are," Harry said, smiling and kissing Draco on the cheek.

Draco snorted and rolled his eyes, but smiled all the same. "I guess you would name him something that means what you want him to be," he said.

"Well, I don't know if there's a name for what I want him to be," Harry said.

"Start with the words and we will find the name," Draco suggested.

"Well ..." Harry said slowly, "I want him to be strong, and caring, and loving, and good, and clever and ... hmmm ... loyal ... and ... Gryffindor," he finished with a smirk. "A Malfoy in Gryffindor." He was joking, but the thought made him chuckle.

Draco grimaced and shook his head. "Figures," he sneered, but it was playful in tone.

"You want him to be in Slytherin?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow. "With those games you play in there ... I'm not so sure about that"

"You think that our child will be a prude?" Draco laughed.

Harry laughed too. "If we're anything to go by, then no, but I don't want him sucking anyone off at eleven."

"You certainly have benefited from that," Draco teased, "and he could pick truth instead of dare."

Harry rolled his eyes. "I guess ..." he said slowly, smiling a little. "But I don't know if I can honestly produce a Slytherin child. I'm Harry Potter, Gryffindor paragon, remember?" He smirked.

"Sure, Potter, you are such a paragon of virtue. Just how many times have you fucked me in front of others?" Draco retorted.

Harry mock gasped. "How dare you!" he said playfully.

"I dare a lot." Draco grinned. "Otherwise I would never have kissed you. Daring, clever, resourceful - Slytherin."

Harry snorted. "Watch," he said, "he'll be neither Gryffindor or Slytherin - just because we're arguing over it."

"We argue over everything, Potter," Draco said, laughing again. "Wouldn't know what to do with ourselves if we didn't."

Harry laughed as well. "Oh, we're not that bad," he said.

"Maybe, but we are certainly wicked," Draco purred as he leant in and nipped his lover's chin.

Harry grinned. "I would have to agree, I think," he said.

"Good," Draco whispered, capturing Harry's mouth with his own.

Harry wasn't exactly in a good mood, but he wasn't in a bad one either, so that was something at least. He and Draco were standing out in the snow in Hogsmeade, Harry in traditional wizard's robes to hide the fact that his stomach was definitely getting bigger. He stepped inside the pub, not bothering to use the back way this time as it was too cold out and not the right time of day for there to really be anyone inside the pub. He was right, and there were only three people, besides Aberforth behind the bar.

The man looked up at the sound of the door opening and nodded to Harry and Draco, stepping into his back room.

Harry sighed quietly and, with Draco, followed him inside.

Nodding to Aberforth once the door was closed behind them, Draco said, "We need to talk to him."

"Well, I assumed that's what you are here for," Aberforth answered. "He's not in though. Hasn't been for a week. I'll need to send him a message."

Harry sighed and nodded.

"It may be a while before he is able to get away," said Aberforth. "Can I interest you both in a drink while you wait?"

Draco nodded again. "Something warm," he said, and Transfigured chairs for himself and Harry.

Harry gratefully sat in the chair, cracking his back as he arched it, and rolled his shoulders.

Aberforth left the room to get them whatever it was he was getting them and to message Snape.

"How long do you think we'll have to wait?" Harry asked, feeling hungry despite having already eaten breakfast.

"Depends on where he is and whether he can get away," Draco said. Instead of sitting down, Draco stood behind Harry and rubbed his shoulders.

Harry sighed and nodded. "Hopefully not too long. I really want a hamburger."

Draco frowned. "A what?"

"A hamburger," Harry replied. He looked up at Draco's face.

"You don't know what a hamburger is?"

"Sounds like some food with ham in it?" Draco ventured.

"Actually, it's beef," said Harry. "I wonder why they call it a hamburger ...? Well, who cares? I want one."

Draco eyed his partner, trying to figure out if he was teasing, and finally shrugged. "I suppose we will find you one when we leave here," he said.

"Okay," Harry said. He didn't know why, but that really did sound very good right now.

Aberforth returned a few minutes later with two pints of warmed mead and handed them to both men. "The message has been sent. You're welcome to wait here if you like."

Harry nodded, staring at the alcohol in his hands and knowing he couldn't drink any of it.

Draco knew better than to say anything about the mead, sipping his. He sat down next to Harry to wait with him.

"I'll just be out here," Aberforth said, stepping out of the room to resume his place at the bar.

Harry set his pint down on the floor and sighed, resting his hands on his stomach and slumping in the chair.

They sat quietly, Draco smiling as he watched Harry. He had to resist the urge to lay his hands on Harry's belly too. Keeping his hands off Harry was hard enough, but now his hands positively itched to touch the magic he felt there.

"You can touch it for a quick second," Harry said, smiling as he stared at Draco. He knew that was what Draco wanted to do. The blond hardly ever stopped touching Harry's belly when they were alone.

Draco looked toward the door to the tavern but scooted his chair closer and ran his right hand over the swell of Harry's belly. He sighed as he did, smiling happily.

"What's it feel like now?" Harry asked, moving his own hands to give Draco more room.

"Strong." Draco grinned. "He reacts to my touch."

Harry's smile grew to show his teeth. "Really?" he said. "I wonder when he will start kicking. I suppose he's too small right now."

"His magic shifts in response to mine," Draco said with grey eyes

sparkling almost silver. "He will probably start moving soon," he added.

Harry, still smiling, leant over and kissed Draco gently, running one hand along his jaw.

By the door, Snape cleared his throat and pulled his hood back.

Harry straightened immediately, pulling his hand from Draco's face very fast.

Draco sat up too and worked quickly to control his expression, trying to think of what Snape had or hadn't seen.

"You two sent for me." Snape shook his head and then shook out his cloak.

"Yeah," Harry said. "We don't know what to do about the Horcruxes. We've looked everywhere we could think in the Manor and there's nothing there. We're going to have to leave there soon to go looking; we wanted to know if you knew anything before we have to do that."

Snape Transfigured a box into a chair and sat down, eyes narrowed and studying Harry for a minute.

Harry frowned. "Well ... do you know anything?" he asked after a few moments of silence. He didn't much care for the way Snape was looking at him.

"Have you put on weight, Potter?" he asked.

Harry's eyes widened considerably. "Er ... I don't - I - maybe a bit," he spluttered, having not expected the question at all.

"Severus," Draco said, "we need to find those missing pieces."

"You do, and soon," Snape said. "I heard you two talking when I came in. You really should be more alert when you are in a place like this."

Harry simply stared and nervously tried to remember what exactly he and Draco had said.

Draco's face was set immobile as his heart raced. He had let his guard down and now he didn't know what to do to fix it.

"Who is moving and responds to your magic, Draco?" Snape asked, looking at Harry as he did.

Harry swallowed and tried to look nonchalant, although his breathing was quickening. He had no idea what to tell Snape that would sound plausible.

"Why do you want to know?" Draco asked, his voice cold and even.

Snape smiled. "Because it may confirm a theory of mine," he answered.

Harry frowned confusedly, but he kept his mouth shut, not wanting to mess up any chances Draco might have of getting them out of this.

"What theory?" Draco asked, voice still even and almost brittle.

Snape had a strange half-smile on his face. "Didn't you wonder why the Ancestral Magic at the Manor accepted Potter, a half-blood and a male?"

He knows, Harry thought. *He knows and it's our own fault*. He felt the colour drain from his face while becoming embarrassed at the same time.

"Yes, I did," Draco said quietly.

"I have been waiting for this actually," Snape said. "Ever since you told me. It was the only thing that made sense."

Harry looked up at Snape, raising an eyebrow. He still wasn't going to say anything unless Snape confirmed what he thought he knew and Draco acknowledged it.

Snape shook his head, sighing and closing his eyes for a moment. "Something I saw a long time ago didn't make sense until now," he said quietly. "Not to mention some of the things that Albus has said."

Harry's attention was very piqued now. "What?" he asked, frowning.

"You, like you are now," Snape said, "belly full to bursting with what I now presume to be the next Malfoy heir."

That rendered Harry speechless and he had no idea what Snape was talking about. He looked to Draco, eyes wide.

Draco took in a quick breath, his eyes widening as well. "Tell us," he whispered.

"I first met Mr Potter here on October 31st, 1981," Snape said, watching Harry as he said it.

– CHAPTER SEVENTEEN –

Strange Times

"How is that possible?" Harry said, feeling anger bubble up inside him. "That was the night Voldemort came after my mum and dad."

"You were there," Draco said, and it sounded like an accusation even to his own ears.

"You were *there*?!" Harry hissed, bringing his voice down to an angry whisper. "You're the one who sold them out! You overheard the prophecy! I know!"

"You were there too," Snape hissed. "Both of you, if I am correct. You would be the tall one beside him with his hood pulled up. And you, like you are now."

"What are you fucking playing at?!" Harry said angrily. "Are you off your bloody rocker?"

"Albus just smiled and told me that it would all make sense someday," Snape said. "Two Harry Potters, one small and one pregnant."

"What?!" Harry asked, getting even angrier because he still had no idea what Snape was talking about.

Draco had been quiet, watching the exchange. "Time magic," he said quietly.

Harry turned to Draco now. "Time magic?" he asked, staring at him confusedly. "Do you mean like a Time-Turner?"

Draco nodded but was staring at Snape. "He is saying we were there the night your parents were killed," he explained, "that we used time magic to go back, and now it is time to do that."

Snape nodded, smiling. "Figures Draco would understand even when you don't, Potter," he sneered. "You stood by while your own parents were killed and now you have to do just that."

Harry's face contorted in anger. "First off, I don't know what the fuck you're talking about. Why the hell would I go back there? And second, if you hadn't told Voldemort about the fucking prophecy,

perhaps they wouldn't have *been* killed!"

Harry's magic flared and Draco reached a hand out automatically to touch him.

"Because, Potter, if you don't go back, your younger self will die," Snape sneered, "and we would never be having this conversation!"

"How would I have died?" Harry asked. "Voldemort wasn't able to kill me. My mother's protection saved my life."

"Potter, I've said all I can about what happened then," Snape said, and sighed. "You will have to go back and see for yourself what happened that night."

"What were you doing there?" Harry spat, suddenly feeling an intense need to know. "There to help your Master?"

"I played my part in what happened," Snape said, sounding resigned. "As I do now. But I won't explain it to you!"

"I don't know why Dumbledore ever gave you a chance! I don't believe for one second the reason he gave me!" Harry said, eyes bright and glaring.

Draco hissed, the angry magic crawling over his skin. "Harry," he said, trying to get his attention. "I know what Dumbledore told him. Remember?"

"I'm talking about the first time!" Harry said, still as angry as ever. "Why did he trust you?! If him, or you, or anyone else expects me to believe that leading Voldemort to my mum and dad was the greatest regret of your life, then they're bloody mad! You didn't and you *don't* give a damn!"

"Harry!" Draco snapped. "Shut the fuck up and listen!"

Snape was glaring at Harry, his body trembling.

Harry looked at Draco as if he had slapped him, mouth hanging slightly open. He didn't even notice Snape's reaction.

Draco took several deep breaths, trying to get himself calmed down. "Harry, aren't you listening? Didn't you hear what he said? Don't you understand what this means?"

"I'm not a fucking idiot, Draco," Harry said angrily.

"Then stop acting like one!" Draco snapped. "I am so sick of watching the two of you fight! Do either of you ever think about how this affects me?!" He dropped Harry's hand and crossed his arms across his chest.

Harry was silent and stared at Draco for a few moments before he dropped his gaze to his own knees, flushing with shame.

Snape buried his face in his hands, refusing to look at either of them.

Draco sat panting with anger and pain and confusion. He hated feeling like he did.

Harry slumped back in his chair, still staring at his knees. He brought his limply hanging hand up to his lap. He wanted to tell Draco that he was sorry, but he wasn't sorry for the things he had said to Snape.

All three men sat without speaking for several minutes, their breathing seeming loud in the small back room. Finally, Draco looked between the two of them. "Set it aside," he said in a firm voice, "both of you. We need to figure this out, not scream at each other."

Harry looked up, his expression one of quiet anger, but he tried to get rid of it, tried to contain it in his eyes alone.

Snape looked between the two of them, looking like he had aged years just since he had walked through the door. "Draco," he said quietly, "do you remember your trust vault?"

"Yes," Draco asked, sounding surprised. "I withdrew some coins last summer."

Snape nodded. "But you didn't look through the items in there, did you?"

"What does that have to do with anything?" Harry asked, actually managing to keep the anger out of his voice.

Snape ignored Harry, still speaking to Draco. "You will find a box from me. In actuality, it is from Dumbledore and was placed there in the month after the ... incident at Godric's Hollow."

"Why would Dumbledore have put something inside Draco's trust?" Harry asked, confused.

"I didn't know at the time," Snape said, "but I think I understand now. I also understand why he wasn't so surprised by the two of you ... becoming ... what you are."

"What does Dumbledore have to do with any of this?" Harry asked.

"He knew," Draco said, making the leap. "He knew that Harry

and I were there - in the past. That's why he knew we would become more than enemies."

"How would he know ...?" Harry said. "Unless ... he saw us there"

"Exactly," Snape said, sighing.

"Dumbledore wasn't there that night," Harry insisted. "He wouldn't have let them die."

"Potter, there is a lot more to that night than you know," Snape said. "Your parents were killed in the evening on October 31st, but Hagrid didn't arrive until the next morning. There were a number of visitors to the house that night. It is time you found out about that."

Harry was staring hard at Snape, his brain working overtime so that he swore he could almost feel it. "So, Draco and I have to go back in time? To the night my parents died ..." he said quietly to himself. "I have to stand aside and watch them die?"

"Yesss," Snape hissed, flinching and curling his fingers into fists.

"That's - I can't - Merlin," Harry said, once again not really taking notice of Snape's reaction. He closed his eyes, trying to imagine something so horrible.

Snape snorted. "But you can," he sneered. "You already did."

Harry looked up at Snape's sneering tone. He felt as if he were being accused and went defensive again. "So did you," he said, eyes flashing.

"Yes," he hissed, "so did I."

Harry fists shook with anger. "You're a heartless bastard and you don't care about anyone but yourself," he said, voice shaking.

"Potter!" Draco snapped again, getting up and standing between the two of them, glaring at Harry.

"You're going to take his side?" Harry asked through clenched teeth, eyes brimming with angry tears that he roughly wiped away.

"Can't you fucking hear yourself?" Draco growled. "How many lives does he have to save before you open your eyes and really look at him? Perfect Potter. You never make mistakes, do you? You don't regret anything you have ever done? I nearly killed Ron. Why don't you tell me how worthless I am?"

Harry glared at Draco through tears that wouldn't stop and it felt like he had been stabbed and someone was twisting the knife. He

wanted to Apparate away, wanted to get up and leave. But he felt frozen to the spot, frozen by Draco's eyes.

Draco saw the pain in those green eyes and it hurt. But he knew he was right. He dropped to his knees in front of Harry, looking up at him with grey eyes brimming with unshed tears as well. "I have made some bad choices in my life, Harry," he said. "Does that mean I am heartless?"

Harry closed his eyes, feeling ashamed for crying, feeling like an idiot, feeling like screaming at the top of his lungs. "No," he whispered instead.

"How can you judge him then? You don't even know what happened yet. He is trying to help now but you won't even listen," Draco said. "Please stop this."

Harry didn't answer, said not a word, but gave a nod so small Draco might not have caught it.

Draco remained on his knees on the stone floor, eyes never leaving his lover's face.

Harry took a deep breath and held it for what felt like along time. "Okay," he whispered. "I'll listen."

Draco smiled sadly up at him, a tear finally escaping down his cheek.

Harry opened his eyes again and looked down at Draco, tears still on his own face as he wiped Draco's away with his thumb.

"Do you forgive me, Harry?" Draco asked quietly.

"Yes," Harry said quietly but straight away. "Of course I forgive you. I'm sorry."

"I mean about Ron, Katie Bell and the other things I did," Draco said, making sure he was understood.

"I've already forgiven you for that," Harry whispered. "A long time ago."

Draco was watching his eyes carefully and was content with what he saw.

Harry gave Draco a very small smile that was almost not there and leant down to kiss his forehead. "I love you," he whispered.

"I am yours," Draco said. "I love you."

Harry remained there with his lips pressed to Draco's skin for a while, until he finally remembered where they were and sat up gently.

He looked slowly up at Snape and sighed resignedly.

Draco reached a hand out and laid it on Harry's belly.

Snape had turned his back on the two and sat tense, waiting.

Harry placed his hand over Draco's and waited for the conversation to start up again, vowing to himself that he wouldn't shout.

"Severus," Draco said, still looking at Harry, "what does the gift have to do with the rest of this?"

Harry looked back down at Draco and gave him that very small smile again. He waited for Snape's answer.

"He didn't tell me until just before ... the end," Snape said, sighing. "Then he said to make sure you opened that box when the time was right. I would guess that it has instructions for how you will accomplish the time magic."

"So we go to Gringotts and get the gift," Harry said. "And then go back in time to do whatever it is I have to do there."

"Yes," Snape said, "and then we can talk. I don't dare tell you too much now. Albus seemed to think that there would be something in the past that would also help with the Horcrux problem."

Harry pinched the bridge of his nose beneath his glasses for a moment and then nodded. "Okay," he said quietly, still hardly able to believe the strange turn of events this meeting had produced.

"You know you can't change what we know happened," Snape said. "It would risk everything. Including what you are carrying now."

"I - I know," Harry said, not knowing whether or not he could bear to watch his parents die, but also knowing that *he* would die if he lost Draco or his child. "I know."

"I am leaving now," Snape said, standing up and reaching for his cloak.

Draco turned around, still on the floor. "Thank you," he said, "and be careful."

Snape snorted but nodded.

Harry was silent and staring up at that dark man. He wondered if he would find answers to some of his questions about him if he went back to that night.

Snape opened the door and closed it behind himself without another word.

Draco looked after him for a moment, hand still resting on Harry's belly.

"I can't believe this," Harry whispered after a few seconds, staring from the closed door to Draco again.

"We should go," Draco said, getting to his feet and holding his hands out to Harry.

Harry nodded, taking Draco's hands and using them to pull himself up. "Yes, we should," he agreed.

They made their way out and then Apparated back to the Manor. Leakey met them and took their cloaks. "Masters Draco and Harry, others in dining room with supper," he said.

Harry was a bit more disoriented than usual after an Apparition from Scotland to lower England and shook his head to clear it. "Okay," he told the elf, nodding.

"Do you want to eat with them or go rest?" Draco asked, looking worriedly at his husband.

"I don't know," Harry said, rubbing his eyes. His mind was still reeling.

"Tell them we are going to rest," Draco told the elf. "And then have food brought to our room." He kept an arm around Harry's waist and began walking them toward their rooms. Harry looked like he would be ill if Draco Apparated them at the moment.

Harry sighed and took his time, grateful for Draco's help. He once again felt like a bloody girl and didn't like it one bit.

"Oh, bloody hell," Draco said, and pulled his wand out, casting a Lightning Spell on Harry. Then he scooped him up into his arms and carried him the rest of the way to their rooms.

– CHAPTER EIGHTEEN –

Draco's Vault

Draco carrying him to their rooms made Harry feel like even more of a girl and he scowled, but couldn't deny that he was glad he didn't have to walk himself.

Draco laid Harry carefully in the bed and began to unfasten his clothing. "There now, love," he said. "Let's just get you more comfortable."

Harry reached up and began trying to help Draco remove his clothing. "Can you take the charm off?" he asked, his light fingers fumbling.

Draco nodded, casting the counter-spell and then simply casting the spell to remove Harry's clothes too.

As timing would have it, Babb appeared then with the food tray.

Harry groaned and hurriedly grasped at the covers but then simply gave up and covered his face with his hands.

Draco sighed, picking up the edge of the covers and folding them over his husband's body. He took the tray from Babb and then she popped away. "It's safe now." He grinned.

Harry rolled his eyes beneath his fingers and then pulled his hands away. He sat up halfway.

"You will fuck me in front of your friends but you are afraid the house-elves will see your bits," Draco teased, shaking his head.

Harry sighed. "That was different," he said, twisting around to pile pillows behind himself.

Draco flushed. "It certainly was." He smirked and set the tray on the bed in front of Harry. Then he began undressing himself.

Harry couldn't help a small smile of his own. He reached forward for the first food item he could reach and bit into it, still hungry from earlier.

"Will this do or do you want to call Babb back and explain what a hamburger is?" Draco said, gesturing to the tray as he folded his

clothes over the back of the chair near the bed.

Harry's stomach growled at even the word hamburger. "Actually, I do really want one," he said.

"Call the elf then," Draco said, and then walked into the loo.

Harry did, and when she appeared, he tried to explain a hamburger as best he could. "It's ground up beef and you ... erm ... roll it into a ball ... and then flatten it ... and then you fry it up. Put it between two pieces of bread and bring ketchup and lettuce and a pickle up with it." He smiled, hoping she got the gist of it.

Babb looked at him, tilting her head as if looking at him sideways would make it all clear.

"Have Hermione show you how it is made, Babb," Draco suggested from the bathroom doorway.

"Yes, Master Draco," she said, and disappeared.

Harry gave a small shrug and leant back against the pillows again.

Draco walked around the bed and climbed in the other side, crawling across to be near Harry. He reached over and picked up some bread and began buttering it.

"So ... when do we go to get that gift?" Harry asked quietly.

"We can go when you feel rested enough," Draco said quietly, pouring them both some apple juice from the cold pitcher on the tray.

Harry sighed and nodded, taking his juice and sipping it. "I'm sorry about ... well, you know," he said.

Draco nodded, thinking. "Severus believed in me when no one else did," he said quietly.

"I know there has to be something between you both for you to like him, but ... it's just ... hard for me. I - I know he saved all those people and I know he's been a really helpful spy and all ... but, I don't know. Maybe I should just forget about it," Harry said, fingering the rim of his cup.

"I have never understood what it is between you two," Draco sighed. "It was one of the reasons I didn't tell you how I felt before last May."

"You didn't tell me because Snape and I didn't like each other?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No, I didn't tell you because you hated me," Draco rolled his

eyes, "but it was why I never talked to him about it. I talked to him about most problems I had. He even intervened a few times when things got ... difficult ... with Father."

"He did?" Harry asked quietly, biting his lip.

Draco nodded quietly, leaning back to stare at the canopy. "One time, Father had me locked in my room without anything to eat for several days," Draco explained. "Severus showed up with food and sat talking with me until I told him what had happened. Then he went to talk with Father. Things went back to normal for a while."

Harry's eyes widened. "I didn't know that happened to you," he said, knowing himself what that kind of thing felt like.

Draco shrugged. "He was always willing to listen to me and encourage me," the blond said. "I know he has been a right arse to you, but even that helped sometimes. You always got all the attention at school and I felt really ignored by the other teachers."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "I would have rather been ignored," he said.

"I wouldn't," Draco said. "To me, that's the worst. I'd rather be beat than ignored."

Harry frowned. "I like keeping to myself mostly," he said. "As far as most things anyway. I guess that's just what I was used to doing."

"I did everything wrong with you. You didn't care about wealth or connections. You scoffed at them." Draco shook his head. "And it made me want you even more. Made me blind crazy."

"Blind crazy?" Harry asked, raising his eyebrow again. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"It meant that even your anger and hatred was better than being ignored," Draco said.

"Well, if you had been nice to me, I might have liked you," Harry said, shaking his head at Draco.

"I was nice to you, at first," Draco sighed, "but not to Weasley or Granger."

"Exactly," Harry said. "And they were my friends - well, believe it or not, I didn't like Hermione very much at first." He snorted. "Ron even more so."

"Actually, I can believe that." Draco laughed. "I was so jealous of Ron that I wanted to strangle him."

"Merlin," Harry said, amused. "Well, I never fancied him in the romantic sense, ugh, believe me." He chuckled. "Not that Ron's ugly or anything, but, he's too much like a brother to me. It was like that almost from the very start."

"Yet, you chose him over me and it made me angry," Draco said.

Harry sighed. "Yes, in a manner of speaking," he said. "To be fair, it wasn't that difficult of a choice. Look at it from my point of view. I was eleven years old and all by myself. Mrs Weasley helped me get on the train and Fred and George helped me with my trunk. Ron came in and we started talking and - just - boom - we were friends. And then here you come in with Crabbe and Goyle of all people and I already thought you were a bit of a snob. You insulted Ron's family right away and then told me that he was the wrong sort of wizard to hang with! What did you expect me to do? Jump up, shake your hand, and abandon the first person who was ever nice to me? And after that, when I turned you down, you tried to steal my food! Which is absolutely stupid, because we both know you had money to get more of your own. You made me so bloody mad."

"Hey, Ron insulted my name first," Draco complained.

"Oh, he did not," Harry said, rolling his eyes slightly. "He coughed funny."

"He snorted when I introduced myself," Draco whined, rolling his eyes.

"Oh, please," Harry said, raising his eyebrows.

Draco frowned, crossing his arms over his chest. "He was making fun of my name in front of you," Draco grumbled.

"He didn't even say anything!" Harry said with a small laugh. "And it was, what? The second time you'd ever seen me?"

Draco scowled, actually pouting, and looked up at the beams.

Harry shook his head, chuckling. "I don't know what you're looking so sulky for," he said. "I'm here now in your bed and Ron Weasley is also living under your roof, along with nearly his entire family."

Draco huffed. Then glanced in Harry's direction. "You done with that?" he asked.

"Done with what?" Harry asked.

"The tray?" Draco said, gesturing at it.

"Oh, er, yeah, just let me -" He ate the rest of his chicken quickly. "Where's that hamburger, I wonder," he said when he was finished.

The question was answered when Babb popped in beside him, holding a plate.

"Oh," Harry said, taking the plate from her and examining it. It actually looked pretty good, and it certainly smelled like a hamburger. "Thank you," he said, giving Babb a smile.

She squeaked in a way that seemed to be happy and disappeared again.

Harry loaded the burger up with the condiments he had asked for and then took a huge bite of it, ketchup spilling out the back. "Erin, so goo" he said through his mouthful.

Draco grimaced, laying the napkin on Harry's chest where he was dripping grease and ketchup on himself.

"Oops," Harry said, but he didn't really care all that much. It tasted too good and he had been craving one so badly.

"Is it always that messy?" Draco asked, eyebrows raised and nose scrunched a bit.

Harry shrugged. "I like mine this way," he said, swallowing. "Want to try it?"

"It looks like it is bleeding," Draco complained.

Harry snorted. "Doesn't taste that way," he said, taking another bite. He held it out for Draco.

Looking dubious, to say the least, Draco leant forward and took a small bite.

Harry grinned and raised an eyebrow. "Well?"

Draco kept his face disdainful for a minute, considering. "Not too bad," he conceded, still annoyed with his lover.

Harry snorted and finished the burger in a few more messy bites. He picked up the napkin and wiped his face before sighing and drinking down the last of his juice. "That was good," he said, feeling full now.

Draco picked up his wand and sent the tray and contents back to the kitchens. He sighed and lay back again.

Harry rolled on his side and stared at Draco, reaching to touch his hair.

Draco trembled when Harry's fingers touched his hair.

Harry sighed. "I don't know how I feel about going back there. I think it will be ... hard."

"It makes me think too much," Draco said, still not looking at Harry.

Harry frowned a little. "You okay?" he asked, looking at Draco's face and trying to get him to look at him.

Draco shrugged. "I just wonder if things could have been different," he said quietly.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked. "What things?"

"You, me, us, everything." Draco sighed. "I mean, *could* I have been different? Would it have *made* a difference? What if I had kissed you earlier? What if I hadn't kissed you? All those what ifs!"

Harry frowned and was silent for a few moments. "Well ... maybe," he said quietly. "But what if ... exactly what happened is the only way we could get to where we are now? I wouldn't trade a hundred thousand friendships or flings with you during school for this."

Draco uncrossed his arms and looked at Harry. "No, neither would I," he said.

Harry smiled gently. "I am sorry that it wasn't different," he said. "I'm sorry that some memories I have of you aren't so ... great, but ... that's just us, right? We wouldn't be how we are if our time at school wasn't like it was."

"Well," Draco drawled, reaching his hand to cup his lovers chin, "I suppose if you can forgive me for being a snob, then I can forgive you for being a git." He finished the sentence by licking Harry's lips.

Harry grinned. "Forgiven," he whispered, letting his tongue out to meet Draco's.

Harry was nervous about what they would find in the gift in Draco's vault. He didn't know why exactly, but he was. He was also filled with a burning curiosity and very much wanted to know what was there. He and Draco hadn't told Ron and Hermione yet what they had come here for, only that it was important and that they would explain when they knew more themselves.

Harry was now waiting impatiently as Draco dealt with one of the goblins at Gringotts, hands in the pockets of his heavy robes and

holding the fabric discreetly away from his middle. He didn't look out of place in the robes as it was late January and still cold outside, so no one really paid him any attention, for which he was glad. The last thing he needed was some sort of article about Harry Potter getting fat.

People still stared at them when they were out together, but Draco was getting used to that. The goblins took no real notice though. Draco helped Harry into the cart that would take them to the trust vault. He hadn't paid a lot of attention to the items in there when he'd come here before, and he hadn't opened it again since he had access to the rest of the estate now.

Harry got out of the cart, feeling wobbly, and hobbled over to the safe door, waiting for the goblin to open it. He stepped back when he did and waited for Draco to go in first.

Draco stood with hands on his hips, surveying the items in the vault. "Well, I doubt the Armour or the swords are what we are looking for," he said, and then his gaze landed on a small iron-banded trunk.

Harry nodded his agreement with Draco's words and his eyes followed his gaze. "But that could be it," he said of the trunk.

Draco picked up the small trunk in his hands and set it on top of a larger one, looking at it. "It has a Locking Charm on it," he said, "but I think it is a specialised type."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked, walking over to look at the trunk more closely. "How do we open it then?"

Draco looked at the box, his eyes unfocused as he used that other sense that was more feeling than sight. Then he smiled. "Give me your hand," he said, holding his palm up.

Harry raised an eyebrow and did as told, reaching his hand out for Draco's.

Draco smiled and laid Harry's hand palm down on the top of the box, his own on top of his husband's. There was an audible click and Draco laughed.

Harry looked surprised. "That was the only way it could open?" he asked.

"Sneaky bastard." Draco chuckled. "Are we sure Dumbledore wasn't Slytherin?"

Harry laughed. "Merlin, I might ask the same question," he said.

"Think about it. He had Severus place a box in my trust vault that would only open to your magical signature. And it has been sitting here for sixteen years." Draco sounded awed.

Harry shook his head. "So he's known for that long that there would be at least something with us and he's kept it all this time."

Draco smiled, looking with wonder from the box to Harry again. Was this his destiny then? To be standing here with his husband, opening this old box? He was still holding Harry's hand and he drew it to his chest. "I wonder if he was worried or amused when we kept fighting?" he asked, smiling at his lover.

Harry smiled. "I have no idea," he said. "He must have been relieved or something when what happened between us happened. I knew that if he would have really wanted that binding promise off, he would have found a way. I also wondered why he seemed to trust you so quickly."

Draco brought Harry's hand to his mouth, kissing the palm slowly. Behind them the goblin made a coughing noise.

Harry looked over his shoulder. "We better get this and go," he said to Draco.

Draco nodded, tucking the box under his arm. "Anything else you want from here?" he asked.

"Me?" Harry asked. "It's your vault."

Draco shrugged, smiling. "I already have what I need," he said, and squeezed Harry's hand.

Harry smiled gently. "So do I," he said.

– CHAPTER NINETEEN –

Voice of the Past

Harry and Draco arrived in the entrance hall of the Manor from Diagon Alley. It wasn't as far as the Hog's Head, so Harry didn't feel too bad after the Apparition. He hurriedly gave his cloak to the elf that appeared to take it and then stepped across the hall, pausing at the entryway. "Want to get Ron and Hermione now?" he asked Draco, looking over his shoulder.

Draco nodded, holding the box tightly and his heart beating fast.

Harry nodded too and continued out the door. At times like these, having such a huge place annoyed him. Ron and Hermione could have been anywhere. After looking in a few rooms, he called a house-elf to tell him where they were and hurriedly made his way to the main sitting room where Ron and Hermione were sitting with Charlie and the twins.

It took a few minutes to get Ron and Hermione away from the room without seeming suspicious, but they were finally all heading up to Harry and Draco's suite with the trunk, anxious to get it open.

Draco sat on the sofa and placed the box in front of them on a table. It was an old wooden box held together with wrought iron bands which had rusted a bit. It was dusty, the grime was smudged where Draco had held on to it. He waited for Harry to start the explanation to the others.

"What is it?" Ron asked, sitting next to Draco to get a closer look.

"It's from Dumbledore," said Harry.

Ron and Hermione both looked at him quickly.

"From Dumbledore?" said Hermione. "I thought you said you really were at Gringotts"

"We were," said Harry. "This is from Draco's trust vault." He patted the top of the box, resisting the urge to flip it open.

Hermione raised an eyebrow. "Why would anything from

Dumbledore be inside Draco's anything?"

Draco raised an eyebrow at the wording but let it go. "This box was placed in the vault sometime between my first and second birthdays by Severus Snape," he explained. "He told us that Dumbledore gave it to him to put there."

"How would that have anything to do with Harry?" Hermione asked. "And what went on with Snape the other day? You said you would tell us and still haven't."

"Snape told us to go and get this out of Draco's vault," Harry explained. "He said ... that I'm supposed to go back ... to the night Voldemort killed my parents."

Ron's eyes widened and he looked confused.

"What?" said Hermione.

Harry nodded. "Yeah, back to that night."

"But why?" she asked, looking even more confused.

"He told us that it had something to do with Horcruxes and that he couldn't give us details," Draco huffed. "That it would make sense afterwards."

"But how will you know what to do?" asked Ron. "What if you go there and mess something up?"

"I'm guessing that the answer to that is in this box," said Harry, patting the box again.

Hermione and Ron looked expectantly at him for a few seconds.

"Well, open it!" said Hermione impatiently.

Draco looked at Harry for confirmation. "Do you want me to?" he asked.

Harry took a deep breath. "Yeah. Let's see what's inside," he answered, playing with the end of his sleeve nervously.

Draco licked his lips and opened the lid. There was a parchment case and a silk bag with something inside that Draco could feel was magical. He picked up the parchment case and saw that it was addressed to Harry Potter.

Harry, Ron and Hermione leant in and looked inside as well.

"There's a letter," Hermione said.

"Open it," Ron pushed, staring at Harry.

Draco nodded but didn't pick up the bag inside. He thought it better to read the letter first. He handed it to Harry.

Harry uncorked one end of the tube and pulled the rolled up parchment out. It was old but thick and rolled tight. Harry saw that it was a letter addressed to him.

To Harry Potter:

If you are reading this now, I assume that you and Draco Malfoy are together. I write this not long after leaving you, against my better judgement, with your Aunt Petunia Dursley and her family. You told me I needed to do that to protect you. It was one of the more difficult tasks I have ever had to do.

I am immensely saddened by the loss of Lily and James and, yet, heartened by the man you will grow into and the partner you have at your side. My best wishes go to you both and your child.

Now to what this letter is supposed to be about: enclosed is the Timekey you instructed me to leave. It functions like a Portkey only in time rather than in space. This means that you must be at the location you want to appear in before you activate it. It will take you to October 31st, 1981 and return you 12 hours later. You told me that the date you left on was February 13th, 1998. You must be in Godric's Hollow on that date.

Remember compassion for all those who were there that terrible All Hallows Eve. It was love that saved you then and it is love that will save you now.

Yours,

Albus Dumbledore.

Harry's hands shook slightly as he lowered the letter and stared at the space in front of him. He passed it to Draco silently, wondering if he was going to cry or not.

Draco read the letter aloud to the others, again overwhelmed by that feeling of destiny.

Hermione covered her mouth with her hand, eyes welling up. Ron stared at Draco with his mouth hanging open a bit.

"So this is - this is real?" Hermione said in a higher-than-usual voice.

"It has to be," said Harry quietly.

"Dumbledore knew I would be with Harry," Draco whispered, "because he met us together back then."

"This is - wow," said Ron, slumping back against the sofa. "Wow."

"We have to go to Godric's Hollow then," Harry said to Draco, finding it immensely strange that he had been wanting to go there since Dumbledore's funeral.

"Yes," Draco said quietly, "in three days."

"Just you and Draco?" asked Hermione, still teary-eyed.

"I think so," said Harry.

"Snape said that it was Harry, pregnant like he is now, and a taller man in a cloak whom he assumed to be me. But Dumbledore mentions me by name," Draco said. "There's also the fact that this was left in my vault."

Harry nodded. "It must be only us then, because Dumbledore would have mentioned you two in the letter if you were there. Snape as well."

"Snape was there?" Ron asked. "That night?"

"That's what he said," Harry answered.

"And he knows Harry is pregnant. Said he has been waiting for it, actually." Draco sighed.

"Well, why didn't anyone tell you about all this?" said Ron, eyes wide.

"They couldn't," said Hermione quietly. "It could have messed up what was supposed to happen."

Draco nodded. "Supposed to happen," he repeated, feeling in shock still about that.

All four of them were silent for a few minutes.

"This is ... a lot ... to take in," Harry said finally.

"Indeed," Draco said, staring now at the bag in the box. He reached shaking fingers for it.

Harry watched as Draco pulled the bag out, feeling almost heavier with all of this new information.

Draco held the bag carefully by the edge, opening the draw-string with shaky fingers and looking in. "Merde'," he cursed when he saw what was inside.

"What?" Harry, Ron and Hermione all asked quickly in unison. Ron leant over towards Draco to get a look and Harry stepped forward, taking a seat on Draco's other side.

Draco upended the bag into the box so the contents lay on the bottom without him touching it. It was a pendant. A gold chain with

a small shield shape. The image of a lion conquering a dragon in white on yellow gold.

Harry's mouth dropped open and his hand automatically came up to touch his own necklace through his robe. He turned his head and looked at Draco. "It's my ..." he said, trailing off.

"Yes, it is," Draco said quietly. "And there is only one of those. I had it custom made as your wedding present. But this one has been sitting in this box since you and I were still in nappies."

"Merlin," said Ron.

"Merlin, indeed," Harry said so quietly it was almost a whisper.

"So, I guess you will give him the one you are wearing now," Draco said in that shocked, quiet voice.

"Yeah ... I ... yeah, I guess," Harry said, pulling his necklace out and fingering the pendant.

"I can see the enchantment on the one in the box," Draco said. "Other than that, they look the same."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, they look exactly the same," he said quietly.

Draco was watching Harry. His entire life had been leading up to this. He wasn't sure whether to be angry over never having a choice or pleased that he was doing what he was meant to do.

Harry let out a quiet sigh. "So, we wait then," he said. "And then ... we do this." He was a bit in awe and terrified as well. It was really sinking in that he was going to go and watch the night that had turned his life into what it was. It was a very legitimate thing to be terrified of.

"Put it away for now," Draco said, holding the bag out for Harry to put the Timekey back.

He picked the necklace up and placed it back inside the bag and then sat there, unsure of what to say.

"This is for a Horcrux?" Hermione said.

"I don't know," Harry answered. "I don't know anything except what's been said to me."

"Snape said that he thought we might find a clue about the next one there," Draco said, reaching a hand to stroke Harry's dark hair.

Hermione nodded and bit her lip. "Harry" she began, but she didn't finish what she had been about to say.

"This is good then, right?" Harry asked, looking up at Draco. "This is what we needed. We had to have some sort of lead."

Draco looked at Hermione, a question in his eyes, but didn't say anything to her. "It is what happened, so it is what must happen," he said. "It may answer questions you need answers to." He threaded his fingers through Harry's hair soothingly.

Harry nodded. "I have a lot of questions," he said quietly.

"I suppose it might be hard" Hermione said, biting her lip again. "Harry ... it'll be just like in third year. You will only be able to do what it is you have to do. Nothing else."

"I - I know," Harry said, nodding again.

"Yes, Severus brought that up too," Draco said to Hermione. He wondered about the reference to third year.

"If anything goes wrong ... you could alter our entire world. You ... can't save your parents. You absolutely cannot," Hermione continued seriously.

"I know," Harry said, and it was a little sharp this time.

"Hermione," Draco said, reaching his other hand to rest on Harry's belly, calling her attention to it, "we know that. We understand what we risk if we do."

She sighed quietly and gave a tiny nod.

"I'm tired," Harry said after another minute of silence had passed as he stared at the floor. "I think I'm going to take a nap."

Ron and Hermione didn't say anything, just nodded, staring at him sadly. He didn't want their pity. If it had to be done, it had to be done.

"I'll be there in a minute," Draco said, indicating Harry should go to the bedroom.

Harry nodded again, feeling like all he was doing was nodding, and got to his feet, heading into their bedroom.

Draco looked after him and then turned to their friends. "I am worried about him," he said.

"I am too," Hermione admitted quietly.

Ron stared between both Hermione and Draco worriedly.

"Pregnancy can be difficult for a grown woman whose body and mind are ready for it," Draco said.

"He hasn't been acting much like himself lately," Hermione said.

"And he's getting big so quickly. I've never seen anything like it."

"I have read everything I can find on pregnancy, and while his symptoms are normal, they are progressing faster than usual," Draco said. "I think the baby is growing quicker."

"Is that safe?" Hermione asked worriedly. "Can he handle that? Will the baby be all right?"

Draco took a deep breath and rubbed his temples. He was scared and he couldn't admit it to Harry. "I don't know. There is nothing in the books that help me here," he answered, his voice quavering.

"This has never happened before," Hermione said, looking even more scared and worried. "I read as many books as I could find, too, and there hasn't been a single thing on male pregnancy. Harry's the first. Anything could happen."

"I have to trust that the Ancestral Magic of the Manor and Harry's magic wouldn't have done this to him if it wouldn't work," Draco said, but he was still trembling a bit as he said it.

Hermione moved to the spot on the couch that Harry had vacated and placed a gentle hand on Draco's back. "Don't worry," she said. "I'm sure everything will be fine. You're right, it couldn't have done this to him without it being able to work."

Draco was startled, but grateful for her kindness. He turned worried grey eyes to her. "He keeps asking me what happens next. But I don't know the answers. Like how ..." he swallowed thickly, "does the baby come out."

Hermione opened her mouth to speak but then closed it again, obviously trying to think of what to say. "Well ..." she began slowly, "vaginal births aren't always the only option for a woman. Sometimes the baby has to be removed"

"Cut out," Draco whispered. "I read that. There was something about when the baby grows in another part besides the womb. That it can damage the ... host's ... internal organs. They usually cut the baby out before it is even ready."

"Maybe that's why the baby is growing so fast," Hermione said, looking frightened from Draco's words. "Perhaps the magic could tell that his body wouldn't be able to carry a baby to term ... all the way through the nine months."

Draco thought about that a minute, nodding. "Possibly, and I

think it has some type of magical protection around it that takes the place of the womb," he said. "But that still doesn't answer the question. Am I going to have to ...?"

"Cut the baby out?" Hermione said, wincing.

Ron's ears were red but he was staring at Hermione and Draco intently.

Draco nodded, not sure he could even say it.

"I can't imagine that it could come out any other way," Hermione said slowly. "There is no other way that I can see."

Draco winced, closing his eyes. He knew this already, but hearing Hermione say it made it more real.

Hermione swallowed. "I don't know what you're ... going to tell him," she said, wincing again. "But I don't know what he was expecting."

"I think he wants me to tell him everything is going to be fine," Draco said, "and so that's what I do."

Hermione nodded. "I think, for right now, that is probably what's best for him. And for all we know ... everything will be fine."

Draco nodded. "Well, I should be with him," he said quietly, getting up.

Hermione sighed. "Yes, you should be," she said, getting to her feet as well. She stared up at Draco. "I know that I'm Harry's best friend," she gave a small smile, "but I like to think we're friends now too. I know things have got to get ... hard and I just want you to know I'm here."

"Thank you, Hermione," Draco said, and turned, "and you too, Ron. I do consider you my friends."

"No problem, mate," said Ron, giving a small smile like Hermione's.

"I guess we'll let you get to your husband," Hermione said gently.

Draco said goodnight and went to the bedroom to find Harry.

Harry was lying on the bed, still clothed, and staring up at that "H." He turned his head when Draco entered the room and smiled softly at him.

Draco lifted his arms to rest against the frame above him and stared down at the beautiful man in his bed. It still made his heart

speed up just to think about it - such a dream come true and here he was.

"What are you thinking?" Harry whispered, reaching a hand out to run his fingers along the outside fabric of Draco's robes.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "That you look good in my bed." He smirked.

Harry smiled. "Even with this belly?" he asked teasingly.

Draco grinned, blushing furiously as he nodded.

Harry raised an eyebrow now. "And you're blushing why?" he said.

Draco's breathing had sped up and he rolled his eyes. Then he sat down on the edge of the bed and removed his shoes before lying down beside Harry, facing him.

Harry rolled on his side as well and sighed, reaching out for Draco's hair now.

"Does it bother you that you turn me on like this?" Draco asked quietly.

"What, pregnant?" Harry asked, raising both eyebrows.

Draco nodded, grinning. He reached his hand out to lie on Harry's belly, stroking him.

"Well, I think I would be more bothered if you thought I looked disgusting," Harry said with a small laugh.

"The man I have wanted for so long is my husband and is carrying our child," Draco said, his voice awed. "How could that be anything other than exciting?"

Harry smiled. "I don't know," he said quietly.

Draco took a deep breath. "I love your body. I loved it at eleven, and I loved it last year, and I love it now, but I don't think what makes me feel this way is about the way you look. It is something about you," he said in a kind of breathy speech, wondering if any of it made sense.

Harry smiled again. "Well, I certainly don't know what it is."

"Do you think that ... if it was reversed, you would still be attracted to me?" Draco asked.

"Yes," Harry said without hesitation. "I think I'd be attracted to you if all your teeth fell out and you smelled weird." He laughed a little.

"So, there it is," Draco said, pushing Harry's shirt up so he could run his hand directly over the skin of his belly, fingers teasing the hair below his bellybutton.

Harry smiled widely and sighed. "There what is?" he said.

"We are both attracted to each other and will be no matter what," Draco laughed, "so get used to it, Potter."

Harry smirked. "Oh, but Malfoy, I think I already am," he said.

"Prove it," Draco challenged, smirking.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure about that?" he asked, grinning.

"I can take whatever you can dish out, Potter," Draco drawled.

Harry grinned wider still and rolled so that he was over top of Draco on hands and knees. "Last chance," he said, leaning close to Draco's face with eyes gone dark and half-lidded.

Draco laughed, Harry's belly pressing against his own. "Oh, I am so scared," he crooned in a mocking tone, even as his heart sped up.

Harry smiled gently before pressing his cheek to Draco's to whisper in his ear. "You needn't be," he said, sliding a hand down to cup Draco's crotch.

Draco hissed, arching into that touch. "Ride me," he whispered.

Harry closed his eyes in pleasure at those words. "Anything," he whispered, performing the spell to strip them both.

Draco groaned as Harry's magic swept over them and they were suddenly skin to skin.

Harry brought his mouth to Draco's, already open for him, and slid both hands along his jaw as he let his body down to rest gently on top of his husband's.

Harry straddling him with his belly pressed against Draco's was odd and hot in a new way. He really was crazy about this man and probably pretty kinky to feel this way. His hands came up to Harry's sides and he opened his mouth, slipping his tongue against Harry's.

Harry moaned quietly at the always amazingly wonderful feel of Draco's hands on him. He pressed their groins together as he sucked on Draco's tongue and licked it with his own.

Draco had been half-hard already, but as Harry rubbed their cocks together, he felt his erection pulse against his lovers.

Harry gasped at the sensation and moved one hand to begin

preparing himself, wanting Draco inside him. He performed the Lube Spell with as little effort as he had to remove their clothes and pressed his fingers gently inside. The feeling of them was nothing, *nothing* to what Draco would feel like.

Draco watched hungrily as he saw Harry reaching back. His hands slid down over his lover's hips and thighs.

Harry gasped again as Draco touched him, moving his fingers faster so that he could have the man beneath him. He covered Draco's mouth with his own again as he lifted up slightly to grasp Draco's cock with his slick fingers, loving the feel of it in his hand.

Draco moaned into Harry's mouth, trembling as his lover's hand grasped his cock. He dug his fingers into the other man's thighs, shivering with anticipation.

"I have you and I've still never wanted anything so much," Harry whispered as he began to slide down against Draco's cock.

"Yesss!" Draco gasped as he felt himself enclosed in Harry's heat. "Yours, always yours," he whispered.

Harry raised up to get a better angle and closed his eyes, his expression one of the most extreme pleasure. "Merlin, yes, always," he said.

Draco looked up at the man astride him. "So beautiful," he purred. "My cock inside you."

"Everything inside me," Harry whispered, his throat exposed as he threw his head back gently. And he was being truthful. His whole life was inside him: Draco, and the child he already loved, both the things that mattered most to him in the world.

Draco slid his hands up Harry's thighs and hips. His left stayed on his hip, but the right continued until it rested on the swell of Harry's belly. "Ride me, love," Draco encouraged, thrusting up with his hips.

Harry cried out as Draco thrust into him. "Yes," he gasped, moving his hips with Draco's movements. "Draco, yes."

Draco felt Harry push up, sliding up his cock, and then that amazing drop back, sliding in again. He moaned, running his hand in circles down the flesh of Harry's belly.

One of Harry's hands joined Draco's on his stomach as he used the other to brace himself on Draco's chest, sliding on his cock and

crying out even louder.

There was something amazingly erotic in the way Harry's belly trapped his cock between it and Draco's stomach, sliding against their skin as he fucked him. Draco was trembling, feeling the magic of Harry's arousal and the pulse under his hand.

"Oh, Draco, oh fuck!" Harry shouted, sweating now. He was gasping and trembling, his arse clenching around Draco's cock.

"Gods, yes." Draco's voice cracked as his body's release brought him. He thrust up, shouting incoherently.

Harry's nails dug into Draco's skin as his orgasm was ripped from him, flooding his body with hot pleasure.

Hot and sweet magic filled Draco, his cock inside and his body under Harry, shuddering as he rode the wave of Harry's orgasm.

Harry sat panting atop Draco, his legs bent at the knees on either side of him and his head thrown back again. He let out one insanely happy laugh as he found himself staring up at that 'H' again.

Draco laughed too, but he wasn't sure why they were laughing. He was caught up in the joy of the man he loved and that happy pulse of magic under his hand.

Harry slowly let his head fall forward again to stare at Draco. He smiled satedly at him, breathing still heavy. "If I loved you any more than I already do, I think I would explode with it," he said.

"I think you just did." Draco ginned up at him.

Harry's laughter at first was moderate, but then he was laughing like mad again and he didn't even know why. He was laughing so hard there were tears running down his face. Perhaps he just needed to cry, and it felt so good to just let go.

Draco ran hands up his lover's sides and around his back, encouraging him to curl against him. He understood the need for release better than most.

Harry lowered his body and pressed against Draco, actually crying now, the tears that he had thought would come finally catching up with him.

Holding Harry, Draco rolled them gently sideways so Harry could relax and press against him without putting too much pressure on his belly. "Yes, love," Draco soothed, "I'm here. By your side. Always."

Those words comforted Harry more than he could ever express

with words of his own. They were like an anchor. Draco would always be here, would always be here to hold Harry and to love him and to listen and to just be ... Draco. Just Draco, his Draco, his husband and the father of his child, the man he would always love even if he had no teeth. Harry's own thought brought a sob that was half a laugh and he clutched Draco tighter.

Draco rested his forehead against Harry's, holding him and murmuring soothing words. He didn't look for an explanation, feeling he understood how confused Harry had to be at this point.

The tears finally subsided and Harry had nearly cried himself to sleep. His swollen eyes drooped as he fought to keep them open.

"Rest, love," Draco purred, "I am right here."

"Right here," Harry murmured, his eyes falling shut as his breathing began to even out.

Draco lay for a long while, watching Harry sleep and petting that pulsing light inside his belly. Draco was seventeen, already married, and soon he would be a father. He felt large with both the privilege and the responsibility of it all.

– CHAPTER TWENTY –

Beloved Child

The previous three days had seemed to fly by faster than any days should have. Harry had done absolutely nothing for those days except think about what he was going to have to do. Even without Dementors there, he could hear his mother's screaming voice inside his head; he could hear her crying for his own safety. He closed his eyes and could hardly believe that he had been there that night - of course he had already known that he had been there that night, but not as he was now, not able to maybe save his parents and doing nothing.

He shivered, trying to wipe his mind clean from the awful images, and placed a hand over his stomach. He knew that no matter what, no matter how hard it would be to stand aside, he could not try to save them. He could not if he was to keep his life how it was at present: married to Draco and carrying their child. He could do nothing to risk that.

He sighed and began dressing again, shaking his head at himself.

"Dress in layers. It will be cold," Draco said, fretting over the Muggle clothes he had to wear.

Harry nodded, walking over to get another shirt to slip on over the one he was already wearing.

"And gloves and a hat," Draco added. "And don't forget your Invisibility Cloak."

Harry nodded again. "Okay," he said quietly. "We should wear sweatshirts with hoods or something too. Snape said you had your hood up."

Draco held up the black sweatshirt Harry had already thrown at him earlier. "I'll tie my hair back too," he said.

Harry nodded again. "Yeah, because Snape didn't have any idea who you were."

"Which means I have to wear gloves too," Draco said, holding up

his silver hand.

"Yes. Cover anything you could be identified from," Harry said, pulling on his own sweatshirt.

"It's a good thing it will be cold, otherwise I would suffocate," Draco drawled.

"I wonder if it will be cold there, though," said Harry. "It will only be Halloween."

Draco shrugged. "Better than July."

"Yeah," said Harry simply, pulling on his gloves now. "What time are we supposed to be there?"

"We know it was night but not when," Draco said. "We should try to be at the house by sunset."

"Okay," Harry said, turning his head and looking out of the window. "We should probably get going soon then if we want to make it there in time. We have to catch the train."

They hadn't told anyone besides Ron and Hermione where they were going, of course. So they would Apparate directly to the train station. Draco slung a back pack over his shoulder which contained supplies including some food stuffs just in case.

Harry moved over to Draco and brought a hand up to cup his cheek. He took a rather large breath and let it out slowly. "I love you," he said, just feeling the need to tell him.

Looking into those green depths always made Draco smile and he leant forward to graze his lips against his lover's. "I love you," he whispered against them.

Harry closed his eyes for a moment. "Are you ready?" he asked, kissing Draco very gently before he pulled away from him.

Draco took a deep breath and nodded, patting the pocket of his back trousers where he carried the Timekey.

"So am I. Let's go," Harry said, grasping Draco's free hand and pulling himself close to him.

Draco Apparated them to the station and they went through the process of buying tickets and boarding the train. Draco let Harry handle the Muggle transactions, always feeling a little odd in those situations.

Harry sat very close to Draco on the way. As hard as he tried, he couldn't stop thinking of his mother's voice. He took a shuddering

breath when he looked outside at the setting sun, knowing that very soon, he would be hearing that voice for real.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Draco asked him quietly, putting an arm around him and looking at him with a worried frown.

Harry gave a small shrug, frowning. "I've told you that I hear her voice in dreams sometimes, didn't I?" he asked. "In dreams and around Dementors. I just - I know that it's going to be bad ... because I've heard it before."

"I will be there, beside you," Draco said. "I hope that helps."

"It does. Merlin, it does," Harry said, reaching for Draco's hand. "I don't know what I would have done if I'd had to go alone, without you."

"Shall I read to you?" Draco asked, holding up the small book of Saki's short stories that he had read from on their last train ride.

Harry smiled gently. "Sure," he said quietly, resting his head on Draco's shoulder.

Draco read *Sredni Vashtar* and a few other stories about animals from his book by Saki to Harry until they reached the station for Godric's Hollow. They collected their things and stepped out onto the platform. Hermione had helped them with a map to find the location once they arrived.

Harry took another deep breath as he looked around. He pulled the map out of his pocket and thanked whoever was listening that Hermione was his friend. "It's not far," he said to Draco. "Just in a neighbourhood a bit west from here. It shouldn't take long to walk."

They walked together through the streets, their Muggle clothes and the cold February air helped them blend. The sun was setting, a brilliant backdrop to the crisp clear day.

It didn't take them long to get there, but Harry was still very happy for his hat, gloves and layers of clothing. When he turned onto the dirt road where the house was supposed to be, his heart began to speed up and both fear and some kind of strange excitement sprung up inside him.

"Is it still empty in this time?" Draco asked.

"It was mostly destroyed," Harry answered. "I suppose it might have been built up again, but I assume it's either going to be an empty space, or boarded up or something like that."

As they walked, the houses thinned out and the area was more wooded. Finally, they came to the place that Hermione had marked on the map. The house was boarded up, the paint was peeling and the yard overgrown. They made their way up a gravel path that was as much weed as road now.

Harry bit his lip as he walked up the drive with Draco, staring at the house. When he reached it, he walked up the few creaky steps of the front porch. The doors and windows could not be entered as they were and he turned back to Draco. "Should we go in?" he asked in a quiet voice. Speaking loudly, or even normally here seemed ... wrong.

"We could look around now, if you like," Draco said, "so we know the layout. But when we use the Timekey, we should be outside, just to be safe."

Harry nodded and pulled his wand. He looked around himself once, just to make sure, before he blasted the plywood nailed over the entrance away. The place didn't have a door and the hinges looked like they'd been torn clean off. He stepped inside the house and looked around at what looked like it had once been the sitting room.

The door might have kept people out, but not vermin, who scattered with the blast. Draco studied the damage to the room – holes in the walls and furniture in pieces. A chill went down his spine when he realised that it looked like the aftermath of a magical battle.

"Merlin," Harry whispered, looking around at the mess. He kicked aside what looked like plaster and wood and, judging by the hole in the ceiling, that's exactly what it was. There were scorch marks in some places on the wooden floor and Harry knew that something had happened in this room. Had this been where his father had died?

"They fought here," Draco said quietly. "He didn't go down without a fight."

Harry nodded and felt extreme sadness but pride as well. "Voldemort told me he died straight-backed and proud," he said, leaning down to touch one of the marks on the floor.

"Sounds like you are a lot like him," Draco smirked.

Harry snorted quietly. "That's what Sirius always said," he replied, moving over to the staircase that he wasn't sure was stable. He

looked up it, wondering if he should risk going up.

"Careful," Draco said, placing a hand on his arm.

"I've had enough experience with old staircases to know that," Harry said, placing a gentle foot on the first step. Once up a few steps, it seemed stable enough. "I think it's fine," he said, looking over his shoulder at Draco. "It hasn't been that long."

Draco snorted but had his wand out just in case. "Then let me go first," he said.

Harry stepped to the side so Draco could go ahead of him. "You be careful, too," he said.

"Certainly," Draco said, sounding tense. He made his way up, testing the steps as he went. There were some that were loose and he pointed them out to Harry. Finally, they stood in the upstairs hall where there were three doorways, one of which was missing the door. The other two stood ajar.

Harry followed Draco up and paused when he saw the doors. He had expected something like this, but seeing it was ... he couldn't think of a word. "That must have been ..." he said quietly, not bothering to finish his sentence. He pointed to the room with the missing door.

Draco cast *Lumos* as the sun had nearly set now. The room still had toys in it and a cot. The once bright colours of the nursery were faded now, the wall paper peeling.

Harry stepped inside and stared around quietly for a few moments. There was nothing wrong in this room except for the missing door and years of being empty of life. He walked over to the cot and placed both hands on it, staring at the small stuffed toys and the little blankets inside.

Draco walked up behind him, putting his arms around his lover's body and resting them on his belly. "This was yours," he said softly. "They wanted you to be safe and happy."

Harry could feel his eyes welling with tears and he closed them as he nodded his head and leant it back against Draco.

Draco didn't know what he could do except hold him, so he stood in the darkening room with his husband and waited.

After a few minutes, Harry thought he could manage to talk without his voice cracking. "We should go," he said quietly. "It's

probably almost time."

Draco nodded, releasing him and walking back to the hall. He looked into the bathroom and what must have been the Harry's parents' room. "We should check around downstairs, too," he said.

"Yeah," Harry said, walking over to the stairs and making his way back down them.

They found a small study - the books long ruined by the elements - and a kitchen/dining room. Then Draco found a door to the basement. He looked at it, tracing invisible runes on the wood. "This used to be heavily warded," he said.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Did it?" he asked coming to look over Draco's shoulder.

Draco nodded and opened the door, looking down the wooden steps into the cellar.

"Should we go down there?" Harry said, wondering what could have been placed there to be warded.

"The stairs here are even more likely to be a problem, and if they were Unspeakables, the Ministry would have cleaned it out," Draco said, eyeing the cellar uncomfortably.

Harry nodded and took a step back so that Draco could move back as well. "It was probably for their research," he said quietly.

Draco closed the door and held out his hand to Harry. "Let's go into the backyard and use the Timekey from there," he said.

Harry took another deep breath and took Draco's hand, walking with him out of the house and around to the back. "Do we activate it or does it activate itself?" he asked.

"I think it will activate at the right time and we had better both be touching it when that happens," Draco said, moving to the far back of what had been the garden.

"We should be out of sight," Harry said. "And you should get it out."

Draco nodded pulling the pendant from his pocket. "Let's wait behind this old garden shed," he suggested.

Harry moved to where Draco had indicated and leant against the wall, holding out a hand to take hold of the necklace with Draco.

Draco took his hand, entwining his with Harry's around the pendant and using his other arm to pull Harry close. It was getting

pretty dark now.

"I'm ready for this," Harry whispered, squeezing Draco's hand.

They didn't have long to wait. Suddenly the pendant seemed warmer than their hands and Draco knew just before that classic tug in his gut that it had activated.

Harry closed his eyes and held Draco as tightly as he could, only opening them again when he knew that they had made the trip. The air was cool, not cold anymore and the snow had gone, replaced with a ground covered in fallen leaves.

Draco looked about. The overgrowth was trimmed back and the fence was no longer listing to the side. He kissed Harry on the forehead before releasing him and tucking the pendant back into his pocket.

"Is he ... here yet?" Harry asked, taking a few careful steps to peer around the back of the shed. There were lights on in the house and the night was quiet.

"We must be in the past," Draco snorted, "because I can't see anything there but an empty lot."

Harry looked at Draco, confused. "What ...?" he said, but then his eyes widened with understanding. "The Fidelius Charm," he said. "But then ... how ... how will you have anything to do with this?"

"I will be beside you even if I can't see what is going on," Draco said. It actually made him nervous, but he knew it was important. "What do you see?"

"A house. The lights are on and everything looks okay ... for now," Harry answered, a bit more nervous now, too.

"Do you want to ... look, to see them?" Draco whispered.

Harry stared at Draco and then at the house silently for a few moments, thinking, trying to decide. He finally took a deep breath and nodded hesitantly, holding his hand out for Draco's.

Draco took Harry's hand with his silver one, holding his wand in the other and keeping an eye out for anyone else.

Harry swallowed and ducked his head down before moving quietly towards the house. The paint wasn't peeling now and its windows were not boarded up. He moved silently around until he was standing against the right side of the house, right outside the sitting room window.

There was muffled laughter and then, "Lily!" and Harry closed his eyes. "Lily, look what Harry's doing!"

"Oh, God," Harry whispered, his hand tightening on Draco's.

"What's happened?" Draco whispered, watching Harry since he couldn't see anything himself.

"I can hear them," Harry whispered. He took a few deep breaths and finally turned to stare through the window.

The lights in the house were soft and warm, the room clean and the furniture not in pieces everywhere. A black-haired man was sitting on the floor by the sofa, holding his arms out and smiling. He was looking at the very small black-haired boy, who was holding on to the sofa with tiny hands. Harry watched as his father attempted to get him to walk, his considerably younger, one-year-old self.

"He's trying to teach me to walk," Harry whispered for Draco's sake, still grasping his hand.

"I bet you are adorable," Draco whispered.

At Draco's words, Harry stared at himself again, at the little, determined-looking face that he could hardly believe was his own.

"What?" came a new voice from what sounded like the kitchen, a female voice.

"Quick!" James yelled happily, still holding his arms out. "Come on, Harry. Come on. Show daddy you can walk. Come on."

Lily entered then, her long auburn hair tied into a braid down her back. She gasped happily. "Did he get up there by himself?" she asked, rushing over to her husband and son and getting to her knees beside them.

"Yeah," James said enthusiastically. "All by himself, 'cause he's a big boy, huh, Harry? Are you a big boy?" He reached out and tickled baby Harry's belly, rewarded with a delighted laugh from the child.

Harry let out a quiet, sad laugh of his own.

Draco was caught by the look on his husband's face, a kind of longing that made his own heart clench.

"He is just amazing," Lily said, smiling hugely, her face lit up beautifully. "We have the smartest little boy in the world." She reached her arms out now. "Will you come to Mummy, Harry?"

Harry watched himself as he tried to take a step forward and fell to the ground on his bottom.

Lily laughed and crawled towards her son, pulling him into her arms. "That's my little boy," she said in that type of voice most people use when talking to babies. "My precious little boy, yes he is."

James smiled and reached for the end of Lily's braid, tickling baby Harry's chin and neck with it.

Harry's heart ached in his chest. He knew it wouldn't be long.

"I am right beside you, where I belong," Draco whispered, trying to anchor Harry in what their mission was in this time.

"I know," Harry said quietly, tearing his eyes from the window to stare at Draco. He moved over to him and hugged him tightly. "He'll be here any minute now," he whispered in his ear.

"Put your Cloak on Harry," Draco said. "We can't risk the Dark Lord seeing you."

Harry nodded, moving away from Draco and reaching for the sack they had brought. He took it from Draco and pulled out his Invisibility Cloak, shaking it out and pulling it over and around himself. "You should put the pack somewhere we can get it later," he said.

Draco nodded and put the pack at the base of a tree among some bushes.

Harry moved close to Draco, touching him so that he could tell where he was. "We should move to the front of the house to watch for him," he said, taking Draco's hand from beneath the Cloak. He led them to where they could see everything in the front yard.

There was a loud crack and two figures appeared in front of the small house. The taller figure threw his hood back from his face and raised his wand, blasting the door to the house inward.

The shorter figure seemed to cower back, flinching a bit.

Harry gasped at how carelessly it was done, without even a second thought, and pulled his wand, his breathing and heart speeding up.

There was a scream from inside the house and then the sound of a baby crying. There were obviously several seconds of confusion before the shouting began.

"Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run! I'll hold him off-" came James's voice, saying what Harry himself had heard inside his head over and over again so many times.

Voldemort strode into the house, laughing.

Harry was breathing unevenly and shallow, the hand on his wand shaking. His eyes were focused on the short figure still standing outside the house, as if not wanting to go in.

"I have to get closer," Harry whispered so quietly, he wasn't sure if Draco had heard.

Draco was doing his best to hide in the shadows, his wand gripped in his right hand. "I can see Voldemort," he whispered.

"Even though he's in the house?" Harry whispered taking a step forward, unsure of what he was supposed to do.

"Yes, I can't see the house but I can see him," Draco said. "He is laughing and firing hexes at someone."

Harry's hand shook again. "I'm moving closer," he said, hearing the hexes and curses and laughing going on inside in the house.

The short figure was still standing outside, having now moved up on the porch, but still cowering, and suddenly, Harry knew exactly who it had to be under the hood.

Draco watched in fascination at the strange sight before him. He still couldn't see the house or anyone but Voldemort.

A sudden idea struck Harry and he released Draco's hand as he ran off as quick as he could manage, the shouts and spells hitting the walls growing louder with every step he took. When he reached the porch, he clambered up the steps and wrenched back the second figure's hood, hoping against hope that it would indeed be Wormtail. It was. Pettigrew squealed with fright and spun around, looking about himself wildly. He looked much younger and fatter than he did in Harry's own time, and his head was full of hair.

Harry took his wand out so that there was simply a floating hand and arm. He pressed the wand to Wormtail's neck. Pettigrew opened his mouth to cry out and his eyes widened in fear.

"Call for him and I *will* kill you," Harry promised in a deadly whisper. "You will be dead before he turns around. Don't try to Transfigure, either."

Wormtail shut his mouth again, letting out a whimper.

Harry reached out with his other hand and grabbed the front of Wormtail's robes, hoping that he wasn't doing anything to mess up time. "Follow me," he growled, and Voldemort was apparently so

caught up in his battle with James, he didn't notice what was going on just outside.

Harry led the trembling man, who wasn't much older than himself, back over to where Draco stood. "Don't show your face," Harry whispered to his husband.

"What are you doing?" Draco hissed.

"Tell him the address of the house. Tell him the secret," Harry hissed at Wormtail.

Wormtail trembled even more violently, looking at Draco and then at the floating hands clutching him and holding a wand to his throat.

"Tell him or I'll kill you," Harry growled, pressing the wand in further.

"But - I - I don't -" Wormtail squeaked.

"One ..." Harry began, pressing the wand closer still.

"I - I don't know what you're -"

"Two ..."

"Godric's Hollow!" Wormtail squawked, sweating and looking fearfully towards the house. "James, Lily and Harry Potter are living in Godric's Hollow on 27 Dilly's Street."

Draco was frowning at the spot where his husband's hand came from the air. Suddenly, behind Pettigrew and the invisible Harry, the house of Lily and James appeared. "I can see it now," he said.

Harry was panting with the effort of keeping from actually trying to kill Wormtail. "I should kill you still," he hissed. He turned his head to Draco. "He needs a Stunner or else he'll run squealing. We can leave him here until everything is done. He won't say anything to his Master. He is too much of a coward and Voldemort wouldn't be pleased, would he?"

Wormtail shook again in Harry's hands.

Harry waited for confirmation from Draco to cast the spell.

Draco cast the spell on Pettigrew, scowling at where he knew his husband was under the cloak.

Harry let Wormtail go, watching as he fell to the ground in a limp heap. He resisted the urge to kick him.

"Harry," Draco warned, "you can't change things."

"I know," Harry said shortly, glaring at Wormtail still. "I don't

know what to do now," he said. "Do I need to see something inside the house?" He looked back up where the battle still seemed to be going on.

"No, we wait here for Severus," Draco said, not even wanting to consider letting Harry anywhere near Voldemort.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE –

If Not for Love

As Harry and Draco stood, there was another crack and a figure appeared on the lawn. After a moment's hesitation the person ran toward the house. In that moment, Voldemort's voice could be heard to cast, "*Avada Kedavra*," and a green glow showed through the downstairs windows.

Harry let out a shuddering gasp. He had known that it was going to happen, and dealing with Wormtail had almost made him forget, but now he felt weak in the knees and knew that the smiling man, who had been trying to teach his son to walk, was now dead.

At that moment, the new robed figure disappeared into the house. There was the sound of another door shattering upstairs.

Harry felt ridiculous simply standing there. He could hardly bear it. "Draco, I think that was Snape," he said, playing the voices he could hear faintly from outside much louder in his head.

"Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!"

"Stand aside you silly girl ... stand aside now."

"Not Harry, please, no, take me, kill me instead - Not Harry! Please ... have mercy ... have mercy "

"We can go in when Voldemort is dead," Draco said.

Harry squeezed his eyes shut, shaking and holding his breath. His whole existence had changed in this moment. This moment sixteen years ago had turned his life into what it had become. He couldn't take another breath.

Draco stepped forward, reaching to where he thought Harry was under the Cloak.

Harry felt Draco's fingertips and he moved to press against him immediately, his eyes still tightly shut.

Draco watched the green light appear in the upstairs window and a horrific scream filled the air.

Harry was screaming as well, a sudden, completely unexpected,

horrendous pain in his forehead. He fell to his knees in front of Draco, gasping for breath and pressing his hands to his scar. He couldn't see or think. The pain was too great.

Draco held Harry in his arms, terrified for him. "Harry? What's wrong?" he asked.

Slowly, the pain settled into a dull throb and left Harry panting on the ground. The Cloak had fallen off him with the movements. The hand that was still pressed to his forehead felt wet and when he brought it down to look he could barely see anything in the dark of the night, but he knew it was blood on his fingers.

"Harry?" Draco asked again. "What's happened?"

"My scar," Harry rasped, still panting. "My scar hurt - hurts," he corrected, as it was still throbbing and bleeding.

"Can you stand?" Draco asked. There was a loud wailing coming from the house.

Harry's head turned quickly towards the house. "What's that?" he asked, struggling to stand and wiping the blood from his face.

Draco made sure his hood was pulled up. He put his arm around Harry and walked with him toward the house. "I think it is safe to go in now," he said.

Harry swallowed heavily, afraid to see the mess inside the house, even though he knew what it would look like.

"You don't have to look," Draco said quietly as he guided Harry up the steps.

"Yes, I do," Harry answered in a whisper, knowing that he *would* have to. When he and Draco entered the living room, it looked worse than it did in the future. It still looked lived in, pictures on the walls, shoes lying by the non-existent door, coats and cloaks hanging on hooks. The scorch marks were fresh and new, and amongst the pieces of ceiling and wall, lay James Potter, his limbs twisted strangely the way he had fallen and his eyes open, but there was still something fierce about his face.

Harry stood staring at him but then had to look away, his eyes filling with tears that he tried to keep away. He wasn't finished here yet and could not break down.

Draco swallowed hard, his silver hand holding Harry's and his wand in the other. "Let's see where Severus is," he said. They could

hear the sounds of crying still coming from upstairs and Draco led them in that direction. At the top of the stairs they turned to the nursery and stood looking at the scene. On the floor were two figures. A young man with long black hair was holding the body of Lily Potter in his arms and weeping. Little Harry was still in his cot, wailing with blood trickling down his face.

Harry's eyes widened and he gasped. He didn't know what to do or if he should say anything. He was overwhelmed with multiple thoughts and feelings in that moment and felt like he nearly fainted with it all, but he did notice that Voldemort's body was not in the room. Only Snape, himself, and his mother.

The man on the floor looked up suddenly, grabbing his wand and pointing it at them. "Who are you?" he demanded. "Potter?" The man frowned, stiffening.

Harry's eyes widened further. How would Snape know ... unless ... he thought Harry was his father. "No," Harry said. "I'm not James. What are you doing here?"

"Who are you?" Snape snapped. "And why are you here?"

Harry had no idea what to tell him or what he was supposed to do in this house. He could barely think as himself as a baby continued to cry. "I'm - I - I'm here for - for -"

"Why are you holding her?" Draco asked Snape.

"She's dead," Snape sobbed.

Harry closed his eyes for a moment. "Why do you care?" he asked, and he managed to keep all traces of anger or confusion out of his voice, even when he felt like yelling for Snape to take his greasy hands off of his mother.

Snape looked down at the dead woman in his arms and the pain on his face was horrible.

Draco took a breath. "You loved her," he said in a surprised voice.

Harry's head snapped in Draco's direction. "What?" he asked, confused. He looked back at the younger Snape.

Draco laid a gloved hand on Harry's shoulder. "Can't you see it?"

Snape was weeping again and clutching the dead woman to him, rocking.

Harry stared at Snape, his eyes getting wider and wider as he

recognised the man's posture. It was exactly the same way Harry himself held Draco the times that he had been afraid for Draco's life - only Snape looked far worse. The person in his arms was actually dead and gone. Harry let out the breath that he hadn't been aware he was holding and had to lean slightly on Draco.

Small Harry was crying so pitifully that Draco wanted to do something but wasn't sure what. He led Harry into the room, around Snape who seemed oblivious to them at that moment. Draco reached into the cot and picked up the boy. "He's hurt and scared," Draco said.

Harry stared at Draco and at the baby he was holding and had no idea what to do. "I - I don't-" he stammered.

At the sound of Harry's voice, little Harry looked around and started reaching his small arms out, crying over and over again, "Dadadadadada."

Harry's eyes widened in alarm.

Draco smiled and handed the small boy to Harry.

It was the strangest thing in the world as Harry took himself from Draco. He was stiff with him for a moment but then tried hushing him, rubbing his back and trying to get him to lay his head on his shoulder. He stared with eyes still wide at Draco.

"You will need to get used to it," Draco said, rubbing his husband's belly.

"Yeah," Harry whispered, still trying to soothe the baby in his arms. It was strange to think of it as himself.

"Who are you?" Snape asked again, looking at them both strangely.

"We - we can't tell you," Harry said to Snape.

Snape scowled at them but then looked back down at Lily. He took a moment to smooth the hair from her face and then gently lowered her to the ground. He then stood up and dusted his robes off. He pulled his wand and aimed it at the two of them. "I really must insist that you tell me," he said coldly.

Harry's eyes widened. "I can't," he said firmly.

"Are you part of the Order?" Snape asked.

"Are you?" Harry asked, not knowing what the right answer would be to give to Snape.

"Severus," Draco said, "we are here at Dumbledore's request."

Harry looked at Draco again. Even here, in the past, he could still deal with Snape better than Harry could. Harry nodded in agreement with his husband.

"Will you take the child to him?" Snape asked.

"Yes," Draco said. "Is he at Hogwarts?"

"I believe so," Severus said, his gaze returning to the woman on the floor.

Harry stared at his mother, too, wanting to reach out and touch her, just once, but he didn't. He just patted the back of the baby in his arms, who was still crying, but softly now. He was shocked that Snape seemed so ready to believe them. Was he truly going to simply let them leave?

"Why did you come here?" Draco asked the man.

"It doesn't matter now," Snape answered.

"You came to try to save her, didn't you?" Draco asked.

Harry stared hard at Snape. "Did you?" he asked, needing to know the truth.

"Too late," Snape said, staring at her with a look of despair.

Harry couldn't believe it, but in that moment, he actually felt bad for Snape. He had never seen him show his emotions so openly, and he had never seen him so upset. "I'm sorry," he whispered, feeling odd saying it.

Snape seemed unaware that Harry had said anything, continuing to stare at Lily.

Draco looked about and picked up a blanket, wrapping and tucking it around the small boy in his husband's arms. He took Harry's sleeve and pulled. "Let's go, H - husband," he said.

Harry looked sharply at Draco when he almost said his name, but then nodded, taking a few steps backward. "Let's," he said quietly, looking at his mother one last time and then heading for the stairs. He couldn't believe they were going to leave here so easily. It couldn't be all they had to do. He remembered what the Snape of his own time had said about Horcruxes. Dumbledore said that there would be something here about them, but what?

Little Harry had his chubby hands wrapped in Harry's hair and was peeking over the man's shoulder at Draco as they headed down

the stairs.

Harry made his way down into the sitting room quickly and headed for the front door, intending to leave, but then he paused. "Wait," he said, "what's in that basement? The Ministry hasn't come."

Draco had paused too. "Yes," he said, "the wards will be down now." He turned and headed into the kitchen.

Harry followed after him quickly, clutching the little boy in his arms tightly to him.

Draco opened the door to the basement, the runes still fresh but no longer active. He stood looking down into the darkness.

"Is there a light switch?" Harry asked, peering over Draco's shoulder like he had before.

"Oh," Draco said, having forgotten about the Muggle switches. He reached around until he found one and pulled the toggle. Light came on in the room below.

Harry stood there waiting for Draco to go, looking at him expectantly.

Draco swallowed, looking down into the basement. He turned to hold out his hands. "Let me hold the child," he said.

Harry nodded and gave a little shrug, handing him over gently.

Draco held the little boy to his chest and looked into his face and grinned as he looked into those green eyes. He reached for a small towel that was on the table where Lily must have left it. He wiped the blood from the little boy's face.

Harry watched Draco with the little boy curiously, smiling a bit. He turned to the basement door, but then paused. "Voldemort's body wasn't up there," he said. "You noticed, didn't you?"

"Yes. Father said his body was destroyed when he tried to destroy you," Draco said.

Harry nodded. "It was never found," he said, "but there wasn't even a trace of it. Not even a piece. It's just ... gone." He was silent for a moment. "You don't think it has anything to do with Horcruxes, do you? I don't know what could be here that has anything to do with them, but there has to be *something* here."

"He didn't make one; I would have felt that," Draco said. "Maybe he was planning to make one when he killed you."

Harry nodded again and huffed. "Yeah, Dumbledore told me that

he thought he was. But then what ... what could be here?"

"Anything important is probably in that basement," Draco said, wincing as little Harry took a hold of his hair and gave a tug.

"Probably right," Harry agreed. "Even if it doesn't have anything to do with Horcruxes, I'm still looking." He turned to the door again. "Are you going to stay up here?"

Draco sighed and looked over at his husband, walking back over with the child. "I will wait here unless you want me to go down," he said.

Harry frowned. "Well, it's not a matter of me *wanting* you to go down," he said. "Shouldn't we both look for stuff down there? I don't want to miss anything you would think was important."

Draco glanced nervously at the descending stairs. "I ... I don't" He swallowed.

Harry's frown deepened. "What's wrong?" he asked, looking down the stairs and then back at Draco.

Draco took a deep breath and closed his eyes, hand on his wand tightening. He opened them again and looked at his husband. "I don't like cellars," he said quietly.

Harry took a deep breath as well and held it for a moment. "I - oh," he said. Anger at Lucius shot through him powerfully, like it always did whenever the man entered into his thoughts. "You don't have to go down, love," he said. "I'll go and bring everything I can back up so you can look at it." He swerved around a little waving hand to kiss Draco gently.

Draco kissed him back, the little boy smacking their cheeks as he did.

Harry raised eyebrows at little Harry as he pulled back. "You'll get your chance," he told him, taking a step towards the basement door again and heading down.

Draco watched Harry make his way down the stairs. The little boy in his arms had taken hold of his lip and was pulling on it. He gave the child his classic raised eyebrow and the little boy laughed.

What Harry saw when he reached the bottom of the staircase was a semi-messy, large room lined with bookcases. In one part of the room there were two big desks, one untidy and one neat. In the other corner, he saw what looked a lot like what was in Draco's potion

room at home. He walked over to the desks and looked at the notes and parchment on top of them, skimming a few pages. They were obviously things that had to do with his parents' work, but Harry couldn't really make heads or tails of any of it, and he definitely couldn't tell if it had to do with Horcruxes in any way.

He sifted through the parchments and then sat them aside, looking around the room again. He noticed what looked like a work table strewn with strange-looking objects that he had never seen before, but there were also at least a dozen Muggle notebooks there, some of them laying open, some thrown about like they had been recently looked at or moved or even written in. There were books as well, old-looking, and when he opened the cover of one of them, he saw that it wasn't even written in English. He turned to the notebooks and pulled one to him, flipping the cover open and looking at the front page. It held nothing except several words all crossed out in ink except for one: the word love circled. Intrigued, Harry flipped through the pages, skimming and catching a few phrases here and there. It all seemed to have something to do with love. What is love? Can it be contained? Can someone control its power? Harry's heart sped up as he read it. He reached for more notebooks, finding that mostly all of them had to do with the same thing. The others, strangely enough, dealt with Death, asking the same questions only on this subject instead.

Draco shifted nervously, watching in case someone showed up, keeping an eye on the stairs Harry and gone down and holding the little boy. After a bit he Summoned a chair to where he was so he could keep watch. The little boy laughed, reaching for Draco's wand. "No," Draco told him, "that's my wand. You get yours later." He sat down on the chair with little Harry in his lap.

Harry bent and looked under the table, seeing more strange objects and some tubes. He pulled the tubes out and found that they held what looked to be blueprints of some sort. There were many of them, all labelled with the word "love" in big letters. The next tube held blueprints labelled with the word "death", and he recognised this room all too well. The room with the veil in the Department of Mysteries.

Heart beating even faster, he realised that his parents had been

studying those two rooms in the Ministry. The one he hadn't been able to get into, he figured, and the one where Sirius had died. He scrambled to his feet with the blueprints, stuffing them back into their holdings and gathering up all the notebooks. He looked around for some sort of bag to carry it all with but just ended up Transfiguring one of the larger unidentifiable objects into a carrier. He began loading it up with the notebooks and the blueprints and all of the books lying on the work table. He picked up the stacks of parchment from his parents' desks as well, just in case.

When the bag was as filled up as he could get it, he hauled it over his shoulder and began climbing up the stairs again.

Little Harry seemed absolutely intent on getting a hold of Draco's wand. "So," Draco said to him, "when I kiss you in the bathroom, don't hex me. Trust me, you will be much happier then."

Harry snorted quietly as he entered back into the room, catching Draco's words. "What are you telling him?" he asked, smiling amusedly at his husband. He walked over to the table and dropped the heavy bag upon it.

"Just what a great shag I am and that he should take advantage of it," Draco teased.

Harry raised an eyebrow and shook his head. "I suppose he should listen," he said, still smiling.

"Yes, because not far from here is a little me just waiting for him." Draco smiled at this husband. "What is all that?"

Harry looked down at the bag. "It was a work room down there," he answered. "I don't know if there's anything that could have to do with Horcruxes, but there were no glaring clues and half the books were in a different language. It would take us weeks to look through it all, and we don't have that kind of time." He was frustrated, and getting a bit anxious, but then he looked at Draco hopefully. "The stuff in the bag could be useful though. Might not be, but could be. They were studying love," he said pointedly. "And death, but love more importantly. I don't think it has anything to do with Horcruxes, but we do know love could be useful."

"I think you are already an expert on that topic." Draco smiled, holding his wand out of reach while little Harry tried to climb his body to get to it.

"Not containing it and using its possible power," Harry retorted, watching the struggle between himself and his husband.

"Persistent little bugger, aren't you?" Draco said as little Harry had managed to climb onto his shoulder, holding onto Draco's head with one hand and reaching for the wand with the other.

Harry snorted again. "Don't let me fall," he said.

"You would just bounce," Draco said, switching his wand to his other hand to escape little Harry's reach.

"Right," said Harry, raising an eyebrow. "We should probably get out of here. I don't want to be here when the Ministry or anyone else shows up." He was nervous about leaving just yet, hoping that he wasn't messing anything up by going too soon, but he didn't know what they would do if they ran into Ministry workers.

Draco managed to grasp the boy again and hold on to him while he stood. "I left our bag outside," he said.

"Okay," Harry said, picking up the bag on the table again. "Let's go and get it and then ... to Hogwarts?"

Draco nodded and followed Harry out of the house. He turned his body so that the little boy didn't see his dad as they walked through the rubble of the front room.

Harry took a deep breath as he passed his father's body again and paused. He turned and bent over him, closing his eyes with his fingers and then taking his hand. He could already feel the cold creeping into it.

"Thank you," he whispered, squeezing the hand and then getting to his feet again. He held his head up to keep his tears from falling.

He moved out into the cool night air, back to where Wormtail was still lying knocked out, and picked up the pack Draco had left there.

"Give me the heavy one," Draco said reaching a hand for it. "I know your back hurts by now."

"You sure?" Harry asked, although his back was hurting him a bit.

Draco huffed, taking the bag and slinging it over one shoulder, his other arm holding the boy firmly against him. "To the gates of Hogwarts?" he asked.

Harry nodded with only slight hesitation. "Yeah," he said.

Draco nodded and Apparated.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO –

First Step

Harry followed Draco very quickly, getting that spinning, dizzy feeling he got from long distance Apparition. He heard himself crying again and knew that if his seventeen-year-old self didn't like the feeling of Apparition, his one-year-old self certainly would not either.

Little Harry was howling in Draco's ear and the blond winced.

"We have to get him quiet before we go up there," Harry said, stepping inside the gates.

"Ideas?" Draco yelled over the noise. "Shhh," he told the boy, but the child was not listening.

Harry flapped his hands a bit. "I - I don't know," he said. "Why don't you try to make him laugh or something?"

Draco frowned, trying to think of what would get the child's attention. He pulled his glove off his left hand and wiggled his silver fingers in front of the boy's face. Little Harry's eyes went wide and he stopped screaming, only letting out a little hiccup instead. The boy reached out and began running fingers over the hand.

Harry sighed with relief. "Good," he said, gesturing for Draco to follow him up the long path to the school. "Are we just going to be able to walk in? It's not like we're students here. I'm right there," Harry pointed to the baby in Draco's arms, "and you're at home probably asleep in your cot."

"How would I know?" Draco asked. He raised an amused eyebrow as little Harry began to chew on his silver thumb.

Harry sighed. "We have to be careful. We have to keep him quiet as well or else we'll certainly be caught."

"Well, he seems to be content to chew on me for the moment," Draco said. "You could put your Cloak on and sneak into the castle while we waited outside."

"Yeah, we could do that," Harry said, thinking. "How the hell do I get into Dumbledore's office? I don't know what the password

would be for right now and I know that's where he has to be at this time of night."

Draco looked up at the tower where the Headmaster's office was and considered it for a minute. "I could fly up there," he said.

"And how are you going to do that?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow.

Draco was distracted by little Harry sucking on one of his silver fingers. He raised an eyebrow, smirking. "I think he is hungry."

Harry frowned. "Well, we can feed him when we get up to the school, I suppose," he said with a small shrug.

Nodding, Draco looked around. "I can get a broom from the team equipment lockers," he said. He gently pulled his finger from the boy's mouth and was rewarded with a familiar scowl. He chuckled.

Harry shook his head at Draco, amused. "Okay," he said, hoping that Dumbledore would let them in.

"There are benches over there," Draco said, nodding in the direction. "You two can wait there for me."

Harry nodded. "Okay," he said again, and he thought for a moment. "Tell Dumbledore that someone he knows wants to see him. It won't be a lie and he'll probably think I'm my dad for a minute."

"Even better," Draco said, "I'll tell him Potter is waiting to speak to him." They reached the bench and Draco held out the little boy to Harry.

"All right," said Harry, taking the baby from Draco. He took a seat on the bench with him and sighed sadly when he began chanting, "Dada," again.

Draco leant in and kissed his husband gently, laying his right hand on his belly as he did.

Harry gave Draco a small smile. "You better go before he starts crying again," he said quietly.

Draco smiled and tousled little Harry's hair. He left the bags on the bench too. "There's food in our pack," Draco said. "I think the three of you should eat while I am gone."

Harry nodded, reaching for the bag with the food.

Draco made his way across the dark grounds of Hogwarts to the

Quidditch locker rooms. A couple simple spells and he had gotten into the equipment storage area and found a serviceable broom. It was very old-fashioned but it appeared new.

The tower was dark, so that meant he would most likely be waking the old man up. He sighed, mounted the broom, and launched into the air. Hovering near a window to the Headmaster's office, he pulled his wand and cast *Lumos*. That was when he realised the full importance of what he was doing. He was about to talk with Albus Dumbledore - a man who was now dead in his time and of whom he carried a lot of interesting memories. Draco took a deep breath and knocked on the window.

Harry waited for Draco nervously as he tore off little pieces of the food they had brought to feed to little Harry. He smiled at himself as the small boy drooled a little and got jam from the sandwich Harry was feeding him all over his face.

Draco waited a few minutes more and then knocked again. He grew increasingly nervous hovering in the air, lit up like a big target.

After a few minutes, he saw a light appear in that back room he remembered as the man's bedroom. Draco knocked again, shivering a bit as the wind buffeted him.

Finally he saw the man make his way toward the window, wand held at ready. "Who's there?" he called out.

"The Potters have been attacked," Draco called back. "I am here with Potter and little Harry."

Dumbledore's eyes widened in alarm and confusion. "Where are they?" he called.

"Below, outside Hogwarts," Draco said, pointing.

Dumbledore looked down around Draco, but obviously could not see Harry from where he was. "I will be right out," he said, turning from the window and hurrying quickly across the room.

Draco assumed that was a dismissal and flew back down to land beside Harry and little Harry. The little boy waved at him and reached for the broom.

"Well?" Harry asked. "What happened?" He held onto the baby as he attempted to get out of his arms.

Draco raised an eyebrow at the baby's behaviour and moved the broom out of reach. "He will be right down," Draco said as he sat

beside them. Little Harry climbed right into his lap.

Harry nodded and then laughed at the baby. "Merlin, I think I already like you," he said.

Draco held the boy and looked into his eyes. "If only you had been like this in Madam Malkin's," he told the child.

Harry snorted. "Climbing all over you?" he asked with a sly smile.

Draco smirked. "I wouldn't have minded." Little Harry had tugged his hood down and was now pulling on his hair which came loose from its tie.

Harry smiled again and then stared off towards the castle, waiting for Dumbledore as his heart began beating quicker.

Draco had put his gloves back on. The night had grown colder. He picked up the blanket and tried to re-wrap the little boy, but little Harry wasn't having any of it, tugging hard on Draco's hair again.

Finally, Harry could see a tall figure approaching, long white beard nearly glowing in the moon light. Harry sat up straighter and then got to his feet.

Dumbledore stepped forward, frowning. "James?" he asked hesitantly, looking at Harry confusedly, but he seemed to think twice because his frown turned into one more of suspicion than confusion.

"Professor," Harry said quietly. "No, I'm not James."

Draco sat, holding little Harry and watching the two other men. He winced as little Harry tried to pull himself up using a handful of white-blond hair.

Dumbledore frowned even heavier and looked over at Draco and the baby. His eyes widened with alarm and he actually took a firm step towards them. His eyes took in Draco's hair. "Lucius Malfoy?" he asked, sounding like he wasn't too sure of that either.

Draco's eyes snapped up to the older man's and widened. "No," he said, "I'm related, though."

Dumbledore looked like he wanted to take little Harry from Draco. "Who are you?" he asked both men. His wand was drawn and Harry noticed his hand tightening on it. "You said that 'Potter' was here. I only see one Potter and I assume he is certainly not the one who wishes to see me."

"In a way, he is," said Harry. "Please, sir. Please, please, *please* hear me out. I know it sounds mad, but I'm Harry. And he's Draco

Malfoy, Lucius Malfoy's son."

Draco had not drawn his own wand and continued to meet the older man's gaze levelly. He nodded in acknowledgement of what Harry said. "A message from you sent us back here this night," he said.

Harry nodded hurriedly. "Yes. I'm Harry at seventeen. Look at my face, my eyes. Compare me to the baby if you have to. He got a scar on his forehead tonight; I have that same scar."

Dumbledore stared from Harry to the baby, still looking very suspicious and wary.

"I swear it, sir," Harry said desperately. "I swear it."

"It's cold out here," Draco said. "We should get this little bloke inside."

Dumbledore had that expression on his face that Harry always took for being a stern look. "I hope you won't mind if I insist upon taking Harry and having the two of you walk ahead of me. If you are who you say you are, then it should be no problem."

Draco stood up and tried to hand little Harry to Dumbledore but the child protested, refusing to release his hair. "Come on, Harry, let go," he said. "Always obsessed with my hair."

Dumbledore frowned but Harry smiled.

Dumbledore reached out and took the little boy from Draco and Harry reached a hand out for his husband's.

Draco spent a moment gently prying the little fingers from his hair and then hefted their bags onto his shoulders before taking his lover's hand.

"To your office, sir?" Harry asked.

"Yes" said Dumbledore slowly, waiting for them to move.

Harry nodded and the small group began walking over the vast lawn of Hogwarts, making their way to the castle. It looked exactly the same as Hogwarts in Harry's own time.

Draco drew his hood back up, as much to hide his hair from anyone who saw them as because of the cold. He squeezed Harry's hand gently.

Several minutes later, they were standing in front of the gargoyle guarding Dumbledore's office.

"Fizzing Whizbee," Dumbledore said, and they all stood back as

the gargoyle sprang to life and hopped aside. Dumbledore nodded for Harry and Draco to step onto the moving staircase.

Draco stepped in, pulling Harry closer as he did. His hand unconsciously came to rest on Harry's belly.

Harry smiled softly at Draco's movement.

Once at the top of the stairs, Dumbledore reached between Harry and Draco and opened the door. "Inside," he said, nodding his head.

Harry stepped forward and into the familiar room, looking back over his shoulder at Dumbledore. It felt strange to be treated with such unfamiliarity and suspicion. He was so used to being listened to without question.

The three men stood looking at each other and then Dumbledore cleared his throat. "Take a seat," he said, sharp, blue eyes never leaving Harry and Draco's forms.

Draco nodded gently to Harry, waiting for him to take the lead here. He was never comfortable with Dumbledore, although strangely enough, the suspicious version set him more at ease than the overly familiar one.

Harry stepped over to the two chairs that sat in front of Dumbledore's desk, taking a seat in one of them.

Dumbledore moved behind his desk and sat with little Harry on his lap. The baby had now taken to pulling his beard, but he seemed to take no notice. "You are Harry Potter?" he said after staring hard at Harry for a few seconds. "This child I have in my lap?"

"Yes," Harry answered, meeting Dumbledore's eyes straight on. "Draco, we brought his letter, didn't we?" he asked.

Draco sat down on the edge of the second chair, putting the packs at their feet. He bent down and opened their satchel, pulling out the parchment container and laying it on the desk in front of Dumbledore.

Dumbledore stared at him for a moment and then picked up the container and pulled the scroll out. As he read, the hardness left his face gradually. He took his wand out and did several spells over the parchment. Probably detection spells. When he looked up again, he was staring at Harry very differently.

"It *is* me, sir," Harry said seriously. "But I don't think I have

much time here. I have a lot to tell you."

Draco looked at Harry, before speaking. "Harry is the only survivor of an attack on his home tonight," Draco said.

Fear and disbelief passed quickly over Dumbledore's face. "Lily and James, they're-"

"Yes," Harry said quietly. "They've been killed. By Lord Voldemort."

Dumbledore seemed to go paler. "How is that?" he asked, seeming to unconsciously hold little Harry tighter.

"Their Secret Keeper betrayed them," Draco said, unsure if he should say who that was since Sirius would go to Azkaban for the crime.

"No," Dumbledore said, still disbelieving. "He would never -"

"He did," Harry spat angrily, and he knew that Dumbledore was speaking about Sirius while he himself was speaking of Wormtail. It hurt him more than he could say when he realised he could not tell Dumbledore the truth about his godfather.

"They're dead?" Dumbledore asked, shaking his head as if that would make Harry give him another answer.

"Yes, and I survived," Harry said. "He tried to kill me, but only ended up giving me that scar." He pointed to little Harry's cut forehead and pulled his own fringe back to show Dumbledore.

"Something happened that the Dark Lord didn't count on," Draco said. "Lily Potter sacrificed herself to save her own child and the spell rebounded on the Dark Lord, destroying his body."

Dumbledore looked at Draco, very alarmed. "Voldemort is *gone*?" he asked, mouth hanging uncharacteristically open.

Harry was silent, trying to think of what he could tell Dumbledore and what he could not. "He's - he's not dead though," he said finally, slowly. "But for the moment, yes, he is gone. He doesn't have a body."

"He will return when we are at Hogwarts," Draco said.

Harry nodded. "But we can't tell you much about when, or what happens, as it could change the world I live in now." He huffed, frustrated. "But he will come back."

Little Harry was wriggling in Dumbledore's lap restlessly and the man put him gently down on the floor. He crawled away rapidly to

explore the room.

Draco's eyes followed the little boy, curious as to what mischief he would get into. As he watched, the little boy used the desk to pull himself to his feet.

Dumbledore shook his head and looked a little older, although not as old as he had looked in his last few days of life. Harry closed his eyes and took a deep breath, knowing that he couldn't tell Dumbledore about that either. He felt like he was cheating the man.

"Love," Dumbledore said quietly. "Love and sacrifice. Ancient magic. Of course, he would have overlooked" He was muttering to himself. He looked at the letter again. "Blood magic ... sacrifice ... love."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, nodding. "It's what kept me alive ... and it is what will continue to protect me. You have ... you have to give me to my mother's sister. I have to live there"

Draco listened to the conversation, listened to Harry telling the Headmaster to take him to those awful people. He didn't like it even if he knew it was what had to happen. Little Harry was looking up at Draco from his place by the desk. Draco slid his hood back and held out his hands, beckoning to the little boy.

"To live with Muggles?" Dumbledore asked, frowning at Harry.

"Yes. It's where I stayed for the next ten years of my life. I will be ... safe there. I had no contact with the wizarding world at all until my Hogwarts letter came, so that is how it must be this time as well. I will be protected there because of the blood magic. My mother's blood flows through my aunt's veins. Voldemort cannot touch me as long as I call my aunt's place home."

Little Harry's eyes were wide as he let go of the desk and took one and then three more unsteady steps, his chubby fingers reaching for Draco's hands. Draco gasped as the little boy grasped his fingers and held on, still standing. He was so caught up in the little drama in front of him he had almost forgotten everything else. "Good boy, Harry," he said to the little one and then blushed when the other men in the room looked at him.

Harry let out a quiet, amused-sounding breath. His mind reeled a bit as he thought about the fact that his first steps had been steps he had taken walking to his own husband. It was a bit confusing and so

very strange.

Dumbledore was smiling very softly at the small child, sadness in his eyes. "This little boy has lost his family and now he must go to live in a world that is not his own, with people who do not understand him. I know of Petunia Dursley and this is a very hard thing for me to allow."

Draco nodded at what Dumbledore said. He smiled into the little boy's face with those huge green eyes. "You have the right idea," he said as the boy began to try to climb into his lap. "I don't pretend to think it is a good idea," Draco said to Dumbledore, "but it is what has to happen. As is his returning to our world when he is eleven."

"My life ... hasn't been ... all happiness and sunshine," Harry said. "But I'm all right, and I'm happy now. Very happy. I'm married and I'm ... having a baby," he leant back a bit and placed hands on his stomach, "as strange as that may sound."

Dumbledore raised white eyebrows, looking shocked. "You're"

Harry laughed quietly. "Yeah," he said.

Draco smirked, blushing. He helped little Harry the rest of the way into his lap, because it wasn't exactly comfortable the way he was pulling his trousers. Of course, the first thing the boy did was take a handful of Draco's hair and yank. "Oww!" the blond yelled. "Harry," he complained, "what is it with you and pulling my hair?"

Harry blushed now. "I'm married to him ... if you hadn't already guessed," he said to Dumbledore, nodding his head toward Draco. "And, ah ... we won't get along too well in school ... but don't worry." He laughed gently.

Draco snorted. "Pull my hair now, but don't be shocked when I break your nose later." Draco waggled his eyebrows at the boy. The boy reached for his eyebrows.

Harry shook his head at Draco as Dumbledore observed them all quietly.

"Also ... Hogwarts won't be normal for me," Harry said slowly. "But don't worry about that either. I know this must sound ominous, but I survive it all. Let me do it."

Dumbledore's brows furrowed only slightly.

Draco rolled his eyes at what Harry said, dodging the hands that

went for his eyebrows. "And you can trust Severus Snape," he added. "Don't let this git talk you out of it."

Harry sighed and nodded. "Yes, trust him," he said quietly.

Dumbledore seemed a little surprised. "Severus Snape is already in my services, but I thank you for the confirmation."

"It's getting late," Draco said, glancing at Harry.

Harry nodded. "It is," he said. He turned to Dumbledore, frowning and thinking of Horcruxes again. Not knowing what he had to find was making him very nervous "I - I'm not sure actually what I'm supposed to do with, um, well, me, I suppose. Do I leave him here with you?"

Dumbledore frowned. "I suppose you could," he said, looking at the boy in Draco's arms. "Was there anyone at the house when you left there?"

"Well, Snape was there ... but no one saw us leave ... I don't think. Would that be ... bad?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore seemed to be thinking intently. "I am not sure," he said. He looked out the window. He sighed. "The Fidelius Charm has been broken. I can think of the name of the town and the house itself. Godric's Hollow. Yes, the Charm has definitely been broken."

"The house was badly damaged," Harry said. "The windows shattered, parts of the ceiling knocked out, the walls as well."

Dumbledore nodded. "Yes, I believe that would have broken the charm, which means that Muggles could be swarming the area at any moment - if they aren't already."

"Sir?" Harry asked, not sure where Dumbledore was going with this.

Little Harry had curled up in Draco's lap and gone to sleep, clutching the blond's gloved silver hand. "All the house wards were down when we left," Draco said.

Dumbledore nodded. "If the charm is broken, it means that I am not the only one who can now think of the house. Lord Voldemort is not one to keep to himself when he thinks he is about to win. I would be very surprised if at least a few of his followers were not informed of where he was going to be. They will come looking for him. And they will want to know what has happened."

Harry still didn't quite know what Dumbledore was getting at.

"Take Harry back to his house. I will send someone to get him. I want this covered. I want everyone to think that I was the first on the scene. I do not think it wise for there to be even a chance that any of Voldemort's followers - or anyone else for that matter - to think Harry was not removed on my orders. I need to get preparations ready for the Dursley house in the meantime. I will have the person I send to get you, drop you off at your aunt's home, but I will not let you live there without extra wards and protection."

Harry was still a bit confused. "So ... you want us to take ... the baby back to the house to wait for you to send someone to get him?"

"Yes," Dumbledore answered. "Stay there with him in case anything happens. I will send for my gamekeeper to do the job as soon as you leave."

"Hagrid?" Harry said.

"Yes," said Dumbledore. "You know him?"

Harry smiled and nodded. "Yes, I know him." And then he suddenly remembered that Hagrid had told him, the first time that they had met, that Harry had been a baby the last time they had seen each other. "Yes," he said, "this is what's supposed to happen. I know it."

Draco sighed loudly and shook his head, but didn't say anything about Hagrid. "Yes, I know that Father and the others will be looking for their Master," he said.

Harry bent and grabbed the bag to hand it to Draco.

Dumbledore got to his feet as well. "Harry," he said, making a bit of an odd face at addressing Harry this way, "I am very sorry. Lily and James were dear friends. I have no words that could possibly be enough to express my sadness. I can still hardly believe they are ... gone." And his tone, indeed, was one of disbelief.

Harry gave a small, sad nod. "I've had sixteen years to get used to it, but I think it may be a bit harder for him." He looked at the little boy. "This is the right thing, though, Professor," he said. "This is what had to happen, as hard as it is."

Draco's hands were full of their bags and the child, so he nodded his head and prepared to follow his husband. "At least we can Apparate there this time," he said.

Harry nodded in agreement with Draco and picked the letter

back up from Dumbledore's desk to tuck it back into the bag Draco was holding.

Dumbledore stepped out from behind his desk and walked them over to the door. "You probably don't need me to tell you, but remember, stay out of sight," he said, nodding to them.

"We'll remember," said Harry, and he started to leave the room but stopped and looked back at Dumbledore. "I almost forgot," he said, reaching a hand down the front of his shirt. He pulled his necklace off and handed it to the old man. "That needs to be turned into a Timekey to take us to Godric's Hollow on this night - a little after sunset."

Dumbledore clutched the pendant tightly in his hand. "Very well," he said.

"Severus Snape was at the house tonight. I - I think he went to try and save my mother. He saw us, but we knew that he would, so it hasn't changed time, but he didn't truly know it was me, and he didn't know it was Draco at all, so I would have to assume that you don't explain to him. What you need to do is tell Snape to place that necklace and the letter inside Draco's trust vault. That's where we got it from."

Dumbledore nodded again. "I will as soon as I can," he said.

"Okay," said Harry, taking a deep breath. "I suppose we should go then."

"Yes. I will send Hagrid soon."

Harry reached for the door again to leave. He paused once more, frowning in thought. His eyes widened. *Of course* he thought. "Oh, and, Professor?" he said, quickly looking over his shoulder.

"Yes?"

"Horcruxes," Harry said simply, feeling the weight of worry lift from his chest. He nodded and pulled the door open, stepping out onto the moving staircase. "That's it," he said quietly to Draco as the stairs carried them down.

"Was that a good idea?" Draco asked.

"That's what it is," Harry said. "We aren't going to find anything about Horcruxes here. We're only going to two places: my mum and dad's place, and Hogwarts. There's nothing back at Godric's Hollow, and there's nothing here, but Dumbledore told Snape that there was

something about Horcruxes. Why would he think that if he hadn't heard me or you say something about them? It's the only thing that makes sense, and now he'll start looking for them and putting the pieces together."

Draco raised his eyebrows and nodded. "You still manage to amaze me, love," he said.

Harry gave Draco a crooked smile. "I'm actually pretty amazed with myself for that one." He continued walking, staying close to Draco.

Draco followed his husband through the halls of the school, the sleeping Harry still clinging to him.

Harry got lost in his own thoughts by the time they were standing back outside the Hogwarts gates. He looked up at Draco and sighed quietly. "He's going to wake up again," he said.

"Kiss me first," Draco whispered.

Harry smiled softly and moved closer to Draco before pressing their lips together gently.

Draco hummed happily at the kiss, and then whispered, "Remember, Potter, you took your first steps for me."

Harry smiled and shook his head but whispered, "Somehow I don't think it could have been for anyone else."

"Good," Draco said, "and I was right, you know."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "About what?" he asked.

"You were an adorable baby." He smirked.

Harry snorted. "I suppose," he said, and looked at the little boy sleeping with his head on Draco's shoulder. "Shall we get me home then?"

Draco nodded. "Be careful. Apparate to the back first," he said.

Harry nodded. "Okay," he said, and he closed his eyes and Disapparated.

Draco followed him moments later and was prepared for the wailing of little Harry when they arrived.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE –

Devastation

Harry heard the crack of Draco's Apparition and the loud crying of the baby when he arrived. "We need him to be quiet again," he said urgently to Draco in a loud whisper, looking around nervously.

Draco scowled at his husband but turned the little boy in his arms so that he could see his face better. He waggled his eyebrows at the little boy. It took a minute of making faces until the boy stopped crying and then reached to pull one of Draco's eyebrows. "Ouch," Draco complained.

Harry gave Draco a shrug. "At least it worked," he said quietly. "Should we take him back in the house? It's kind of cold out here."

"I can do it," Draco said.

"What - just leave him in there alone?" Harry asked, frowning. "I don't know how long it will take Hagrid to get here He can't Apparate."

"No, I thought I would borrow your Invisibility Cloak." Draco sighed.

Harry sighed too. "Should I sit out here then?" he asked.

"That's not much safer, is it?" Draco said. "Have a suggestion?"

Harry shrugged, frowning. "Do you think we could both fit under the Cloak?" he asked. "Me and Ron could ... last year ... when I wasn't pregnant. We could try."

"Seriously, no," Draco said. "You, me and the boy?"

Harry huffed. "Well, I don't know," he said. "We could just go and sit in there with him. Hagrid's not exactly hard to miss or very quiet. We'll probably hear him coming."

"Let's get in there," Draco said. "Then one of us can hide in the other room or something."

Harry nodded. "All right," he said, and made his way back to the mess that had been the sitting room. He paused at the door, eyes going slightly wide.

Draco was startled to see that the place was worse than when they had left it - picture frames that had hung on the walls were now smashed, furniture that had survived Voldemort was now in pieces. "They've been here," he said to Harry.

Harry swallowed, knowing exactly whom had been there. "The Death Eaters," he said, and he was glad that his father's body only seemed hastily moved. "If we hadn't taken him" he said, looking at the little boy.

"Yes, Severus was right," Draco said. "They would have found him instead." He made sure to shield the boy's view of James Potter's body, but he knew there wasn't much he could do about Lily.

Harry slowly let out a breath. He'd come very close to death and had been saved by himself. He gave his head a shake. "We have to put him back in his room, don't we?" he asked, but he knew they did. He had stopped moving and was facing the staircase without going up just yet.

"We can wait with him in the other bedroom until Hagrid arrives," Draco suggested.

Harry looked over his shoulder at Draco and little Harry and nodded. "Yeah," he said quietly, moving up the stairs now.

Draco followed Harry, noticing how much harder stairs were for him now and the way the weight of the baby had shifted his gait.

Harry stepped over the door in the hallway and glanced very quickly into the room that still held his mother's body. Snape had gone. He shivered again and moved on to the bedroom that had to have been his parents'.

Draco followed, shifting the weight of the small boy in his arms. Little Harry's eyes were wide and he was being unusually still.

Harry stared around the room when he entered it. He looked at the laundry basket holding clothes that seemed like they needed put away, looked at the two bathrobes hanging on the closet door, at the shoes poking out from under the bed. Everything looked so normal and yet his parents were lying dead in other parts of the house.

Draco sat down on the bed. "Merde'," he cursed, looking down unhappily at his shirt.

That caught Harry's attention and he looked over at Draco from where he still stood near the door. "What?" he asked.

"You pissed on me, that's what." Draco grimaced. "See if the laundry basket has nappies."

Harry couldn't help it. He stared at Draco for a moment and then began laughing loudly. "Oh, Merlin, that's priceless," he said, moving to do what Draco had told him to.

"Just don't tell Fred and George," Draco drawled.

Harry laughed even more at that. He threw Draco a nappy and a new pair of pyjamas for little Harry.

Draco stood and laid little Harry on the bed. "Harry, maybe you should do this?" he asked, sounding embarrassed.

Harry snorted. "I thought you didn't mind washing my bits," he teased, coming over to the bed.

Draco made an odd face, looking confused and frowning. "Not quite what I had in mind when I said that," he grumbled.

Harry snorted again. "I'll do it if you want, I suppose," he said, tilting his head and staring at the little boy on the bed who seemed to be looking at him as if he knew what they were talking about. "Although I have no idea what I'm doing."

Draco shrugged. "And you think I do?" he asked.

Harry sighed. "We have a lot to learn," he said with slightly raised eyebrows. He reached forward and began trying to get the baby's clothes off without touching the wet spots.

Draco went to the window and kept watch for Hagrid or any others who might show up.

Little Harry, it seemed, did not like being changed one bit. He wriggled and squirmed and Harry had to keep repositioning him. He finally managed to get him undressed and the kid rolled over and tried to crawl away. Harry grumbled and had to reach across the bed to get him again, his little dimpled bottom making Harry blush a bit as it was technically his own. "Merlin, kid, sit still," he said, trying to get the nappy on him.

Draco snorted. "Always the troublemaker, weren't you?" he drawled.

Harry huffed, holding the boy's legs together with one hand. He finally got the nappy on him and after a few more minutes of struggle, he was in pyjamas too. "Merlin," Harry said again, allowing the baby to crawl away from him on top of the bed now.

Draco chuckled, looking over at the two Harrys. The blond had used a Cleaning Charm on himself while Harry struggled with his younger self.

Harry heaved a sigh and picked little Harry up to put him on the floor. He walked over to a spot near Draco to sit on the floor himself, thinking it would feel too odd to sit on his parents' bed.

Draco knelt down beside them, reaching to ruffle first one and then the other's hair. "You handled things well back there," he said.

Harry gave a little shrug. "I guess," he said, watching with slight amusement as the baby began trying to stand again with the aid of Draco's trousers.

Draco grinned at the child. "Such a pretty pet," he told both of them.

Harry smiled. "I wonder what the little you looks like right at this moment."

"A blond terror," Draco grinned, "if my mother's stories are correct."

Harry snorted. "Then our child should be a right angel," he said amusedly.

Little Harry insisted on climbing him and reaching for Draco's hair again. So he sat down and pulled the boy into his lap. "You seem quite enamoured with me," he observed.

Harry snorted again. "I do, don't I?" he said, reaching up and pulling on a strand of Draco's hair himself.

"Do you know what time Hagrid will arrive?" Draco asked. "Or what happens after?"

Harry thought for a moment. "I'm not sure about the time, although I imagine it'll be about an hour at least. I've heard him talk about Sirius showing up here now that I think of it. Yeah - yeah, I think Sirius tried to take me, but Hagrid wouldn't let him because of Dumbledore's orders. Overheard a conversation about it once."

"And then what? He takes the child and we return to our time?" Draco asked.

"I suppose" said Harry. "Do you think there's anything else we have to do here?"

"I don't know," Draco said, "but I do know that you and I will have to find some time alone before noon."

Harry winced a bit. "Oh, yeah," he said. "We should be able to get back before then, I think"

Harry and Draco sat with little Harry in his parents' bedroom for quite a while. It wasn't until the very early morning hours, when light was just beginning to fill the sky, that Harry heard a sort of loud crash from downstairs and quiet wailing - if there was such a thing. He had been nodding off and little Harry had fallen asleep in Draco's arms. Harry jerked wide awake and got to his feet as quickly as he could. "Draco!" he hissed in a whisper.

"Quick," Draco said, picking up the boy, "put the Cloak on or put it on me! Someone needs to take him back in there."

Harry got the Cloak out of the bag as fast as he possibly could and threw it over Draco.

Draco carried little Harry back into the nursery and laid him gently in his cot, hoping he wouldn't wake up. And then he stood back against the wall as he heard footsteps on the stairs.

Harry hurriedly switched the light off and stood very still and very quietly in his parents' room. Hagrid's thundering footsteps could be heard all the way up the stairs and through the hall. Harry could hear his sniffing as well.

Hagrid entered into the bedroom where Draco was standing against the wall, where little Harry lay in his cot, awakening now from the noise, and where Lily Potter still lay dead. He looked absolutely far too big to be in the room and had to bend to fit. "Oh, Lily," he sobbed, great, fat tears leaking from his eyes.

Draco stood as still and as quiet as he could, watching the scene in front of him unfold.

Hagrid took a spotted handkerchief from one of his many pockets and blew his nose, successfully waking the little boy now, who started crying immediately. Hagrid seemed to startle and then turned to Harry, trying to hush him. "Oh, Harry," he said, voice cracking. "Oh, Harry. Yeh poor little tyke. It'll be alrigh'. Don't you cry now; it'll be alrigh'." He reached into the cot and picked Harry up, being careful to be very gentle with his massive hands. "I'll be takin' yeh ter Dumbledore. He'll know what ter do with yeh. Don't you worry now."

Little Harry was staring at Hagrid with huge green eyes, seeming unsure if he should be scared or not.

Draco swallowed an unexpected lump in his throat, a part of him wanting to take the little boy back. He knew it wasn't rational, that this had already happened, but he was used to being protective of Harry. He trembled with the urge and a strange kind of longing.

Hagrid held the small boy to his chest, effectively blocking Lily from view as he took one last, sad look at her himself. He gave a few more quiet sobs and pulled several blankets out of Harry's cot to wrap him in.

Little Harry let out a quiet yelp of uncertain fright and hung on to Hagrid's overcoat as the giant of a man carried him out of the room, his footsteps loud and crashing all the way through the house.

Draco went to the window of the room, watching.

Harry was still for a few more moments before creeping into the hallway and peeking into the nursery. "Draco?" he whispered, keeping his eyes away from the floor.

Draco startled and looked over at Harry, pulling the cloak from his head so that he could see him.

Harry moved over towards Draco, keeping his eyes only on him. He stood close to him next to the window, looking out as well where they could see much of the front yard. Hagrid came into view and Harry knew it wouldn't be long before Sirius showed up as well.

Draco slid his arm around Harry's back, pulling him against his side and then covering both of them with the cloak so no one would see them in the window.

Sure enough, as soon as Hagrid seemed to be about to start making his way up the drive, there was a muffled rumbling and a flying motorbike came from the sky. Harry's eyes widened slightly. It was difficult to see clearly in the dim morning light, but Harry knew that the slim, tall figure that clambered off of the bike was his godfather. He was happy that Draco was holding him; it hurt to see Sirius, even from this distance.

Sirius walked over to Hagrid and Harry watched the exchange between them for a few moments and then Sirius fell to his knees on the ground, covering his face with his arms.

Harry unconsciously moved closer to Draco.

Draco pulled his husband close, his right hand sliding over to rest on his belly. "Will he come up here?" Draco whispered.

"I don't know," Harry answered, feeling his eyes tearing up again.

Hagrid held little Harry with one arm and patted Sirius's back with his free hand. Sirius seemed to finally pull himself together and then there was a conversation between him and Hagrid that lasted several minutes. Finally, Sirius walked over to stand beside the bike and walked it over to Hagrid, seeming to hand it over. A few more minutes passed and Hagrid climbed on top of it, looking awkward astride it. They talked for a few more minutes still before Hagrid flew off and Sirius stood with his head hanging, unmoving and probably trembling.

Draco watched Hagrid fly away with little Harry and held his husband close, breathing in his scent to reassure himself that he was safe.

Harry leant into Draco and watched as Sirius turned his head and looked up at the house. He seemed to hesitate and then began walking towards the porch.

Harry took in a quiet breath. "I think he's coming in," he whispered.

"Yes," Draco whispered, turning them to face the door. "Hold still and I think the Cloak will cover us both."

Harry nodded. He could hear quiet noises downstairs and then a roar of both rage and despair. He heard crashes and Sirius's voice as he sobbed and screamed and cursed. Harry squeezed his eyes shut, the tears falling now.

Draco listened to the pain of the other man, wondering about the cousin he had never met.

It was a while before the noise stopped. The room was lit up now with the light from outside.

Harry held his breath as he heard the footsteps on the stairs and then approaching in the hallway. He could hear Sirius's heavy breathing and knew he was standing in the doorway. He couldn't make himself open his eyes for a moment, but then he did and wished that he hadn't.

The look on Sirius's face was the very definition of loss. He looked broken, even more so than when Harry had seen him that

night in third year for the first time. His handsome face was wet with tears and his dark eyes seemed blank and unbelieving as he stared at the body of Lily Potter. Harry watched as he closed his eyes and grasped the door frame for support, more tears leaking silently from him.

Draco was still, gritting his teeth to keep from making a sound as he watched the devastation in the lives of this small group of people. Somehow, Sirius made it more real than even the bodies had done.

Harry didn't know how long they stood there watching Sirius, but the man suddenly opened his eyes again and there was a hatred there, a hatred so strong that Harry nearly gasped. Sirius shook with suppressed rage and his eyes filled with angry tears again. "I'll kill him," he whispered, looking at Lily. "I'll kill him." And with a swish of his long black coat, he was hurrying from the room and back down the stairs.

Harry turned hurriedly back to the window and watched as his godfather's dark form ran all the way to the start of the drive and then Apparated away with a crack Harry could hear from where he stood.

"The Ministry and the Muggle authorities will probably be here soon," Draco said. "We should leave."

Harry stood looking at the spot where Sirius had just been and nodded. "Our things are in the other room," he said quietly.

Draco let the Cloak fall back and took Harry by the hand, leading him out of the room and back into the next. He bent and picked up their bags. "Most of this will be destroyed, I assume," he said. "Is there anything else you would take from here?"

Harry sniffed and wiped his face, shaking his head no, but then he stopped and turned to look out the door of the room. "I - I think I want their wands," he said. "I'd like to have them."

"I'll get them," Draco said, setting the bags back down and, still wearing the Invisibility Cloak, made his way from the room. He went directly downstairs and found James's wand, looking sadly for a moment at a photograph of the Potter family on the wall. He took it down, shrunk it and put it in his pocket. Then he went back upstairs to the nursery and found Lily's wand before returning to the room with Harry. He handed both to his husband.

Harry took the wands from Draco with a hand that shook slightly. He put both of them securely in his sweatshirt pocket and then looked back up at Draco. "How do we leave?" he asked

"I suppose the Timekey will activate when we are ready." Draco reached in and withdrew the pendant. He picked up the bags again and held it out to Harry.

Harry moved close to Draco and grasped the pendant with him. He waited for a few seconds and then there was a jerk that seemed to pull him forward. When he opened his eyes, they were standing in the same room, only now it was dark inside as the light from the window was blocked with boards.

Draco stood holding Harry's hand and looking at him for a moment. Then he took the pendant and unclasped it, putting it back around Harry's neck.

Harry let out a shaky sigh, holding still as Draco put his necklace back on him. "It's done," he said quietly.

"It is," Draco said, smoothing Harry's hair back and looking into his eyes.

Harry sighed again and leant up to kiss Draco gently on the lips.

Draco's hands rested on Harry's sides, palms resting against his belly as he kissed him gently, nibbling at his lips.

Harry's eyes were closed and he rested his forehead against Draco's. "Let's get home," he whispered.

"As you wish," Draco said softly and then Apparated them to the Malfoy Manor entrance hall.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR –

Truly, Deeply

Harry was glad to be home. He felt mentally and physically exhausted. At this hour, everyone was probably still asleep. "We should go to our room," he said, handing the house-elf that had appeared his coat, gloves and hat.

Draco nodded, still holding onto Harry and Apparating them to their bedroom.

As soon as they were in the room Harry started undressing, but he paused when he felt his parents' wands in his pocket. He took them both out and stared at them. It was so strange to think that his parents had died so many years ago, but the wands he held had probably been used only the previous night. He sighed, walking over to his dresser and putting the wands inside his top drawer. It wasn't the most glamorous place to put them, but he liked the idea that he could keep them safe and close to him.

Draco smiled at him and then pulled the shrunken photograph out. He returned it to its normal size and held it out to his husband.

Harry turned his head and looked from the photo to Draco, taking it from him. "You took this?" he asked, looking down at himself and his parents smiling up at him. "I've never seen this one before."

"Yes," the blond answered, "and I suppose you couldn't have since I took it instead of leaving it behind."

"Yeah," Harry said quietly, tracing the frame with a finger. He looked back up at Draco and then put the photo in his drawer with the wands for the moment. It was difficult to find the correct words, so he remained silent and kissed Draco instead of saying anything.

Draco didn't have words for this either, so he held and kissed his husband. He could feel the round mound of Harry's belly between them, its solid presence reminding him of the child they would soon have.

Harry sighed quietly and stared at Draco as he pulled back, his arms around his neck. "Want to get undressed?" he asked, voice still quiet.

Draco nodded, stepping back and beginning to strip out of the Muggle clothing he had been wearing since yesterday.

Harry started undressing again. His back hurt and he winced a bit as he stripped himself of his many shirts. He got out of his shoes and the uncomfortable trousers and then pulled off his boxers as well. He shuffled over to the bed and climbed atop it, not bothering to remove his socks.

Draco smirked a bit at the sight of Harry - pregnant and wearing nothing but socks and that pendant. He set aside the last of his clothes and stood beside the bed. "Roll to your side and I will rub your back," he said.

Harry rolled quickly, thinking that having his back rubbed sounded very good.

Draco knelt beside Harry and began working strong, nimble fingers into the muscles and joints of Harry's spine.

Harry groaned quietly, closing his eyes and sighing.

Draco worked his way from Harry's shoulders down his spine, the sounds of Harry's sighs and groans as erotic to him as they were when they made love.

Harry sighed again. "What time is it, love?" he asked, arching a bit into Draco's touch.

"Still early," Draco said, working on Harry's lower back and buttocks.

Harry nodded, the feeling of Draco kneading his muscles very relaxing and comforting after such a hard night.

Draco continued the deep massage, working down his lover's arse to his thighs. He was waiting for the release he knew would come. He could feel the emotional tension in the man's body and knew from experience with him that it would not stay pent up indefinitely.

Harry covered his head and face with his arm. While the massage was enough to make him feel better, it wasn't enough to keep his mind blank. He couldn't help thinking about the night. He watched the scene in his mind of his parents and himself in their sitting room. He saw his father lying dead along with his mother. He saw the

shaking form of Severus Snape and the look of despair in his eyes that was still hard to believe. He saw Dumbledore and thought about how he wasn't able to tell him about Sirius and how he wasn't able to even tell him about his own death. And he saw Sirius; Sirius's face distorted with pain and rage and betrayal, not knowing that he would be framed and thrown into Azkaban within the next two days. Harry was hardly aware that he was crying.

Draco heard the sobs and was relieved. He ran his hands soothingly up his lover's body and then lay down beside him, pressing against Harry's back and wrapping his arms around him.

Harry cried and it was strange because these things had happened long ago, but seeing them happen had been hard. He grasped Draco's arms and held them against his body tightly. "I have you," he whispered, still sobbing quietly. "I have you and I have the baby. I do have a family now and I've always wanted one of my own. I love you."

"Yes, we are a family," Draco agreed. "We have each other. And they loved you, they truly loved you."

Harry sniffed and nodded, still holding Draco's arms tightly.

"I love you with every beat of my heart and every breath I take," Draco whispered against his ear. "I wanted to protect the little boy you, too."

Harry smiled softly and let out a choked laugh. "He'll be okay," he said. "And pretty happy when he's older."

Draco ran his hand down that swelling belly, loving the feel of Harry's flesh and magic, along with that strong pulse of their child's.

Harry closed his eyes again, taking quiet deep breaths. "I love you," he whispered again.

Draco nuzzled the back of Harry's neck; the scent and taste of him making him shiver as much as the feel of his body against his own.

Harry let go of Draco's arms with one hand to reach slightly behind him and run it down Draco's side and hip, feeling his skin and warmth.

"Mmm," Draco responded to his touch, licking and kissing his way up Harry's neck to his ear. He licked the shell and then blew hot breath across the wet skin.

Harry shivered and bit his lip gently, sliding his hand back up Draco's skin and then back further to his arse.

Draco pressed his hardening cock against his lover's arse as he gently bit his ear.

Harry let out half a quiet moan, pressing back against Draco, his own cock beginning to harden.

"Yes, my love," Draco purred in his ear, hand sliding down the curve of Harry's belly to the cock below.

Harry gasped and let the breath out of his open mouth slowly, pressing into Draco's touch.

Draco wrapped long fingers around his lover's erection as he rubbed his own along the cleft of Harry's arse. "I am going to fuck myself on your cock," he whispered.

Harry stomach flipped at those words and his cock hardened further, his lower half seeming to fill with heat. "Yes," he moaned, hand on Draco's arse tightening.

"I am going to take this hard heat into my body," Draco continued to whisper seductively in Harry's ear. "And you are going to fill me with your seed and your magic."

Harry gasped and moaned. "Merlin, yes, Draco," he said, eyes still closed as he allowed himself to feel.

Hard and leaking, Draco loved the way his now slick cock rubbed between Harry's arse cheeks. If he didn't need it so badly right now, he would fuck Harry instead. "And later," he added, "I am going to fuck you too, giving you my heat."

Harry groaned. "Fuck, yes," he panted, his cock twitching at Draco's words.

The blond chuckled deeply at his husband's reaction. "Gods, I love this," he said. "I love the way you writhe under my touch and pant at my words. I love the way I feel inside you and you inside me. I love it when your eyes light up or when they go dark with desire. I love that your magic is so intense it compels me and so powerful it has filled you with our child. I love everything about you."

Harry smiled, hearing and feeling the truth of Draco's words.

Kissing the side of Harry's face, Draco rolled him gently toward himself and onto his back. Now looking down into those eyes, he ran his tongue over Harry's lips.

Harry opened his mouth for Draco, letting his tongue out to meet Draco's and moaning again. "I want you," he whispered, breaking the kiss and then moving forward again for another.

"Yes, I am yours," Draco answered, sealing his mouth over his lover's, his tongue twisting with his.

Merlin, Harry loved kissing Draco. There was nothing else like it in the world. He slid his tongue wetly along Draco's, into his mouth, licking and sucking.

Draco spent several minutes lost in the taste and feel of kissing his lover. The blond's erection was now pressed against Harry's side and his hand gently stroking his cock. Even Harry's breath mingling with his own sent shivers down his spine.

"Mmm," Harry moaned, moving his hips gently with Draco's strokes. "Draco," he whispered. "Draco, please."

"Yes, Harry," Draco whispered against his mouth. "As you desire."

Harry moaned again, loving the feeling of Draco against him, and with him, and surrounding him.

Draco kissed Harry's chin and began kissing his way down his jaw and then his neck.

Harry sucked in a breath, lifting his head and tilting it back to expose his throat. "Yes," he whispered, the slow movements and kisses making him feel like he was being seduced, although he certainly didn't need to be.

Draco's lips and tongue worked over the skin of Harry's neck and along his collarbone, continuing down his husband's chest, nuzzling the few soft hairs there. He smiled as he saw the way those dark nipples were already pebbled in response to him and he sucked one gently into his mouth, running his tongue over that sensitive flesh.

"Yes," Harry moaned, burying a hand in Draco's hair. "Mmm, Draco, yes."

"Pull it, Harry," Draco said, his breath against Harry's wet nipple.

Harry hissed through his teeth and gripped the hair between his fingers. He held it tightly and pulled it, his cock throbbing.

"Yes," Draco hissed, taking Harry's other nipple into his mouth, sucking and licking it as well. He could feel the slickness of pre-come coating his lover's cock as his hand continued to stroke him, thumb

caressing the crown on each stroke.

Harry was moaning loudly now, writhing beneath Draco. He was panting and arching and still pulling Draco's hair.

Every pull on his hair seemed to go straight to Draco's cock and he shuddered. He released Harry's cock and looked up at Harry's face. "I am going to ride you now, Harry," he said, voice almost hoarse with his desire.

"Fuck, yes," Harry hissed, his cock twitching in anticipation.

Draco chuckled deeply again. "Release my hair, so I can turn around," he told his husband.

Harry bit his lip tightly and let go of Draco's hair, reaching for the blankets instead.

Draco turned around, on hands and knees so that Harry could see him. "Touch me, prepare me," he said as he reached again for Harry's cock.

"Mmmm," Harry moaned, reaching for Draco's arse. He spread his own legs for his husband and pressed suddenly slick fingers against Draco's entrance, rubbing it before sliding his longest finger gently inside.

Draco groaned, trembling at Harry's touch and the feel of him pressing inside.

"So gorgeous," Harry whispered, pushing the finger in and out a few times before adding another and stroking Draco's prostate, wanting to hear him moan.

Draco shuddered, his head falling forward to rest on Harry's thigh, gasping and moaning.

"So gorgeous, so mine," Harry whispered, adding yet another finger. "I want to be inside you."

"Yes, yours," Draco gasped. "Inside me."

"Yours," Harry said, moving his fingers to get Draco ready for him. "All yours."

"Yes, want you inside me," Draco answered.

"Please," Harry gasped. "Take me, please." He removed his fingers now, panting heavily.

Draco crawled down, straddling his husband, facing toward his legs. He reached back to grasp the man's cock, positioning himself. Then with a moan, he sunk down onto him, feeling his lover's cock

filling him.

"Merlin, yes!" Harry cried. Throwing his head back, he grasped Draco's sides tightly, gasping.

"Yes, you fill me," Draco responded, settling so that his balls pressed against his lover's body and he felt full and stretched. He panted a minute and then began to rock himself.

"Oh, fuck," Harry moaned, staring down at Draco. He was just as hot as he always was, even though Harry's own belly prevented him from seeing his cock sink into Draco's body.

"Yes, oh, yes," Draco chanted as he slid himself up and down his lover's cock, feeling the heat and power filling his body.

Harry accidentally dug his nails into Draco's skin and, as the fucking went on, the more sensitive his cock seemed to become. He was crying out with almost every single one of Draco's movements now.

Draco shuddered, the combined assault of Harry's magic, nails, and cock making him feel dizzy with sensation. "Fill me, please," he begged.

Harry clenched his teeth and thrust up into Draco, throwing his head back again as that last burst of powerful sensation had him coming, screaming Draco's name.

Harry's hot come and burning magic filled him. Draco screamed as it brought his own orgasm too. His body shuddered and clenched around Harry, his hands holding onto Harry's thighs and his head thrown back.

Harry lay panting, still gripping Draco's skin, and he gasped as Draco's orgasm made his arse clench around him. "Fuck," he let out in a very breathy, quiet whisper.

Draco dropped his chin to his chest, panting and trying to hold himself up. "Yes," he whispered.

"Please lay with me," Harry whispered, running his hands up from Draco's sides to slide over the slightly damp skin of his back.

Draco slowly bent forward, releasing Harry's cock from his body and then shakily climbing off him. He crawled up beside him and laid his head on Harry's chest and his hand on his belly.

Harry sighed happily and cradled Draco's head with his arm and hand, stroking his hair.

"Harry, is that movement under my hand?" Draco asked suddenly, his hand pressing into Harry's lower belly.

"What?" Harry asked quickly, going completely, deathly still, and then he felt it. His eyes widened. "He's kicking!" he said excitedly, smiling hugely. He jumped a little with the movement. "Feels odd and like he's kicking my insides, but he's kicking!"

Draco closed his eyes, hand pressed to Harry's belly, and he felt a ripple against it and that magic pulse with it. He didn't think he could have felt any happier than he had before, but this ... this was amazing. "Yes, he is," Draco said, voice full of wonder.

Harry laughed delightedly, feeling like he might possibly never stop smiling, just from this moment alone.

Draco opened his eyes and looked up at Harry's face, letting his wonder show in his expression. "Our son," he said quietly.

"Our son," Harry repeated, smiling down at Draco. He cupped his cheek with his hand.

Draco was so overwhelmed he was speechless. How could he possibly tell Harry how much this meant to him? It was beyond anything he had ever felt before.

Harry lay silent, staring adoringly at his husband and feeling their baby give small kicks inside him. "I love you," he said after a few minutes. "I'm carrying him, but he wouldn't be here without you."

Draco smiled, eyes shining with unshed tears. "Ours," he whispered.

"Completely and one hundred percent ours," Harry agreed, smiling softly. "You and me all wrapped up into one little person. He is going to be perfect."

Draco grinned. "He is going to be a wild, mischievous thing," he laughed.

Harry laughed too. "You think we can keep up?" he asked.

"I can if you can, Potter," Draco teased.

"Good," Harry said, eyes lit up as he smiled widely at the man he loved.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE –

Truth Be Told

Harry and Draco had taken quite a long nap, both of them exhausted and worn-out. Once they had finally woken up, Harry knew that he needed to talk to his friends. They didn't even know they were back yet and Hermione was probably stricken with worry. Harry and Draco had got dressed again, Harry simply wearing loose fitting pyjamas, and had moved out into their sitting room.

"Leakey?" Harry called, taking a seat on the couch.

The elf appeared. "Yes, Master Harry?" he asked.

"Can you please go and get Ron and Hermione? Tell them that we're back, but not loudly if they're in a room full of people. Tell them we want to see them."

Leakey nodded his head, his ears flapping with the movement.

After only about a minute of waiting, Ron and Hermione both appeared with loud cracks, looking both worried and excited.

"What happened?" Hermione asked, launching into questioning straight away.

Draco had ordered breakfast and tea while they were dressing and was now sipping the hot, sweet liquid. He found himself still staring at Harry's belly with fascination, wanting to feel that movement again. He greeted the other two when they arrived. He was wearing what passed for casual clothes for him and was sitting on the sofa with Harry.

"A lot," Harry answered with a sigh. "It was ... strange, and hard, but obviously, we did what we were supposed to. Nothing's changed."

"What did you see?" Hermione asked. "Did you see Dumbledore? Your - your parents? Anything about Horcruxes?"

Harry nodded. "Dumbledore, my parents, Hagrid, Sirius, Snape, Wormtail, Voldemort, myself - spent a great deal of time with me, actually."

"Merlin," said Ron.

"He was quite the little troublemaker even then." Draco smirked, setting his tea down and giving in to the urge to pet Harry's belly again.

Harry smiled at Draco.

"Well, what did you have to do? And what about the Horcrux?" Hermione asked, clearly anxious to hear the rest.

"We got there and Draco couldn't see the house because it was under Fidelius in the past," Harry said.

Hermione nodded.

"I - I watched my mum and dad from the window for a bit, but it wasn't long before Wormtail and Voldemort showed up. Voldemort went right in the house and my mum ran upstairs with me, I guess, but my dad stayed and fought"

Hermione took a seat next to Harry and laid a hand on his arm. Ron sat in the chair near the couch, turning it to face Harry fully.

Harry explained to them the rest of what had happened all the way up until the part with Snape. He paused here and stared at his knees. He didn't know why, but it was hard to think of Snape loving his mother.

"Why was he holding your mum?" Ron asked, seeming confused.

"I told you before that he admired her," Draco said. "Apparently it was more than that. He was in love with her."

Ron's eyes widened and he made a face.

Hermione looked shocked too.

Harry nodded slowly. "He never actually said ... but ... you could just tell. He was crying and ... the look on his face was very - very un-Snape like."

"Wow," said Hermione quietly. "That's" But she didn't seem to really know what to say. "I suppose they must have been friends in school then. I bet they worked on the Half-Blood Prince book together, especially if she was doing the same sorts of things for the Ministry."

"No wonder he hates me," Harry said suddenly, staring off at the floor, but not really seeing it. "I mean I know he hates my father still, but really - to hate me so much for that? He hates me because I was there and might have been able to save her ... but I didn't."

"You couldn't," Draco said.

"I would hate someone if they had the chance to save you and didn't," Harry said slowly, looking up from the floor and at Draco. "Even if they technically couldn't have."

Draco sighed but nodded, running soothing circles on Harry's belly.

"Well ... what else?" Hermione asked after a moment.

"We had to leave after that," said Harry. "We took little me from my cot and went back downstairs. Oh, yeah, I forgot. Before we actually went back in time, we walked around the house to get a look at it just in case and the basement had been heavily warded, but it was empty. When we went back, it wasn't empty and I went down there. I think my parents were studying love or something - and death, because the room down there was a sort of work room or office type thing with lots of books and potion-making supplies and things like that. I found a bunch of notebooks with tons of stuff on both subjects and some blueprints, too. The room with the veil at the Ministry, and remember that room we couldn't get into? The one that melted Sirius's knife?"

Ron and Hermione nodded quickly, looking very interested, Hermione especially so.

"I think that room as well. Dumbledore said it held a force that I'm filled with and that Voldemort has none of - I think it's love," Harry finished. He hadn't even told any of this to Draco.

Draco raised eyebrows at both the description of the things found in the basement and the Ministry. It was all news to him.

"What did the notebooks say?" Hermione asked quickly, her eyes wide with curiosity and excitement.

"I don't know," Harry answered. "I was only able to skim some of them, but I brought them back, along with the blueprints and all of the books that were laying around where the notebooks were."

Hermione was nearly bouncing in her seat at that news. "Oh, my goodness! Harry, do you know what this could mean?" she asked. "If your power over Voldemort is love, then what if the answer that could help you defeat him is somewhere in all that information?"

Harry nodded quickly, encouraged and heartened by her response. "That's why I grabbed it," he said.

"Hermione and I can study them and see if we can find out a way to use this. And we still need to find the next Horcrux," Draco added.

"There was nothing there?" Hermione asked, frowning.

"I'm getting to that part," Harry said.

"Well, go on," said Ron. "Tell us the rest of what happened then."

Harry did. He told them all of what had happened, all about Dumbledore and what he had told him, and even about all the funny things his small self had done and about how his first steps had been to Draco. He told them about going back with little Harry and seeing Hagrid and then Sirius and about how strange it had all been. They talked for another hour at least. When Harry finally finished, it was around dinner time.

"And you're sure that was the only thing there that could have had to do with Horcruxes?" Hermione asked. "All you had to do was tell Dumbledore about them?"

Harry nodded. "It *is* the only thing that makes sense. There's no way we could have found anything else there."

"Merlin," Ron said again.

"Yeah," said Harry, leaning back against the couch.

Hermione looked like she was still thinking about it, but she seemed content enough with Harry's answers.

"You left out something, Harry." Draco smiled and patted his belly.

"Oh," Harry said, smile growing big. "The baby moved."

Hermione was brought immediately from her thoughts and gasped with delight. Ron blushed a little but smiled as well.

"Oh, Harry! Oh, my gosh, that's wonderful!" Hermione said, grasping his arm.

Draco rubbed Harry's belly again, grinning so much it almost hurt.

Harry grinned as well.

"You really are quite ... large for it being only ... what? Your fourth month?" Hermione said, still smiling.

Harry shrugged and nodded. "Yeah, I know," he said.

"The baby's growing faster than normal - well - that's rather

obvious, I suppose. It could be ... born soon," said Hermione.

Harry took a deep breath. "Yeah," he said.

Draco nodded, sharing a look with Hermione. "His magical signature is strong too," he said, his voice full of pride.

Hermione smiled. "I'm sure he'll be strong. You both seem pretty confident that it's a boy."

Harry smiled and nodded. "I think I know," he said. "I'm pretty much certain. It's strange, but there you have it."

"We should talk to Severus soon," Draco said, "because I don't think it will be safe for Harry to travel much longer."

Harry nodded.

"Yes, you're right, Draco," said Hermione. "Also ... I think everyone is getting a bit suspicious of something going on. You don't just look like you've gained weight anymore, Harry. You look ... like someone has stuffed a huge ball down your shirt. And you'll probably get bigger than that even."

Draco frowned. "We need to limit who sees him to only those we explicitly trust, and we need to have a talk with them."

"Well, I trust everyone living here," said Harry. "And people in the Order, of course, but they probably won't see me."

"I think everyone who lives here would be safe to tell as far as keeping their mouths shut Do you *want* to tell everyone here?" asked Hermione.

Harry shrugged and looked at Draco.

"Yes," Draco said after a moment's thought. "Remus and Tonks as well. After dinner tonight. Gather everyone in the sitting room."

Harry took another deep breath, blushing a little already at what Fred and George might say.

"Okay," said Hermione. "Don't worry about anything. I'll let everyone know and I'll get Remus and Tonks."

"Thanks, Hermione," said Harry gratefully.

"You have a lot of resting to do, Harry," said Hermione, smiling gently. "This last bit of time is when he'll probably be taking the most energy from you, developing fully and all. And he probably needs to develop most of his magic too. That'll be tiring."

Harry sighed and nodded. "I figured as much," he said.

Draco nodded, but smirked too. He knew that the baby liked it

when they shared magic. "So tonight," he confirmed.

"Tonight," Harry answered.

Harry had got into his traditional robes again for dinner. Everyone kept asking where he and Draco had been all night and most of the day, but Harry had simply told them that he had been tired, which caused everyone to stare suspiciously at him, eyes lingering on the belly that showed even with the robes.

Remus and Tonks had shown up for dinner and they had both stared at Harry with slightly surprised looks. They hadn't seen him at all in a while.

The meal went quickly as Harry was nervous about telling everyone, wondering what they would think, even though he already had the support of Ron, Hermione and Mrs Weasley. Soon, everyone in the house was in the sitting room, waiting to hear what this secret news was. They looked nervous, seemingly preparing themselves for the worst.

Harry took a deep breath and sat up a bit straighter on the sofa where he was sitting next to Draco. Everyone was so quiet and anxious that this small thing caught their attention and all eyes landed on Harry.

He flushed a little and stared at the floor for a minute before taking Draco's hand and looking up again.

Draco had been too nervous to eat much at dinner and he was having an increasingly difficult time not touching Harry's belly. It was becoming a near obsession for him. Now he sat holding his husband's hand with a lot of expectant and worried faces turned to them. "We have an announcement," he said. "We can appreciate that some of you, probably all of you, have been worried about Harry's health."

Tonks was standing nervously next to an armchair that Remus was sitting in. She gripped the older man's shoulder when Draco spoke. Remus himself was frowning and leaning forward in the chair.

Only Ron, Hermione and Mrs Weasley were not looking nervous. They stared around at everyone else's faces, knowledge in their eyes and small, similar smiles on their lips.

"I'm fine," Harry assured the room. "I'm not sick. I'm not dying."

He let out a small, nervous laugh. "I'm ..." he took another deep breath, "pregnant."

There was complete utter silence for what felt like forever. A pin could have dropped and been heard.

Mr Weasley looked very confused, as did everyone else. "Huh?" said Fred and George in unison. Bill's eyebrows rose high on his forehead. Fleur looked at Harry like she thought he was a little mad. Charlie was looking at him with a sceptical expression, as if waiting for the punch line. And the three in the know beamed, Mrs Weasley and Hermione especially.

Tonks gasped and Remus laughed. "If it was anyone else, I would think you were joking," he said.

Draco nodded. "He really is pregnant," he said. "And before you ask, we aren't exactly sure how it works. We just know that it was the result of a combination of his wild magic and the Manor's Ancestral Magics."

"So you aren't joking?" said Fred, staring at Harry and Draco with his mouth open.

Harry blushed again and shook his head. "No, we're not joking," he said.

Fred and George both looked speechless.

"Ow long?" Fleur asked, eyes wide.

"Since October," Draco said, "but the child is growing faster than a conventional pregnancy."

Harry nodded. "As you can see," he said, laying a hand on his stomach.

"Merlin!" said George. "I thought you were just getting fat and you're having a baby!"

Mrs Weasley frowned at her son but then smiled when she looked at Harry again.

"You still have ... your parts, don't you?" Fred asked, looking a bit horrified.

Harry flushed brighter. "Yes," he said through his teeth.

Draco blushed and said, "Definitely." He looked around. "It is a magical pregnancy. He is still male. Apparently, he wanted this and his magic did what it always does: it made it happen."

"Well ... that's ... something," said Bill, shaking his head and

staring at Harry and Draco.

"Quite," said Charlie, face similar to Bill's.

"It's lovely," said Mrs Weasley, smiling. "I've known for a little while. I've been helping Harry with some things - vitamins and such."

Harry nodded, smiling at Mrs Weasley. "It has to be a secret," he said to the rest of the room. "I don't think I need to tell you why."

Remus shook his head. "Lily and James would be so excited," he said, wistfully, sounding a bit choked up.

"We think the baby will be ... ready ... in the next month. And Harry will need a lot of rest," Draco said, sounding a bit worried despite his efforts to sound calm.

Harry smiled softly at Lupin's comment and squeezed Draco's hand, turning his face to look at him when he spoke.

"Don't hesitate to ask for anything, Harry," said Mrs Weasley. "We'll all be glad to help out."

Harry smiled. "Thanks," he said.

Fred cleared his throat. "Erm ... if you still have your bits ... how exactly are you supposed to have a kid?"

Harry frowned. "I - I don't know," he said.

Hermione looked up at Draco.

"That is one aspect we aren't completely clear on," Draco said, "but then this is a magical pregnancy, so I expect the solution may be there as well."

Harry let out a quiet breath and nodded.

"Well, I believe congratulations are in order," said Mr Weasley, smiling. "I'm happy for you, boys."

"You blokes certainly do move fast," said Charlie, amused.

Harry smiled and gave a little shrug.

Draco smiled and allowed his hand to slide over Harry's belly, resting comfortably there with his husband's.

"All of this should make Draco happy," Harry said, smiling at him, "because he has been having to keep himself from doing this in front of you lot and can hardly keep his hands away."

Everyone chuckled.

Draco blushed but didn't move his hand, pressing it into Harry's flesh and happy when he felt the baby push back.

Harry smiled at Draco again, having felt the movement as well.

"Do you know what ze sex iz?" asked Fleur.

"A boy. We're pretty sure," said Harry.

"How about a name?" asked Mrs Weasley, still beaming.

"We haven't decided yet," Harry answered.

"Malfoy for a surname," Draco said emphatically.

Harry snorted quietly at Draco's tone.

"No Potter at all?" asked Mr Weasley, seeming a bit surprised.

Harry shrugged. "I assure you, he's half mine," he said with a small grin, "but I figure it's fitting for the name to be Malfoy, as the Manor wanted a Malfoy heir. It's why I'm pregnant in the first place."

Draco nodded, pleased with Harry's answer. He closed his eyes, feeling that pulse of magic. It was warm and bright.

"Oh, it's been so long since there's been a baby," said Mrs Weasley, seeming excited. "I know you probably don't want a mad old woman around, but I really can't wait."

Harry laughed. "Mrs Weasley, believe me, we don't think you're a mad old woman, and we'll certainly want you around."

Draco blinked, opening his eyes. "Actually, we hope you will be willing to teach us about infants," he said. "Until recently, I had never even held a small child."

"Oh, certainly," she said, and then frowned a bit. "Is there someone you know who's had a baby, dear?"

Harry froze slightly, unsure what it would matter if everyone found out they had gone back in time.

Draco exchanged glances with Harry, realising his mistake. He looked toward Hermione to see what she thought.

Hermione gave him a small shrug and everyone was looking at Draco expectantly, waiting for an answer.

"Does it matter if we tell them?" Harry asked, whispering in Draco's ear, and surely now, the curiosity and suspicion had increased.

Draco thought hard about what they knew. "Some basics should be fine," he said. Then he looked at them, smirking. "The only child I have ever held is Harry," he said with a laugh.

"What?" asked Mrs Weasley, confused.

Harry sighed. "And yet another secret," he said. "We went back in time. That's where we were last night - with me, as a one-year-old."

The range of expressions were much the same as they had been when Harry had said he was pregnant.

"Dumbledore left us a message and a Timekey that told us we needed to be there the night Lily and James died," Draco explained.

Mrs Weasley gasped.

"You went to that night?" Mr Weasley asked, eyes wide. "Did you see their - their deaths?"

Harry nodded sadly. "Yeah," he said.

"And Dumbledore?" asked Bill, leaning forward.

Harry nodded again.

Remus's face was one of shock and confusion, and pain. "You were there?" he asked in a hoarse voice.

"We couldn't interfere but we protected and took care of little Harry until Hagrid and Sirius showed up," Draco said, watching Remus carefully.

Harry stared at Lupin as well. "We couldn't," he said quietly. "There was nothing I could do."

"Oh, Harry," said Mrs Weasley sadly.

"We saw Pettigrew there as well," Draco added.

Harry nodded, scowling in disgust. "He couldn't even go in," he said.

"We were able to learn exactly what happened that night, to tell Dumbledore what needed to be done and to take care of little Harry," Draco said, smirking a bit at the last part.

Harry nodded.

"So you ... went back in time to tell Dumbledore what to do with you?" Mr Weasley asked, sounding amazed.

"Yeah," said Harry. "Strange, isn't it?"

"Very," said Bill.

"What was the point of going there?" asked George. "What did you find out?"

Harry was silent for a moment, thinking, but then he realised that there were people in the room who could very possibly help him. "We found some things in my parents' basement," he said looking at Lupin. "Things having to do with their work in the Department of Mysteries."

Remus's eyes widened at that and he sat up straighter. "You saw

what they were working on?" he asked.

Harry nodded quickly. "Yeah," he said. "Well, I think what they were working on at the time anyway. I didn't have a chance to look through it all, but I took everything that looked like it had been recently looked at or worked on. Notebooks on love and death. Blueprints of rooms in the Ministry. The one where ... Sirius died, and I think another room there as well."

Draco nodded, realising it also might lead to more information about what happened to Sirius.

Remus looked quite alert now. "I would be willing to help with that research," he said.

Harry nodded. "I think we'll be able to use all the help we can get, and also," he glanced at Tonks and Mr Weasley, "I don't want to jeopardise anyone's job, but it's possible that we may need to get into the Ministry again to take a look at those rooms. I have my Invisibility Cloak, and Moody has his if he's willing to help. I think this could lead to a way to help me destroy Voldemort."

"Sure, Harry," Tonks replied quickly and Remus patted her hand on his shoulder, nodding to Harry.

"It's been a long day and we can talk more about this tomorrow," Draco said. "I want Harry to get more rest now."

Harry felt almost sick to his stomach when the time came to see Snape. He knew that Snape, obviously, would remember exactly what had happened and what Harry had seen, and it was strange because Harry preferred to think of Snape as he had always saw him. That cold, dark, horrid man who hardly cared for anyone in the world except himself. It unnerved him to think of Snape loving someone, and it made him even more uncomfortable to think about *who* Snape had been in love with. Even though it was technically Snape who had had a part of himself unintentionally revealed, Harry felt like the vulnerable one.

Aberforth had taken them to the usual spot and they were waiting for the man now, Harry nervously tapping his foot.

Snape appeared quickly this time and regarded them both with a calculating look. "So you've seen," he said gruffly. "Let's get inside."

Draco nodded in response to both statements and took Severus's

arm, reluctantly releasing Harry's hand.

Harry didn't meet Snape's eyes or even look at his face. He took Aberforth's arm, but when they all four had Apparated inside, Aberforth turned to Snape and nodded. "Severus," he said in what seemed like a greeting and a goodbye all in one. After a moment, he Disapparated.

Harry frowned and raised an eyebrow, but then moved back over to Draco, taking his hand again.

Severus huffed and sat down at the table. "You spoke with Dumbledore then?" he asked.

Harry nodded. "Yeah," he said quietly, hesitantly taking a seat at the table as well.

Draco sat beside him. "I am sorry, Severus," the blond said quietly.

Harry bit his lip and glanced up at Snape. He didn't say anything, feeling ashamed almost.

Snape nodded. "It was a long time ago," he said, but the pain in his voice made it seem a lie.

Harry had no idea if he should say anything. He didn't know if Snape would want him to say anything. There was still such hostility between them that this couldn't possibly take away.

"What happened?" Snape snapped. "I hope it was worth it. That you learnt something of value."

"We did, I believe," Harry said, for once not getting angry with Snape's tone. "In the basement of the house."

"I never looked in the basement," Snape said quietly, his eyes looking far away, thinking back to that time.

"You couldn't have stopped him," Draco said, looking between the two men. "Neither of you, even if you had tried," he continued.

Harry sighed quietly and stared at the table top.

"I didn't know they had made Pettigrew their Secret Keeper," Severus said, not looking at either of them. "I found out too late."

"Not even Dumbledore knew," Harry said. "Only them and Sirius."

"I came as soon as I found out," Severus said, almost to himself.

Draco nodded. "And even if you had got there earlier," the blond said, "he would have killed you too."

Harry took a deep breath and nodded. "And then ... and then we wouldn't have had you for a spy for all these years ... and who knows what may have happened." It was the closest Harry had ever come to actually saying something nice about Snape willingly.

"After you two left, the others came," Snape continued. "Pettigrew had gone for help. Apparently, you upset him."

"The Death Eaters," Harry said, frowning.

Snape nodded. "Malfoy, Nott, and some of his other followers. They were looking for their Lord. They would have taken Harry if they had found him then," he explained. "But you two had taken him with you."

"We were just in time," Harry said. "We left for Dumbledore after we took the things from the basement and then we came back to the house and no one was there."

"They ransacked the place," Snape said with a nod. "Whatever you took from the basement, they would have had. I hope you retrieved what we needed."

Harry took another deep breath. "Yeah. I think we got everything and did everything we needed," he said firmly. "And what we did get is likely very important."

Snape breathed a large sigh and nodded. "I did what Albus asked me to," he said, seeming as if he was shrugging off a large weight. "Now use it well," he said, looking Harry directly in the eyes.

Harry gave one firm nod. "I will," he said.

Snape held his gaze for a moment and then nodded. "So, when are you due?" he asked.

Harry was a bit startled by the casual question. "Oh, erm ... I'm not sure exactly. Soon, I think. It's growing faster than a usual baby."

Snape regarded him curiously, looking between him and Draco. "Did you do this deliberately?" he asked.

Draco smirked, shaking his head.

Harry blushed a little. "It sort of just - happened," he said.

Severus raised an eyebrow. "You seem quite prone to magical accidents," he observed.

"Yeah," said Harry, wincing a little. "A bit. But this is a good one. Actually ... they've all been pretty good." He squeezed Draco's hand.

Snape rolled his eyes and huffed. "So how will you ... remove it?"

he asked.

"We don't know," Harry answered. "This has never happened before so ... we're sort of just ... clueless about it, really."

Snape cocked his head, looking at Draco.

Draco's face was serious, nodding to his godfather to indicate that he was aware of the difficulties this presented.

"Erm" Harry said awkwardly, "do you think you might know how it could be," he gulped, "removed or - whatever it is that's going to happen?"

"I have heard of something like this happening only a couple times in magical history," Snape said.

"You have?" Harry asked quickly. Not even Hermione had been able to find anything.

"One involved a man who had been transformed into a woman and then had congress with a man. When he returned to his true form, he found he was pregnant," Snape said.

Harry frowned. "Well, erm ... I believe I was still very much a man when we ... erm ...well ... yeah." He blushed again.

"Hardly a case one would want to use anyway, since the man tried to have it removed and died," Snape said dismissively.

Draco scowled at him.

Harry paled a bit. "Oh," he said, sounding sick.

"It had, apparently, attached itself to a couple major internal organs" Snape went on to explain.

"Severus!" Draco interrupted him. "I don't think that applies here."

Harry's eyes were wide as he stared at Snape, going even paler.

Draco reached for Harry's hand. "This pregnancy was made by Harry and the Malfoy Manor's magic," Draco said, "which means, I doubt it would have the same consequences."

"Yes," Snape agreed, "it may have been unintentional on your parts, but not on the Manor's."

Harry released a very shaky breath, clutching Draco's hand in a death grip.

"But it may require magical intervention to come to term safely," he continued.

"I have considered that," Draco said firmly. "But St Mungo's is

not safe for any of us."

"Ask Madame Pomfrey," Snape said, "I think she can be trusted."

"Isn't she busy at Hogwarts?" Harry asked, voice a bit higher than usual. He cleared his throat.

"Yes," Snape said, "but you really should see a Mediwitch to be safe."

"I will look into it, Severus," Draco said. "How are you doing?"

Harry sat quietly, thinking about what the upcoming month was going to be like.

"As well as can be expected," he said. "And you are right to stay concealed. They cannot know about this."

Harry looked up at that, a sudden fierce protectiveness coming over him. "No, they cannot," he said. "And I'd like to see them try anything," he hissed angrily.

"I would rather not see any such thing," Draco said. "We should go."

Harry sighed and nodded, pushing himself up from his chair with the help of the table. "We have a lot to do, but the main issue here is still Horcruxes. I know there's no need to tell you this, but if you find anything, let us know," he said to Snape.

The man nodded, standing with them.

"I'll go first," Draco said, taking Snape's arm and looking at Harry a bit nervously. He didn't like letting his husband out of his sight.

Harry nodded, giving a little shrug.

Snape Apparated out with Draco and then returned for Harry, almost seeming reluctant about touching him.

Harry didn't particularly want to touch Snape either, he was still not at all fond of the man, but he reached out and took his arm, not liking the fact that Draco was standing outside alone.

Draco was relieved to see Harry again and took his hand immediately. He nodded his goodbye to his godfather and Apparated himself and Harry home.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX –

At First Sight

Though it had only been a couple days since Harry and Draco had seen Snape, Harry was sure he had grown even more in the short amount of time. His back felt like it was going to split right in half, his feet hurt constantly, and he went through sudden bouts of being very hot, which annoyed him terribly. He was utterly sick of being pregnant and wanted the baby to come already, while, of course, also being afraid of the moment when that would happen.

Harry was currently on the sofa in the sitting room by the fire, waiting with Draco for Professor McGonagall and Madam Pomfrey. They had decided to take Snape's advice about seeing Pomfrey, but also needed McGonagall, as she would need a reason for allowing the school nurse to be out and travelling to Malfoy Manor. Draco had sent them a letter asking them both to come to the Manor urgently and McGonagall had Floo-called only a few minutes ago to say that they would be there as soon as she fetched Madam Pomfrey from the infirmary.

Harry sighed quietly, wondering not only what McGonagall and Pomfrey would think of him being pregnant, but also what sort of poking and prodding he would have to endure from the nurse.

Leakey suddenly popped into the room. "Masters, your guests have arrived," he announced.

Draco nodded and stood up, facing the door as the two older women were led in by one of the other house-elves. They had agreed that Harry stay seated so as not to shock them too much at first.

Harry turned his head to look over at the door, but indeed remained seated.

Professor McGonagall's lips were very thin and white and she was frowning. "Mr Malfoy," she said, sounding worried, "what is so urgent that you needed myself and Madam Pomfrey? Nothing looks to be out of order here. And you sent the message by owl." She

looked over at Harry, frowning at him as well.

"We did not wish to upset you, but we do need to consult Madam Pomfrey on an important medical issue," he said. "Would you please both take a seat and I will have the elves bring tea." Draco used his best host voice and gestured to the chairs he had set up.

Harry took a quiet deep breath as Pomfrey and McGonagall sat down, both of them looking puzzled.

Professor McGonagall's eyes widened very slightly when she set them upon Harry, but she didn't say anything. Harry knew he didn't look so obviously pregnant while sitting; he only looked big.

Babb brought the tea and laid it out, and Draco went through the process of asking about and pouring it for each woman. He wasn't sure if he should start or Harry.

Harry took another deep breath. "We asked you here, Madam Pomfrey, because I'm going to need your help with, as Draco said, a medical issue. We asked you here, Professor, because we'll probably be needing Madam Pomfrey to visit us several times and we knew it would have to be cleared with you first."

"Are you ill, Mr Potter?" Professor McGonagall asked, looking worried again.

"No," said Harry with a small sigh. "I'm pregnant." And he waited for the exclamations of disbelief.

Professor McGonagall raised both her eyebrows very high. "I did not come here to play games," she said. "Now please, tell us what the matter is."

Harry had known it would go this way. "I really am," he said, feeling like this was the hundredth time he'd had this same conversation.

Madam Pomfrey seemed more curious than disbelieving, studying Harry from where she sat, sipping her tea. She set the drink down. "You two both had a penchant for magical accidents even before you got together," she said.

Harry nodded, only slightly surprised that she was willing to believe it. "Perhaps it's magnified since," he said. "However it happened, it did, and that's what we called you here for. I'm not lying or playing any jokes."

Pomfrey nodded, but she looked to McGonagall, seemingly

waiting for her reaction.

Draco sat back, watching the two. "You know about Ancestral Magic?" he asked.

Professor McGonagall turned her confused-looking expression from Harry to Draco. She looked like she thought all of this was nonsense. "Yes, of course," she said to Draco.

"Then you know that Malfoy Manor is meant to promote the Malfoy line," he said. "And I think you are already aware of Harry's wild magic."

"And you're saying that made him pregnant?" she asked, putting emphasis on the word 'him'. "I've never heard of such a thing."

"But do you admit that it makes sense?" Harry said. "My magic and the Manor's combined to make me pregnant. Draco says that it's why the Manor accepted me as his spouse. It knew that we would somehow be able to produce an heir. It started working on putting Draco and I together soon after I decided I wanted a baby one day."

Professor McGonagall stared very hard at Harry for several moments. "And you're certain of all this?"

"Very certain," said Harry. "Not only is there all that evidence, but Draco can actually feel the baby inside me. Also, I *am* growing."

"Headmistress," Pomfrey said at this point, "I believe I can answer the question for you. If I can examine him." She seemed to be waiting for permission from both McGonagall and Harry when she finished.

Harry's eyes flashed to the woman. "Erm, what exactly will this examination include?" he asked. "I'll let you do it, of course, but I'd just like to know beforehand."

"Well, there are several spells to check for pregnancy," Madam Pomfrey explained. "It's not like I haven't faced that problem among students at Hogwarts in the past. And there are spells to check the health of mother, or in this case, parent and child."

Harry was quite relieved with that. He nodded. "All right."

Professor McGonagall was staring between them.

Pomfrey held her wand but waited, looking at the Headmistress for permission.

"Well, you should do it then, Poppy," McGonagall said, nodding.

Pomfrey stood and then cast a spell. She hummed as Harry's belly

glowed softly. "Well, that's a positive," she said. "Now if you would lift your shirt, Mr Potter."

Harry grasped the hem of his once much too big t-shirt, and pulled it up, revealing the very round curve of his stomach. He flushed, feeling a bit odd.

Professor McGonagall's eyes widened. "You really aren't lying, are you?" she muttered quietly, and though the question was to Harry, she seemed to be speaking to herself.

Pomfrey knelt beside the couch. "I need to examine you," she told Harry. "You should lie back."

Harry glanced at Draco as he did as told, still feeling odd. He stared up at the ceiling, letting his hands rest on either side of himself.

Pomfrey laid her hand on his belly, pressing gently but firmly in various spots. After a minute, she smiled as the baby pressed back. "Someone is awake," she said pleasantly.

Harry glanced at Draco again, smiling slightly this time. "He's hardly stopped kicking me in the last few days," he said.

Draco smiled, beaming with love and joy at his husband. He had to hold back to keep from reaching to feel again.

"Would you two like to see your child?" Pomfrey asked.

Harry's eyes widened. "We can see?" he asked. He knew about ultrasounds in the Muggle world, but had never actually considered there might be a wizarding equivalent.

"Certainly," she said, smiling at his eager reaction.

Draco's eyes widened and he moved closer, perching on the arm of the sofa by Harry's feet.

Pomfrey then cast another spell and Harry's belly glowed again. This time it shimmered, Harry's skin becoming translucent and the outline of the baby beneath becoming more distinct.

Draco gasped, mouth falling open slightly as he got his first look at his son.

Harry quickly lifted himself on his elbows, his mouth open as well as he stared down at his belly.

"My goodness," said Professor McGonagall quietly.

Harry laughed amazedly, looking up at Draco for only a quick second before looking back down again.

"Beautiful," Draco said in an awed voice. "And definitely a boy," he added with a smirk.

Harry grinned widely. "Yes, but we knew," he said, wishing he could touch the baby.

As they watched, a little leg extended, kicking out against Harry's body. Then the glow began to fade, the image of the baby fading with it back into Harry's flesh.

Draco looked into his husband's face, wanting at that moment to take him into his arms and snog him senseless. He let his feelings show in his eyes.

Harry felt very much the same and shivered at Draco's look, feeling absolutely awestruck.

Professor McGonagall actually seemed a bit choked up. "This is one of the most amazing things I have ever heard of," she said.

Pomfrey nodded then seemed to recover first. "The child does appear to be quite healthy," she said. "He appears nearly fully developed. Do you know what date conception occurred?"

"Well, it was in November," Harry answered after a moment, reluctantly taking his eyes from Draco.

Draco licked his lips, trying to refocus on the conversation but still unable to take his eyes off Harry. "Yes, mid-November," he said, "but he seems to be growing faster than usual."

Pomfrey nodded. "Quite a bit faster," she said. "And since Mr Potter's body is not designed for this, the pregnancy does seem to be putting additional stress on his internal organs."

That got Draco's attention and his gaze shifted to her. He frowned.

Harry swallowed, sitting up more. "What does that mean?" he asked, getting slightly nervous.

"It means you are going to have to be careful and rest as much as possible," she said with a sigh. "I can work with Mr Malfoy here on a program of potions to help your system."

Harry let out the breath he had been holding and nodded. "It'll be soon, won't it? The birth?"

"I think so," she said, then frowned again, glancing at Draco.

Draco knew what she was thinking by the look.

"It might be better to contact an actual midwife," she said. "I

haven't the experience in births, especially one that will take additional skill."

Harry bit his lip. It was still a mystery to him how any of this was going to work. "We'll have to talk about it," he said slowly. "We're trying to keep this as much of a secret as we can."

"Well, with the Headmistress's permission and yours, I will do what I can to help," she said. "This really is unprecedented."

Harry nodded, as did Professor McGonagall. "I certainly understand the need for secrecy," she said, "and Madam Pomfrey has my full permission to come here for checking on you and helping with whatever she can." She nodded to Madam Pomfrey. "I won't speak a word of it."

"Thanks, Professor," said Harry. "Thanks, both of you." He was still feeling a little nervous about the internal organ thing, especially after what Snape had said, but he took deep breaths and kept repeating Draco's words in his head. The Manor's and his own magic would not have done this if it weren't possible.

After some discussion of potions and how to contact her in an emergency, Draco escorted Pomfrey and McGonagall to the door of the sitting room. He then returned quickly to his husband's side, kneeling next to the sofa.

Harry had dropped onto his back again, his shirt still pulled up. He turned his head to look at Draco. "This will all be okay," he said, and though it technically wasn't a question, it sort of was.

Draco laid his right hand on Harry's belly and bent to kiss him. "Yes," he whispered against his husband's lips before pressing his to them.

Harry sighed, kissing back. He let one hand rest with Draco's on his stomach and the other he placed on the back of Draco's neck.

Draco kissed his husband, licking and sucking on his lips. He could feel their son's magical signature under the firm flesh his hand rested upon.

Harry flicked his tongue against Draco's. He could hardly believe they had actually got to see their son, and, Merlin, he loved his husband. So much. They had made the baby inside him. It was so very, *very* real.

Draco slid his tongue over Harry's lips, touching the tip to the tip

of his lover's tongue. He shivered at the contact, lost in his love for Harry and their child.

Harry didn't feel up to Apparating at the moment, and didn't want to. He simply wanted Draco right where he was. "You should lock the door and widen the couch or something," he whispered. "Because I want you right now, at this very second."

Draco chuckled, pulling his wand and casting the spells to lock the door. He smirked down at his husband. "How do you want it, love?" he said in a voice already husky with desire.

"I want you inside me," Harry answered, eyes glazed over. "I want to just lay here and get fucked." He smiled, his cock already hardening.

"As you wish," Draco said, smiling. Wand still in hand, he cast the charm to remove their clothing and then widened the sofa. "Lie with your arse at the edge," he told his husband.

Harry scooted to comply, letting his legs hang down for the moment as he stared up at Draco happily and lazily. He didn't know why he was suddenly so tired, and he knew he would take a nap after this undoubtedly wonderful sex.

Draco knelt beside the sofa still, now between his lover's legs. He smiled at the amazing image of Harry with his hard cock and his round belly. Draco took hold of Harry's ankles and brought them up until Harry's feet were resting on Draco's own shoulders. He used his wand to adjust the height of the sofa and then cast the Lube Spell before wrapping slick fingers around his husband's erection.

Harry gasped and almost immediately started trying to thrust into Draco's hand.

Draco chuckled. "You said you wanted to just lie there," he pointed out, sliding his fingers slowly up and down the length of flesh.

"What I say and what actually happens sometimes differ," Harry managed, closing his eyes and gasping again. "Especially when it comes to you with a hand on my cock."

"Does that mean you don't want me to fuck you now?" Draco asked, teasing. He cupped Harry's arse with his silver hand, squeezing gently.

Harry bit his lip tightly with the feeling of Draco's hand still

moving slowly over him and the other one now on his arse. "No, that is not what that means at all," he said, letting out a quiet moan.

"Good," Draco said with a grin. "Because I want to feel myself inside you. I want you to feel me." He moved closer as he said it, his erection brushing against Harry's thigh. Then he used his silver hand to spread lube over his own length before pressing slick fingers against his lover's opening.

"Mmm, fuck, yes," Harry said, moaning again. "Inside." He pushed down a little, wanting Draco to press his fingers in.

Smooth silver fingers slid into Harry's opening and Draco gasped at the sensation, his cock twitching in response. His hand on Harry's cock faltered briefly before resuming stroking. He moved both hands in time with each other.

Harry threw his head back, licking his lips and panting slightly. "Draco," he gasped, "I want you in me so fucking bad."

"And you get what you want," Draco answered, pulling his silver fingers out and positioning the head of his cock against that slick, tight hole. Then he pressed forward, breaching his lover's body with a moan.

Harry grasped his own hair with his hand, and then the couch, and then his hair again, letting out a deep groan. "Oh, fuck," he whispered, toes curling.

"Yes, love, yes," Draco said, agreeing and encouraging as he slid forward, feeling that tight heat and pressure grasping his cock.

Harry opened his eyes again, trying to focus them. He looked at Draco, reaching to run a hand up his body.

Draco leant over his lover, pressing Harry's legs up as he did. He placed a kiss on Harry's belly as he looked up at him. Then he flexed his hips, withdrawing partway and then thrusting forward.

Harry let out a strange laugh as the baby kicked then. He moaned again, moving to meet Draco's thrusts as best he could.

"You are so beautiful," Draco crooned, flexing his hips again as he began a steady rhythm. His hand on Harry's cock was trapped between his lover's body and his own, but he still managed to stroke in time with his thrusts.

Harry smiled, his lips parted as he was rocked with Draco's thrusts. "Yes, Draco," he moaned.

"I swear I will take care of you," Draco gasped. "My love, trust in us. Trust me."

Harry was panting as he met Draco's eyes, his own filling with unshed tears. "I know you will," he whispered. "I do trust you. More than anything or anyone."

Draco smiled, grey eyes dark with pleasure as he picked up the pace, thrusting faster, rocking into Harry's body. "Yes, love," he gasped, "bring us."

Harry closed his eyes again, gasping with pleasure at Draco's words. He always loved the fact that they came together nearly every time. As Draco thrust harder and faster into him, with his hand also still on his cock, Harry knew he would reach completion very soon. He arched, and the movement made his sore back hurt a small bit, but it was nothing next to the sensation that surged through his body a moment later. He came, spilling his seed onto Draco's hand and himself, panting, gasping, and moaning with his release.

There was nothing else like that rush of pleasure and magic that Harry's orgasm brought in Draco. He threw his head back and cried out his pleasure as Harry's body spasmed around his cock and magic crackled over them. Under his hand, he felt their child's magic pulse with the flare as well.

Harry's chest was still heaving and he ran a hand over his sweaty face, effectively knocking his glasses crooked, but he didn't bother with fixing them for the moment. He smiled again, floating in bliss as always.

Draco was still panting as he looked down, smiling at his husband.

Harry slowly opened his eyes and stretched his arms out. "Draco, you are perfect," he said, and then the baby kicked him yet again. "And he is definitely still awake." He grinned.

Draco gasped as he slid back, pulling gently from his husband's body and then lying forward a bit to rest his cheek against Harry's belly. "Soon, my son," he spoke against that flesh. "We will see you soon."

In the next several weeks, Harry's back hurt even more and he was increasingly tired. He now spent most of his time in the sitting room

or in bed, and Madam Pomfrey made frequent visits to the Manor. Draco was propped up beside Harry in bed, reading again. He and Hermione had spent most of the day going over notes they had made from the research journals.

Harry took another bite of the sandwich he was eating. All he seemed to do anymore was eat, sleep and have sex. "What're you reading?" he asked, leaning over a bit to get a look at whatever it was in Draco's hands.

Draco smiled, glancing at him. "Latin Grammar and Compendium of Names," he intoned.

"Names?" Harry asked, smiling as well. "Anything good in there?"

Draco nodded, marking his place with his finger. "Actually, I have a couple I wanted to discuss with you," he said.

"Hmm," Harry hummed, scooting closer to Draco. "What are they?" he asked, interested.

"Well, I considered Flavian, but we don't know the hair colour," he said.

Harry made a face at that name. "I don't like it anyway," he said. "What's it mean?"

Draco smirked. "Fair-haired."

Harry snorted. "So you're certain this kid's going to be a full-out Malfoy, eh?" he teased, grinning.

"Aubin is essentially the same meaning as well," Draco teased.

"Next," Harry said, raising an eyebrow. He snorted again.

"Corbin would work if his hair was your colour," Draco continued, "but naming someone for their hair colour seems trivial."

Harry nodded in agreement. "Yeah, it does," he said. "Anything else you came up with?"

"A name that means strong, valorous and healthy," Draco answered. "Valentine."

Harry raised an eyebrow again. "Valentine?" he asked. "Doesn't that make you think of ... Valentine's day?"

"Well, the feast of Valentine is an old custom for celebrating love," Draco said, "and the name is a powerful one."

"I guess" said Harry slowly, but he still wasn't convinced. "You don't think he'd get teased in school for being called

Valentine?"

"At Hogwarts?" Draco raised an eyebrow at that. "And he can go by Valen if you prefer."

Harry nodded appreciatively at that, thinking. "Hmm, I actually like that," he said. "Valen. Sounds good."

"And for a middle name," Draco said, "I had in mind a name that honours you. Especially since he will have my surname."

Harry smiled. "What?" he asked, laying a hand on his stomach.

"Leander." Draco smirked. "It means lion man."

Harry grinned broadly. "Oh, he will *so* be a Gryffindor," he said.

Draco snorted. "So you agree with the names then?" he asked.

Harry nodded. "Yeah I like them," he said, kissing Draco on the cheek. "Valentine Leander Malfoy. Valen for short. Sounds like quite a name." He smiled.

"A good strong one." Draco nodded, setting aside his book and reaching to lay his hand on Harry's belly. He spread his fingers to entwine his with Harry's.

Harry grinned as the baby picked that moment to kick.

Draco scooted down until his face was level with Harry's belly. "Valentine," he said, raising his voice a little. "Valentine, are you going to be as much of a troublemaker as your father here?" he asked.

Harry eyes shone with emotion as he smiled down at Draco. He felt the baby kick again, responding to Draco's voice. He jumped as another kick seemed to be rather near his bladder.

"I am sure that was a yes." Draco smirked. "Just as long as you remember you are my son too," he said to Harry's belly.

Harry snorted. "I don't know how he could possibly forget that," he said.

"Good." Draco smiled, kissing Harry's belly.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN –

Old Family Friend

Draco's first awareness was that he was cold. He shivered, pulling Harry's body closer to his own and reaching for the blankets to pull them up higher - except he couldn't find them. He opened his eyes and gasped. They were not in their own bedroom.

It was dark, damp and cold. They were lying on a mattress on the floor of a cinder-block room with a dim electric light bulb and one closed metal door. Trying not to wake Harry, Draco looked frantically about for his wand or Harry's but they were not in the room with them.

Harry reached for Draco, mumbling in his sleep. The movements woke him up and he opened his eyes. "What're you doing?" he asked thickly, a bit annoyed at the fact that the blankets seemed to be gone. He sat halfway up and opened his eyes fully, still not able to see very well because he wasn't wearing his glasses, but he could definitely tell that they weren't in their room. "Draco," he whispered, quickly moving closer to him.

"We're in trouble, love," Draco whispered. "Stay calm."

Harry's breath sped up and he looked around for his wand automatically, but as soon as he looked, he knew it wasn't there.

Draco helped Harry sit up, his arm around him. "We are not anywhere I recognise," he whispered, "and it has a Muggle light. We are without our wands, your glasses and our clothes."

Harry leant in close to Draco's body, terrified, his heart pounding in his chest. "What do we do?" he whispered, his hands shaking.

"I don't know, yet," Draco said. "It depends on who has us. And remember, you don't need a wand. But we don't want whomever this is to know that yet." He made sure to whisper directly into Harry's ear as he said the last part.

Harry nodded. "How is this possible?" he asked. "We were in bed in our room."

"I don't know," Draco answered, furiously trying to think through the possibilities. Betrayal was the word that filled his thoughts.

Harry was thinking along the same lines as Draco, but he couldn't bring himself to believe that any of the Weasleys had done this. Nor Lupin or Tonks.

"Stay here," Draco said, letting go of Harry. He had fallen asleep with his silver hand on and was grateful for that.

Harry gritted his teeth and nodded, knowing that if there was to be some sort of fight, he had the magic, but he was in no state to run or to do anything physical. He could hardly remain standing for more than a few minutes.

Draco moved from the mattress and walked around the room, examining it. "It's warded to keep us from Apparating," he said aloud.

"We don't have our wands," Harry said. "We couldn't anyway." He knew he might be able to, but not his husband. He watched Draco with eyes wide and fearful.

"There is a plate with some bread and cheese and a cup of water here," Draco said and brought the items over to Harry. "Eat them now, just in case."

Harry hardly felt like eating, but he knew that Draco was right. He ate quickly, eyes never leaving his husband.

Draco walked around the room, running his hand over it to check the magic on it. "There is a bucket too, which I suppose is for waste." He grimaced then made his way over to the door. He wasn't surprised that it was locked.

Harry was finishing up the bread now, still watching Draco. He was still terrified, but he tried not to show it on his face.

Draco looked over at his husband, checking to make sure that he had eaten all the food. Then he knocked loudly on the metal door and waited for an answer.

Harry gulped, wanting to pull Draco back down near to him, but he knew it would be better for one of them to be standing.

Draco waited for a few moments and then knocked louder, using his silver hand to make a louder noise against the metal door.

Harry watched, getting increasingly nervous with every passing

moment.

There was a sound as a bolt was slid back and the door opened a sliver. "Step back to the other side of the room," a male voice commanded.

Harry tensed and was very still, trying to concentrate on his magic if they might need it.

"Macnair," Draco whispered to Harry as he backed up, his eyes never leaving the door.

Harry's eyes widened slightly. This was not good. This man had been with Lucius and had tortured Draco without batting an eye. A flare of anger at the Ministry shot up in him. They had already sent this man to Azkaban.

The door swung open and Walden Macnair stood in the doorway with his wand pointed at the two of them. "Surprised to see an old family friend, Draco?" Macnair sneered.

Harry tensed even more, his hands curling into fists.

"And Potter? How ever did this happen?" He laughed. "Up the duff? I guess you aren't as much of a man as we thought."

An even stronger wave of anger washed through Harry and he could feel his own magic, just waiting to see if the man would try anything.

"How did you get into the Manor?" Draco asked, his voice cold.

"Oh, your mother was most helpful in that regard," the man laughed.

Harry gasped and turned his head quickly to look at Draco, still concentrating on his magic.

"So why haven't you turned us over to your Master?" Draco asked.

"Your mother would rather I didn't do that," Macnair said.

Harry frowned in confusion. That didn't make any sense.

"What do you plan to do then?" Draco asked.

"It really depends on that thing inside Potter," Macnair said.

Harry actually backed up a bit and covered himself with his arms, these words scaring him more than anything. He stared with wide eyes at Draco and then snapped them back onto Macnair.

"What is it?" Macnair asked.

"None of your business," Draco replied.

Harry gritted his teeth to keep from screaming and felt like his very fingertips were trembling with magic.

"Behave yourselves and we might give you food and water," Macnair said, "because you will be staying here until we know what that is."

Harry just continued to stare up at the man, arms still shielding his body.

Draco looked nervously at Harry. "Then what?" he asked.

"That will depend a lot on both the answer and you," Macnair answered. "Because I owe you."

Harry's brows furrowed. He was confused again.

"Can I speak with my mother?" Draco asked.

"She is tied up right now," Macnair smiled, "but we will see if she can find her way clear."

"We need clothing and blankets," Draco said, "and more food."

Harry simply remained quiet, thinking it would probably be better for him to keep his mouth shut.

"What is it?" Macnair asked again.

"None of your business," Harry said now, voice steely.

"You heard him," Draco said, shrugging.

"Then I guess we wait and see," Macnair said, and with a flick of his wand, the door closed again.

Harry looked up at Draco, the fear plain in his eyes. "What do we do?" he asked, voice high.

Draco closed his eyes for a moment, taking a shaky breath. He came and sat down beside Harry, wrapping his arms around him. "We don't know enough yet to have a way out," he said.

Harry's breathing was uneven and shallow. "What does he mean?" he whispered. "What does he mean he wants to know what it is?"

"I don't think they are certain that you are pregnant," Draco said, "but they suspect."

Harry let out a dry, choked sob at that, hugging Draco tightly.

"I think if it was up to Macnair, I would be dead and you would already be in front of the Dark Lord," Draco answered.

"I don't understand what's going on," Harry said. "Why didn't they take me to Voldemort? Why are we here? What does he mean he

owes us?"

"He was Father's ... friend," Draco said.

Harry shivered at that. "What does your mother have to do with this?" he whispered, hugging Draco tighter.

"That's the part I don't understand," Draco said. "Mother knew about them, but they weren't exactly friendly."

"What will they do to our baby?" Harry whispered into Draco's ear, voicing what he was most afraid of now. "Draco, what will they do?"

"If it were only Mother, I wouldn't be worried," he said. "At least, not about the baby."

"Why?" Harry asked, trying to keep himself from trembling.

"Because he will be family," Draco said.

"But so are you," Harry replied, moving his head back so that he could stare into Draco's face.

"Our son will be the Malfoy heir," Draco said, "which means that if I die, he inherits the Manor."

"So what," Harry said. "What does that have to do with hurting him or not?"

"If they want to control the Manor, the money and the magic," Draco said, "then they would need him."

Harry's heart began pounding again. "They can't have him," he said, a violent shiver going through him. "They can't."

"No, they can't," Draco said. "But it explains why they are so interested in him."

"Oh, Merlin," Harry whispered, not knowing what to do. "Merlin, what if I have him here? It could be any day now. That's what Pomfrey said the last time she came. Any day."

"She also said for you to try to remain calm," Draco said. "At your side, love."

Harry nodded and took a shaky, deep breath, hugging Draco again.

"I need you to do a Heating Charm to keep yourself and the baby warm," Draco said.

Harry nodded and closed his eyes, concentrating. He knew it had worked when he felt warm suddenly and he moved a hand over Draco, doing one for him as well. He didn't say so, but just that

simple charm made him feel a little weak.

Draco frowned. "You weren't supposed to do one for me too," he whispered.

"I don't care," Harry whispered back, closing his eyes and pressing his face into Draco's neck.

"I do," Draco whispered. "I care a lot."

"I don't want to argue," Harry whispered, pressing his hands flat to Draco's back. "I already did it."

"Conserve your energy," Draco said. "Use it for yourself and Valen."

Harry sighed shakily and nodded, face still pressed into Draco's skin.

Draco stayed curled around his husband, waiting and hoping he could figure a way out of the situation.

Harry and Draco had eventually fallen asleep with no more interruptions from Macnair or anyone else. Several hours had passed at least and still they had been given no blankets, clothing or anything else to eat. Harry had had to renew the Heating Charm for himself, but had not given Draco one this time, instead pressing as closely to him as he could. They were pressed closely together still as they slept, Harry on his side with Draco behind him.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT –

Eros' Child

Harry was dreaming about some towering man who kept casting Crucio on him. Oddly, the spell didn't hurt as much as it usually did, not at all like it usually did, but the man kept casting it anyway. It was only uncomfortable, although Harry realised, with some fear, that the pain seemed to be growing worse every time he cast it. "Stop," he told the man, but the man only did it again. "Stop," Harry said, louder this time, and his own voice woke him. He opened his eyes and looked around, confused for a moment ... but then he remembered. He shivered and closed his eyes again, actually preferring the strange dream to his reality when there was a sudden pain in his abdomen that felt a lot like what the dream had felt like. Frowning, Harry held very still. The pain didn't come again and he sighed, closing his eyes, but then it *did* come again and his eyes opened wide with fear. He sat up suddenly, hand on his stomach.

Draco was awake instantly when Harry sat up. "Harry? Are you okay?" he asked, sitting up too.

Harry turned his head and stared at Draco with wide, scared eyes. "I don't know," he whispered.

Draco saw the fear in Harry's eyes and understood. He laid his hand on his belly and felt the tension first and then the ripple of magic. "Gods," he said.

Harry's breathing sped up and he began shaking. "No, no, please no," he begged, closing his eyes. "No, please."

"Shhh ," Draco said, moving up to sit behind Harry and pull him back against him. "Relax and breathe with it," he said.

Harry was still breathing very quickly and he struggled to slow it down, clutching Draco's arms in a vice grip. It wasn't that the pain was bad, but he knew what it meant and he didn't want it to be that time yet.

"Forget everything but me and Valen," Draco said. "We are all

that matters right now," he continued in a soothing voice, right hand stroking Harry's belly and his left rubbing the base of his back. Draco was terrified, but he knew better than to show it to his husband.

Harry concentrated on relaxing, trying to let everything go. It was very hard to do and it wasn't until several minutes had passed that he was calm enough to breathe slowly. The pains kept coming and were fairly short, but it seemed to Harry that the spaces between them grew shorter. It had gone from being several minutes before a pain would hit, to hitting for longer and with less time in between.

"I can feel him," Draco whispered. "He is like you. He has power. And he can feel your magic and mine. He is a sensitive, like I am."

Harry breathed deep and actually managed a very small smile. He held his breath as another pain hit, this one stronger and longer than any so far. He released the breath loudly and with a bit of a groan.

"Yes, that's it," Draco whispered against the side of his lover's face. "Feel your magic and his. Let it happen."

Harry had no idea what was going to happen or how the baby was supposed to get out, but he listened to Draco, his voice calming and the only thing in the world that mattered to Harry besides his child.

Draco held and soothed his husband. He could feel Harry's magic and the baby's shifting. Without a wand, he didn't know what he could do. He held him, rocking and muttering soothing words as the contractions became stronger and closer together.

As the pains grew worse, it also felt like something was wrong. Harry was gritting his teeth as hard as he possibly could to keep from crying out. His whole body tensed up with the pain and then when the pain was over, he released with a growling sound almost, breathing quick again.

Draco closed his eyes, using both his sense of touch and his sensitivity. "He is getting tired," Draco said. "He is trying to find a way out but can't do it on his own. You ... you are going to have to help him."

"How?" Harry asked through his teeth, the pain too much for him to be thinking about anything else.

"Do you remember that spell? The one I used to cut myself?" Draco asked.

Harry nodded, body shaking as he felt another contraction coming.

Draco rocked him through the contraction, trying to help him keep his breathing deep. "And the other one," he said. "The one you used to stop the bleeding when you cut my arm?"

Harry released the tension in his body again with the same kind of growl. "Yeah," he gasped.

"Can you imagine them together, something that cuts and does not allow you to bleed?" Draco asked.

Harry imagined what Draco was saying, tried to imagine a spell that would cut and not bleed. He nodded slowly, feeling like he knew where this was going.

Draco felt around until he could feel the place where Valen was pushing with his own magic. "Here," Draco said, drawing a finger across Harry's belly. "It's safe to cut here," he added. "Then I can lift him out but you will need to seal the wound quickly."

Harry took a very deep breath and opened his eyes, nodding when he looked down and saw where Draco's finger was. He took a few seconds to prepare himself for what he had to do.

Draco moved so that his hands were on either side of Harry's belly, with his husband resting against his chest. This way he could hold Harry up and reach for their son. His own heart was beating so fast it was a wonder that he could still hear Harry's breathing over the noise. "Beside you, Harry," Draco said. "I love you."

"Love you," Harry breathed, raising a shaking hand to perform the spell he wasn't even sure would work. He tried not to allow himself to think about anything except Draco and Valen as he pressed the index finger of his right hand to the spot that Draco had indicated. He took one more deep breath, and thinking about the spell without a name, drew the finger across his stomach, gasping with the pain of it, eyes welling with tears.

Draco sucked in a harsh breath as he felt Harry's magic and saw that wound open across his belly. Almost blindly, he reached into his husband's body, following the feel of their son's magic and grasping at soft, warm flesh. His silver hand found it first and lifted as gently and quickly as he could. The child was wrapped in a thin bag of flesh with a cord that disappeared back into Harry's body. "Cut and seal

the cord, Harry," Draco said. "And then close it, quickly."

Harry was breathing very, very fast, crying out on every other breath. He grasped at the strange cord, drawing his finger across it before laying his hand against his own stomach and pressing it across the strange unbleeding wound, although there was blood from the inside of his body spread across his belly. He could feel the skin mending itself slowly and he continued to run his hand over it, thinking with all his might about sealing it up.

Draco almost cried in relief when he saw Harry's magic working on the wound. "Good," he said. Valen was struggling inside the flesh that had protected him. Draco pulled the small bundle up to Harry's chest, laying it there as he tried to use his own fingers to pull it open. He could feel Valen's hands and feet pushing at the sack, his magic like sparks.

Harry finally felt the cut close up all the way and he groaned with relief, his body going completely limp.

"Harry?" Draco asked, worried. He could feel the flesh give way under his fingernails and he tore the sack, fluid and blood running everywhere. Valentine had stopped moving.

Harry had closed his eyes again and lay breathing deeply. He made a strange groaning noise in response to Draco.

Draco started to panic. He could feel Harry was hurt and he was afraid for Valen too. He lifted the small body of their son. He was so little he didn't look real. He turned him over, face down in the palm of his hand and rubbed his back with his other hand, trying to clear the infant's air passages. After what felt like an eternity but was probably less than a minute, there was a little cough and the tiny body jerked. Valentine spit up the fluids he had choked on and was crying. "Oh, Merlin, thank you," Draco breathed himself.

Harry heard the crying and let out a choked sob of his own, too weak to sit up or do much of anything but lay there.

Draco pulled the remains of the birth sack off of his lover, tossing it aside, and laid their baby on Harry's chest instead. "Open your eyes, Harry," he urged. "Don't give up now. You have someone to meet."

Harry was crying as he opened his eyes to see the tiny little boy resting on his chest. His son, his and Draco's son. "Hi," he

whispered, bringing up one shaking hand to touch him.

Valentine opened his eyes, staring up at his parents. He was tiny and covered in blood, but seemed very aware.

Harry let out a short half-laugh, reaching for Draco with the hand that wasn't touching their son.

Draco's blood-covered hand held his husband's. "He's perfect," Draco said. "A tiny little person."

Harry squeezed Draco's hand, stroking Valen's head. "Perfect," he whispered.

Draco smiled. He had prepared for weeks for this with Madam Pomfrey's help and had a dozen potions on hand at home to deal with the possibilities. None of which he could use right now. At least he had been working on the combination spell. But it was Harry who had done it. He kissed the side of Harry's face. "Welcome to the world, Valentine Leander Malfoy," he said.

Harry smiled weakly. "We love you already," he whispered.

"Yes," Draco agreed. "How do you feel?" he asked his husband.

"I don't know," Harry answered. "Very, very sore. And very empty."

"That's to be expected," Draco said. "But you don't feel like you are getting weaker or dizzy?"

"I don't know," Harry answered again, voice hoarse. "I just feel odd all over the place."

"We need to keep you and Valen warm until we can get somewhere safe," Draco said.

Harry shuddered at Draco's words. They brought him back to the reality of where they were. "I think I can manage a Warming Charm," he said. "Can I do one on him?"

"I don't know, Harry," Draco said. "I suggest we lay you on your side. You curl around him and I will curl my body around you."

Harry nodded, lifting both hands to hold Valen gently but firmly to his chest.

Draco eased Harry to his side, curling around him in the cold room.

Harry hissed a little through his teeth as he was moved, but settled in gently. He held the baby very closely to him, cradling him with one arm and doing his best to cover him up and hold him close

with the other.

Valentine's mouth sucked at the skin of Harry's chest.

"I think he's hungry," Harry whispered, stroking his head again.

"Let him suckle," Draco whispered. "Even if you don't have milk, it will feel good to him."

Harry nodded, moving Valen so that he was positioned at a nipple. It was strange, but Harry found that it didn't really bother him at all. He was giving his child comfort and that was all that mattered to him.

After a moment of rooting around, Valen's mouth closed on the nipple and began to suck, making little noises as he did.

Harry sighed quietly, petting Valen's skin. "He's gorgeous," he whispered.

"His hair is white." Draco smiled, looking over Harry's shoulder. "Not much of it yet, but white," he said.

Harry smiled. "Very much a Malfoy," he said quietly, touching said hair.

After a few minutes, the sucking stopped and the baby sighed against Harry's chest, mouth still on the nipple even though he had fallen asleep.

Harry felt tears in his eyes again as he watched his son sleep for the first time and thought about how he was going to get him home and warm and safe.

"We need to get out of this room and we need to keep him with you," Draco said. "Do you understand? You can get him to safety."

Harry sniffed and let out a sob. "What do you mean?" he choked out.

"I mean if I can find a way to bargain you out of this, you take it," Draco said firmly.

Harry closed his eyes. "Draco," he sobbed. "I can't leave without you."

"Trust me, I don't want to be left behind," Draco said. "But if you get the opportunity to get Valentine and yourself out of here, you take it. Promise me."

Harry cried, not answering.

"Promise me, Harry," Draco insisted.

Harry squeezed his eyes more tightly shut before he nodded. "I

promise," he sobbed.

Valen's fingers clutched at Harry's chest. "Look how tiny his nails are," Draco said, wonder filling his voice.

Harry sniffed and looked down. It was several moments before he could find his voice again. "Everything about him is tiny," he said.

Draco sighed, caught between watching Harry's face and his child. "You sleep too, love," Draco said. "You both worked hard."

Harry nodded, but even though he felt weak, he didn't know if he could fall asleep. However, he eventually did, too exhausted to stay awake, his hand gently resting on Valen's head.

Draco wasn't sleeping. He was cold, hungry and, truth be told, terrified. He was curled around his husband and child, propped up on one elbow, watching them sleep. Valen yawned and opened his eyes. Green. Draco smiled. He reached his hand down, a finger touching Valen's tiny chin. Small fingers wrapped around his. Valen's touch was a familiar magic and both of them seemed comforted by it.

Harry was very, very tired and worn out, more so than he could ever remember being. It was several minutes after Valen had awoken that Harry did. He opened his eyes slowly to see Valen clutching a long, pale finger and smiled gently at him.

Draco smiled into his lover's face. "How are you?" he asked quietly. Valen made a small grunting noise and pressed his face to Harry's chest again.

Harry groaned a little bit. "Still sore," he said. "But that's not very surprising, is it?"

There was a noise and they heard the bolt being thrown on the door. Draco got quickly to his feet, putting himself between the door and his family.

Harry gasped and held Valen to him securely, attempting to sit up a bit.

"Stay down," Draco whispered.

Macnair pushed the door open, wand raised. His eyes widened at the sight of Draco standing with blood on himself and on Harry behind him. "What has happened?" the man asked.

Harry didn't say anything, just stared at the blurry figure of Macnair, holding his baby and trying to keep him out of sight.

"We need water, food, towels, blankets, and clothes," Draco said sharply.

"Answer my question first," Macnair said. "Stand aside, Draco."

"No," Draco said. "Let me speak to my mother."

Harry's heart was pounding and he started concentrating on his magic again. If Macnair came anywhere near Valen, he was going to blast him clear across the room.

Macnair stared past Draco and back to him again, considering. "Okay," he said, stepping back, "but he stays here."

Harry gasped and made a jerky movement, not wanting to let Draco out of his sight, but he didn't protest, remembering his promise.

"You'll provide for him?" Draco asked.

Macnair rolled his eyes and reached beside the door. He set a bucket of water inside and then a loaf of bread. "Now move, Draco," the man said.

"Th ... he needs a blanket," Draco insisted.

"When I return," Macnair said.

"Then your robe," Draco bargained.

Macnair scowled and it didn't look like he would give in. But then he reached up and undid the fastener, throwing that into the small room. "Now move or I will change my mind," he said.

Draco walked forward and the door slammed behind him, leaving Harry and Valen in the room.

Hissing through his teeth again, Harry pushed himself up with as much strength as he possessed. He moved slowly over to the robe, still holding Valen to his chest and then wrapped the material around him, making sure to cover his tiny little body up completely. He was shivering himself and Valen was so little, the entire robe wasn't needed to cover him up and Harry used it to cover himself, using a corner of it to wipe some of the blood that hadn't dried yet from Valen's face.

– CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE –

A Parent's Love

Macnair gestured for Draco to walk ahead of him, his wand trained on the blond. They walked down a short concrete hallway to the base of a set of stairs and then up to the top. They were apparently being held in the basement of a Muggle house.

"Try anything and I won't hesitate to kill you," Macnair reminded him, shoving him a couple times on the way.

Upstairs at the end of another short hallway was a bedroom door, which Macnair unlocked and shoved Draco through.

Narcissa's arms were bound together and to one of the bedposts, and her wrists were red and possibly even bleeding from pulling on the ropes. She was on her knees beside the bed, her long blonde hair obscuring her face, her head bowed. When the door was opened and Draco was pushed in, she slowly looked up, as if it were an effort, and immediately began sobbing, the skin around her blue eyes already swollen and red with previous tears.

Draco dropped to the floor beside her. "La mère, ce qui s'est produite?" he asked, pushing her hair off her face.

"English only," Macnair snapped at him.

Narcissa's chin shook as she squeezed her eyes shut, more tears flowing down her cheeks. She opened them again after a moment. "What has happened to you?" she asked, ignoring Draco's question. Her wide eyes fearfully took in the blood covering Draco's body and hands.

"I am uninjured," he said, glancing angrily at Macnair. "Vous êtes une grand-mère," he added.

Macnair cast the Cruciatus Curse then and Draco fell to the floor, writhing.

Narcissa's eyes had widened further at Draco's news, but then she screamed with her son, sounding as if she were in nearly as much pain as he was. "Stop!" she screamed. "Don't hurt him! Please stop!"

"Bitch," Macnair snapped at her, and then ended the curse.

Draco lay curled on the floor, gasping. He had forgotten how good at that curse Macnair was.

"So, Draco," Macnair said, leaning against the door. "Why are you covered in blood?"

Narcissa was pulling on the ropes binding her, trying to get to Draco. "Tell him nothing, Draco," she said, voice shaking with what seemed like effort. "Tell him *nothing*."

Macnair flicked his wand, casting, and it was Narcissa's turn to writhe under the curse.

If it weren't for Harry and Valen downstairs, Draco would have launched himself at the man then. He seethed with rage. "I swear I will kill you," he hissed. Macnair laughed, ending the curse after a few more seconds of watching Narcissa.

"Now, I asked a question," Macnair sneered. "Where did the blood come from?"

"I am not yours to command," Draco sneered.

Macnair's smile was frightening. "But you can be," he said and cast the Imperius Curse on Draco.

Draco could feel magic and he expected something powerful when the curse hit him. He was shocked to feel it slide off him like water on an oily surface. It simply didn't penetrate his own magical field. His eyes widened in surprise.

Macnair stared at him suspiciously. "Now tell me why there is blood on you and what is going on with Potter," he ordered.

Narcissa watched in fear, shaking with it. "Please, Draco, fight it," she whispered.

Draco smiled. It was a wicked smile most of his fellow Slytherins would have recognised from his days at school. "I don't have to," he purred. "I am immune."

Macnair turned purple with rage, casting Cruciatus on Draco and letting him lie there screaming.

Narcissa began screaming again too, and it was as if she would rip her hands off to get to Draco, distraught as the curse was continued.

"Convince him, Narcissa," Macnair snapped at her. "He cooperates or you all die."

Tears ran down Narcissa's face as she watched Draco scream and

writhe. She trembled and continued to struggle. "They have a child!" she sobbed over the screams. "Please stop! They have a child!"

"Now?" Macnair asked, confused, and then he understood, the recognition showing in his face.

"Yes!" Narcissa yelled. "Stop!"

Macnair smiled and flicked his wand, ending the curse.

Draco was curled into a ball on the floor, panting. There was a bit of blood trickling out of his mouth where he had bitten himself while in pain.

Narcissa wept, dropping her head in both failure and relief.

Draco was breathing deep, trying to pull his wits together. He hadn't heard anything except his own screaming during the curse. He managed to sit up, albeit after a couple attempts. "Mother?" he asked, wondering why Macnair looked smug now.

Narcissa shook her head, looking more pitiful than Draco had ever seen her. "I'm sorry, Draco," she said. "I'm sorry." Blood was definitely seeping from the ropes now as Narcissa lifted her head again, breathing very heavily. Her expression was one of such fury it was a wonder she didn't catch Macnair on fire with her gaze. "I'm under Imperius," she said. "Even now, and so you are right if you do not trust me. I don't even know if I can trust myself. Take everything I tell you to be what I believe is truth."

Draco turned cold eyes onto Macnair. "Release her," he said.

"Why would I do that?" Macnair answered. "She and I are going to be married."

Narcissa clenched her teeth tightly, ignoring what Macnair said. "He knows, Draco," she said, her voice shaking. "Do not let him play these games with you. He knows about the child."

"Shut up, bitch," Macnair snapped.

Draco hissed, rage at Macnair and fear for his family making him tremble with it. His hands clenched and he desperately wished he had the ability to do wandless magic.

"You bastard," Narcissa spat angrily at Macnair. "You know you can still get nothing without one of us. If you kill me, you kill me, but then you will need Draco. You need a Malfoy to have control of the child. And if you kill my son I will refuse to do anything for you."

Macnair looked about to cast Cruciatius again, when Draco

interrupted him. "If you let Harry go, I will cooperate," he said. "And if you leave me alive, my mother will cooperate. In the meantime, I want my husband out of that cold basement."

Narcissa took a deep shaky breath, staring up at Macnair with hard eyes.

"I will let you live if you transfer ownership of your properties to me," Macnair told Draco.

Draco thought about that. He could transfer some of the accounts, but Malfoy Manor would never accept anyone not of the Malfoy bloodline. "We would need to go to Gringotts," he lied. "So, I will need clean clothes."

Macnair seemed to consider and then nodded. "I will be right back," he said. "Remember, do anything and Potter goes right to the Dark Lord."

The man left then. Draco could hear him lock the door behind him. The minute the door closed, he turned to his mother. The bindings were magical, so he couldn't untie them without a wand.

"Draco, you must get out of here," she said, her voice shaking again. "I don't care what you do, but you must get out. You know how he can be if something goes wrong."

"I know," he said. "He was with Father when they came after us. But I can't leave here without Harry and our child. They are the most important things to me now." He loved his mother, but he hoped she understood that.

"Don't you dare come back for me if you get out," she demanded with tears in her eyes. "Don't you ever look for me again. For all I know this is a trap. He took me from where I was in hiding as I slept and then forced me to do the same to you. Give me your word that you won't try to find me."

"If you give me your word that you will put your grandson's needs ahead of both of ours," Draco replied.

She closed her eyes tightly and was silent for a short time. "I will," she said.

"Then I swear it," he agreed.

There was silence for several seconds before Narcissa opened her mouth to speak. "I'm not asking for forgiveness for the things I've" She let out another sob. "I do love you. I always have and I

always will. I want you to know that. Whatever may happen, just know that."

Draco cupped his mother's cheek with one hand. "No need for apologies, Mother. And I love you, too."

She began crying again and pressed her face into his hand, laying a kiss on the palm.

Draco smiled softly. "I am in love, Mother, and now I am a father," he told her. "I think I am more like you than Father, though."

Narcissa smiled too. "I never thought you would be like your father," she whispered. "You are far more a man than he could have ever hoped to be. It is something I should have told you long ago."

Draco's breath caught at that and he wanted to cry. But he didn't dare let his guard down now. "Thank you," he said quietly.

She closed her eyes again. "Do not thank me, Draco. Live it, like I know you will, my selfish little dragon." She smiled again, though it contained great sadness.

The door opened again and Macnair stood scowling at them. "Sweet," he sneered. "No time for this." He threw clothes onto the bed. "Put these on."

Narcissa laid one last kiss to Draco's hand before she righted herself and wiped her face blank.

Valen made a little noise and Harry smiled down at him, but he was scared, terrified. There was absolutely nothing he could do and he hated it. How were they supposed to get out of here? What on earth could Draco say to make Macnair let them go? And even if he did somehow strike up a deal, could Harry leave without him? He didn't feel like he could, despite the promise he had made.

A small droplet fell down onto Valen's face and Harry realised he was crying. He tried to stop it, knowing that he had to remain calm and in his right mind to protect his baby. He looked over at the water and bread, but he didn't think Valen could eat that. The water maybe ... but that wasn't anything that Harry could feed him and it was probably cold. Harry closed his eyes for a moment and let his head fall forward as he tried to think of something to do. He knew Valen was hungry but he didn't have anything for him.

He gritted his teeth, moved over and grabbed the bread, wondering if he could possibly chew it up thoroughly and then feed it to Valen. He bit a small piece off the loaf and tried to do just that but Valen spit it out. Harry groaned and tried again, but Valen wouldn't eat it and he started crying. Harry gasped and stared around the room like he was afraid someone would hear. "Shhh, Valen, shhh. It's okay. It's okay, shhh," he tried to hush him, rocking him slightly. It didn't help. He cried louder and Harry started to panic, the cries echoing in the room. Finally, hoping it would work, he positioned Valen at one of his nipples again and sighed in relief when the crying stopped and the baby started sucking.

Harry sat there, feeling tears coming again because the only thing he could give his son was his dry nipple to keep him from crying, and he knew that it wouldn't last long as there was only so long a baby could go without being fed. Harry let out a quiet sob and stared down at Valen's face, stroking it with his hand again. He looked down and Valen looked up at him, almost as if he were regarding him coolly. Such a Draco face. Harry let out a small, almost despairing laugh, petting the little bit of blond hair the baby had. He stared at him for several moments, petting his hair and skin as Valen sucked and Harry's eyes widened when he saw what looked like a little white bubble at the corner of Valen's mouth. He gasped quietly and pulled Valen away from his chest, amazed and very, very confused because there seemed to be - milk coming out of him. Valen made a few irritated little cries and Harry placed him back at the nipple quickly, his mouth hanging open. As he watched his baby miraculously drink from him - a man, a new small hope sprung up inside him. *We'll be okay*, he thought. *I don't know how, but we'll be okay.*

Harry heard a noise and the bolt was drawn back again. He went very still, covering Valen's head with the robe, staring at the door.

Draco came through the door - dressed and looking cleaner than he had before. He took notice that his husband had eaten the bread. "We are leaving this room," he said calmly, setting a towel and some clothes down beside Harry and glancing back at Macnair in the doorway.

Harry let out a small sigh of relief when he saw Draco. "We are?" he asked, frowning.

Draco looked tense but he nodded. "You need to put these clothes on," he said. "I'll help you." He glanced down at the place where Valen was. "I can hold the cloak for you."

Harry nodded, looking intently into Draco's eyes as he moved Valen away from his nipple and wrapped the rest of the robe around him, praying that he wouldn't start crying.

Valen opened his mouth to cry but seemed too startled when Draco touched him, his mouth closing suddenly.

Harry tried to push himself up, closing his eyes and gritting his teeth as he did. He grabbed the wall behind him for support, leaning on it heavily when he was finally to his feet.

Draco clutched Valen in the robe to his chest and dipped the towel in the water with his other hand, handing it to Harry. "There's blood on you, even your face," he said in a quiet voice.

Harry nodded and took the towel, wiping his face and hands before moving it to wipe gently at the still-sore closed wound on his belly. He wiped everywhere he saw blood, feeling cleaner at least, but still scared.

"Do you need help to dress?" Draco said, holding his hand out for support.

Harry glanced at the bundle in Draco's arms quickly. "I think I can manage," he said, and he tried to bend down and reach for the clothing but almost fell and had to grab Draco's arm. Scowling and grimacing from the pain, he picked the clothes up and straightened himself again, gritting his teeth.

"Don't be stubborn," Draco sighed. "Use my hand to steady yourself."

Harry let out a heavy sigh and after a few moments of trying to dress on his own, he grabbed Draco's arm, more scared of the fact that he couldn't even do this than aggravated by it. It took a few minutes and much stumbling, but Harry finally had the clothes on, panting a little after his efforts.

Draco gritted his teeth, watching Harry struggle to dress and wishing he could do more. Harry should have been at home, safe in his bed, complaining about the obnoxious Healing Potions Draco was making him drink. Once he was dressed, Draco held Valen to his chest and put his arm around Harry's waist, helping him walk.

Harry gripped Draco's shirt tightly, wondering where they were going and nervous about passing Macnair or being anywhere near him.

Draco walked his partner through the door, down the basement hall and to the stairs. "He can't make it up the steps," Draco said. "The wards keep me from Apparating."

"So carry him," Macnair sneered.

Harry's hand tightened on Draco's shirt and he pressed close to him, thinking that he would try with all his might to get up the stairs, but when he did press closer to Draco, his eyes widened and he frowned. Draco's body felt cold. With his heart beating quicker now, he found himself wondering, with dread, what time it was.

Valen was asleep; Draco could feel that. He pressed the bundle into his husband's arms. Macnair already knew about the baby, but Draco didn't want Harry even more frightened by that fact than he already was. The sneer on the older man's face sent an additional shiver down his spine. His time was running out. Draco could feel his limbs like ice now.

Harry knew the fear was showing on his face, he couldn't hide it like Draco could, but he tried to as he took Valen from Draco. He held him to his chest again.

Draco looked at Macnair. "I am not sure I can carry him without a Lightning Charm," he said.

Macnair huffed at him. "Fuck, I'll take him then," he snapped.

Draco leant into Harry. "He will drop the field to Apparate," he whispered.

Harry's eyes widened hugely and his breathing sped up. He shook his head no in tiny movements, holding on to Draco's shirt even tighter.

Draco frowned. "You can't walk, Harry," he said, emphasising. "You need to Apparate."

Harry closed his eyes, trying to keep from crying. He didn't know if he could do it. He *couldn't* do it. He couldn't leave Draco, not when he didn't know where they were, not when he was going cold.

Draco squeezed Harry's arm and pushed him toward Macnair. "This is important, Harry," he said in a stern voice.

"Now, or go up the stairs," Macnair snapped.

Harry stared at Draco, nearly hyperventilating. He knew this would probably be their only chance, his only chance to save Valen. *Valen*. This didn't have anything to do with him and Draco. This was about getting their baby out. Looking into Draco's eyes, Harry could see that. He couldn't be selfish and jeopardise his baby's life because he didn't want to give up his husband. He nearly sobbed at that thought. Staring at Draco with tear-filled eyes, he took a step back from him, towards Macnair.

Draco nodded, smiling when he saw Harry understood.

"I love you," Harry mouthed, clutching Valen firmly to him and concentrating on his magic strongly for the third time.

"I love you," Draco responded, eyes soft and sad.

Harry forced himself to take that final step back from Draco, tears running down his cheeks. *I'll find you, I promise*, Harry thought inside his head, afraid to say it or even mouth it with Macnair standing there.

Draco took a deep breath and watched as Macnair stepped up to Harry.

Knowing that Draco would be able to tell when the wards were down, Harry's eyes never left his face. He stood, tense and ready with his magic crackling around him.

Draco felt the wards shift and nodded quickly when they did. "Go," he said.

Harry took a quick, deep breath and concentrated on the entrance hall of Malfoy Manor as hard as he could. With a crack that sounded far louder than it seemed like it should have, he was gone. He actually felt his legs try to stay put, but he managed not to splinch himself. He collapsed onto his back, eyes closed. He could hear Valen crying and he breathed a sigh of relief. He was passing out and it was strange because he *knew* that that was exactly what he was doing. He heard another crack and a squeaky gasp.

"Master Harry! Master Harry!"

Harry knew it was a house-elf. "Get help," he rasped, and then the world went black.

– CHAPTER THIRTY –

Cold, Dead Flesh

Someone was slapping Harry's face gently.

"Harry!"

Harry was confused and he couldn't move or open his eyes.

"Look, I think he's waking up!" said someone else.

"Oh, watch out! *Ennervate!*"

Harry suddenly found himself very much awake and he opened his eyes, sitting up halfway and groaning as he did.

Several people gasped, and as he focused on the blurry faces surrounding him, he saw several Weasleys, Ron being the nearest one to him, Hermione, Remus and Tonks. They were all standing around his bed, staring at him with wide eyes.

"Where's Valen?" Harry asked immediately, realising that he was not holding him.

They looked confused, but then Hermione seemed to understand. "Mrs Weasley has him," she said, looking over her shoulder to a spot in the room Harry couldn't see.

"Where?" Harry asked, needing to see him.

"Here, Harry," Mrs Weasley said and Harry tried to push himself up. Ron helped him. Fred and George moved aside a bit so that Harry could see past them. He could just make out Mrs Weasley's form holding his baby. He heaved a relieved sigh and fell back, closing his eyes, only for them to spring open a second later. "Draco!" he said.

"We have been looking for the two of you since this morning," Tonks said. "But then you came back and Draco didn't. What happened?"

"I don't know!" Harry said, pushing himself up again. "We woke up and we were in some strange room without our clothes or wands or anything and Draco's still there! He needs me!"

"Harry, calm down," said Mr Weasley, frowning worriedly. "We

need to know what happened so that we can get to where Draco is."

Harry tried to take several deep breaths. "We woke up in that strange room and Macnair came," Harry said, trying not to lose his head and go into hysterics.

"The Death Eater?" Bill asked quickly.

Harry nodded.

"How could he get in here ...?" asked Mr Weasley.

"I don't know! Draco's mum had something to do with it, I think - or I think something like that was said - I - I don't know! He wouldn't let us out of the room and there were wards up and then - I had the baby and - sod all this! Draco needs me!"

Valen began wailing.

Harry's head snapped in that direction.

"Oh, shhh," said Mrs Weasley gently, trying to rock him.

"Give him to me," Harry said, probably sounding a little demanding, but not really caring at the moment.

Mrs Weasley walked over with Valen, who was wrapped in a baby blanket now, and handed him to Harry very carefully.

Valen was less loud but still crying, thrashing about and making little sucking noises.

Harry laid Valen on his lap very gently and reached to take his shirt off, not caring a single bit that the room was full of people. Ron helped him as he struggled, looking confused.

As soon as the shirt was off, Harry picked Valen back up and placed him at a nipple, pleased when Valen stopped crying.

Everyone was staring at him with wide eyes and mouths hanging open.

"Merlin," said Fred quietly.

"Now, I need to get to Draco!" Harry insisted in a hiss, ignoring everyone's looks.

Tonks was the first one to recover. "So Narcissa was able to come into the house and somehow kidnap you both. Do you know where they took you? What kind of place?"

"I was never brought out of the basement, so I don't know where we were," Harry said, feeling panic on the edge of his emotions, "but it was Muggle. There was Muggle light."

"Muggle," muttered Mr Weasley. "But that could be anywhere."

"Muggle lights and in a basement," Tonks said. "How did you get away?"

"Macnair came and was going to take me upstairs, but I couldn't go up them myself," Harry answered quickly. "He took the wards down to Apparate me up them, but I Apparated here instead."

Charlie frowned. "I thought you said you didn't have a wand," he said.

"I didn't," Harry said. "I've been learning wandless magic. I can do it when I really want to, and I've mastered a few spells."

There was stunned silence and impressed looks and that made Harry angry.

"But we're not here to discuss my skill level!" he snapped. "Draco needs me! It was nearly time for me to enter him when I left! I don't have time to sit here and go into every little detail!"

"Was it a long jump or a short one?" Remus asked, frowning.

Harry bit his lip. "I - I don't know. Probably not that far. I would've splinched myself I think if it had been far."

"Are there any areas around here that are Death Eater spots?" Mr Weasley asked Tonks, seeming to be trying to remember himself.

Tonks and Remus exchanged a glance and she Apparated out of the room. Remus looked at Harry. "Draco had given us financial records of the Malfoy estate purchases over the last several years. He thought that some of them might be used as Death Eater hideouts."

Harry nodded, swallowing. "I have to go with you or whoever's going to go," he said. "Draco's going to need me."

"Harry," said Mrs Weasley. "Do you really think you're in any state to be going anywhere?" She frowned worriedly at him.

"I have to!"

"You can barely sit up, let alone dodge spells or run!" Mrs Weasley insisted.

Hermione cleared her throat. "There are those potions Draco made," she said to Mrs Weasley.

Harry gasped quietly and nodded. "Yes, yes the potions!" he said. "Give me them!"

Mrs Weasley frowned at Hermione, seeming a bit upset that those had been mentioned.

Hermione bit her lip, looking at Harry like she was hoping what

she had just done was for the best.

"Go! Get them!" Harry said, very displeased about how slow everyone seemed to be moving.

Hermione sighed very quietly and nodded before Disapparating. She appeared a few moments later, hands full of potion vials. "Ron, go get the last of them," she said. "They're sitting out on the table."

Ron nodded and was gone with a crack.

Hermione examined the first vial and then pulled the stopper off, handing it to Harry.

Holding Valen to his nipple still with one arm, Harry took the potion from Hermione and tipped it back quickly, only grimacing slightly at the taste. "Another," he said once that potion was finished.

Hermione handed him the next and he took that one too, the taste and smell even stronger, but as he took the potions one by one, he did start to slowly feel a bit better, more awake, his middle not hurting as much. He was still sore, of course he was, but not *as* sore.

Remus watched and frowned. "How many potions did he make and are you supposed to take them all at once?" he asked.

Hermione looked at the labels again of the ones Harry had already taken. "He's already taken what Draco said were the most important," she said, looking at Harry worriedly. "The others I think are just simple ones for precaution. He shouldn't take any more probably."

Harry swallowed the last mouthful of the fourth potion. "Fine, let's go then," he said.

Mrs Weasley frowned at him. "You should wait a few minutes, I think," she said.

Tonks popped back into the room with an armload of papers and spread them out on one side of the bed. Remus was looking over them with her. "If we only check the Muggle buildings starting with those closest to the Manor," she said, "we can look for wards. That should tell us when we find it."

"This will go faster if we send people in different directions by broom," Remus said. "Fly there and then Apparate back to report what you find. Bill, George, Fred, Ron, Tonks - get your brooms. I will copy out the addresses and draw up maps for checking."

"I'll go too," Harry said at once, but Mrs Weasley and even

Hermione and Ron frowned at him.

"I think you should stay here at least until they find the place, Harry," Hermione said, placing a firm hand on his shoulder.

Harry scowled and then Valen picked that moment to suck harder and Harry looked down at him and sighed. "All right," he said, "but someone take my broom. It's the fastest."

Ron nodded and then most of the Weasley males in the room began filing out.

Remus coordinated their plan and within the hour, they were all back with their reports. They found a small isolated house that was supposed to be unoccupied but which had strong wards placed around it.

"Did you see anyone besides Macnair?" Tonks asked.

Harry shook his head no. "I only saw Macnair, but I think Draco's mum was there as well. I don't know what exactly she had to do with all of this."

Valen had finished feeding and Mrs Weasley had burped him while Harry changed into some of his own clothes. He had his glasses now, and his wand and Draco's wand as well in his pocket. Valen was now asleep on Harry's chest again, but Harry was ready to go as soon as the go ahead was given.

Tonks came back into the room. "I have Floo-called Shackbolt and he will be sending Aurors to back us up," she said. "Since it was Bill who scouted the place, he can Apparate there. But the rest of us will have to fly since we haven't been there before."

"Should I wait for everyone then?" Bill asked.

"It would be stupid for you to go in alone," said Charlie.

Harry sat watching all of them, a bit angry, because even though he had been there, it had only been in the warded basement that he couldn't get into now.

Tonks nodded. "Yes, we wait for back-up," she said. She turned to Harry, crossing her arms across her chest. "I suppose you still feel you have to come?" she asked.

Harry raised eyebrows at her for an answer. "Can we go now?" he said.

"We should leave," said Ron seriously. "Harry said Draco needs him" His ears didn't even turn red.

"You shouldn't ride a broom yet," Remus said, "so have Bill take you on Side-Along. But, Harry, wait for the rest of us to get there."

Harry gritted his teeth and huffed through his nose before giving a short nod. He got to his feet, hiding the discomfort. Valen squirmed a little in his arms and he smiled softly down at him. "I'm going to get Daddy, okay?" he whispered, kissing his little forehead. His heart hurt as he turned to Mrs Weasley to hand him over.

Her eyes were filled with tears as she took him.

Harry stared at Valen for a moment before taking a deep breath and turning to the group of people going with him. "All right, let's go," he said, and Bill stepped up beside him.

The others trooped out again and were on their way.

"You aren't going to make me restrain you, right?" Bill asked seriously, raising his eyebrows.

Harry simply frowned and took his arm.

Bill sighed and with a crack, they were gone.

They appeared again outside an inconspicuous looking Muggle house with trees all around. Some lights were on and Harry itched to run up and burst through the door, but Bill's firm hand on his arm told him that wouldn't be an easy thing to do. He gave Harry a stern, hard look and Harry glared but didn't attempt anything.

They moved close to the outside wall of the house and waited, listening for any noises, wands drawn. Harry grew more and more anxious and frightened as time passed.

Tonks landed behind the tree line and crept toward the house, signalling the others to do the same.

"There they are," Bill whispered, spotting the others when they came into view.

Harry turned his head quickly.

They all gathered together where Harry and Bill were standing.

"What's the plan?" Ron whispered, holding his broom and his wand.

"The house is warded," Tonks said, "so we need to wait for an Auror with the training to break through them."

"I don't have time for that," Harry growled. "Draco could - Draco could die."

"Harry, we can't do anything if we can't get in the bloody house," said George.

Tonks frowned, looking at Harry. "Harry, they have to fly here from London," she said.

"London?!" Harry hissed. "Draco will be dead by then!"

"Calm down, mate," said Ron, looking nervous.

"Calm down?" Harry hissed at him. "I'll bloody do it myself." And he turned towards the house, closing his eyes.

Everyone looked at him like he was mad.

I need Draco. I need these wards to come down so that I can get to him. Valen can't lose his father. I can't lose my husband. I won't let that happen, I promised him. I need the wards to come down. I need them to come down. Please, I need them to come down. Please let them come down. And as Harry chanted these things in his head, he could feel the magic working to comply. Please come down. Come down. He opened his eyes, knowing, without really knowing, that it had worked.

Tonks was watching him. "Did you do something, Harry?" she asked.

"I think so," Harry said, eyes wide. He was amazed with himself even.

"Can we go in now?" Ron asked, seeming awed.

"I think so" Harry said again, turning his head to look over his shoulder at everyone. "We shouldn't just go through the front door though, should we?"

Tonks did a spell that shimmered in the air for a moment. "They're down all right," she laughed. "'Kay. Bill, George, and Fred, you take the front. Ron, Remus, Harry and I will go in through the back."

Bill and the twins nodded, heading off cautiously.

Ron moved in very close to Harry, wand at the ready. He tossed his broom off to the side and nodded firmly.

Harry gave him a single proud nod and held his wand in front of him as well.

"Let's go," he said, heading slowly for the back of the house. He still felt as though he couldn't run or move very fast at all, and that scared him, but he was determined.

He led the small group with him to the back door, not knowing

what to expect. The door was unguarded enough to be opened with a simple *Alohomora* and he pushed it open, stepping in quickly to what looked like the kitchen of the place. It was empty of any furniture or appliances and also empty of anyone.

Tonks made her way to the doorway of the hall and looked around. She saw the others coming through the living room. She nodded to them. No one was visible in the hall either.

Fred and George moved silently through the house and pressed their backs to the wall. They made their way to the first door in the hall, which was an empty bedroom.

Harry held his breath, watching them.

Ron stood slightly in front of him, as if trying to block him from view without Harry noticing.

Tonks looked into another door, seeing an empty bathroom.

Remus followed Tonks and had made it to the first door on the other side of the hall. It was closed. He turned the knob and pushed it open, stepping back. When nothing happened, he quickly glanced into the room. It was empty except for a bed and a night stand. He slid into the room, also checking the closets.

"What's there?" Fred asked in a very quiet whisper, looking into the kitchen at a door they hadn't opened.

He and George inched over to it, pressed to the wall on either side of it. George reached and tried to twist the doorknob, but it was locked.

"It's probably the basement," Harry whispered back.

Tonks looked over and cautiously made her way to the basement door as well, and Remus followed after her. The twins slowly backed away at looks that Tonks and Remus gave them, and the two stood on either side of the door. Remus checked the door himself and then nodded to Tonks. He cast *Alohomora* and flung the door open. They looked down the stairs into the darkness. Tonks reached over and turned the light on before making her way cautiously down, Remus following her again.

Harry was holding his breath again as he walked over to the doorway in the kitchen, looking down the steps. If Draco were down there It was bad enough that they had been trapped down there together. Draco trapped in a basement all alone was a nearly

unbearable thought.

Down the hall Tonks and Remus found the metal door hanging open. Tonks ducked through the doorway, wand first, and then stopped. Remus looked in, and holding his wand up, stood looking as well. "Harry," he called out, "I think you should come here."

Harry's heart began pounding very hard. He moved as quickly as he could down the staircase, discreetly pressing a hand to his stomach as he went, gritting his teeth.

Tonks had gone on ahead. Remus was blocking the doorway, facing Harry when he got to it. "Harry," he said, "I'm sorry."

Harry's entire body went completely cold and numb at that. "What?" he asked in a raspy whisper, trying to see around Lupin.

"He's ... well, he's here." Remus stumbled through the words. "But we are too late." He stepped back. Tonks was kneeling on the floor of the room. There, on the bloody mattress, was Draco.

"No," Harry said, heart pounding. "No, I'm not too late." He moved into the room and over beside Draco, breathing very quickly. He bent over, reaching out a hand to touch his husband's face.

Draco had been beaten. His face was bruised and cut. His shirt had been ripped and there were more bruises. His eyes were closed. He was cold and not breathing.

Tonks was crying. "I checked, Harry," she said. "He's dead."

Harry dropped to his knees, his eyes wide and unblinking as tears formed and fell from them. "No," he said, his own heartbeat seeming too loud to his ears.

Tonks laid a hand on Harry's shoulder. "I'm sorry," she said.

Harry was staring at Draco's face, still wide-eyed. "No," he said again, louder this time.

"Someone get him out of there," Harry heard Ron say from the door. His voice sounded oddly thick and worried, but Harry didn't turn to look.

"Come're Harry," Tonks said, sniffing. "We should get you home."

"No," Harry said again, breathing getting heavy. "Get out," he said, not really caring if there was anyone there or not. He crawled forward onto the mattress, reaching to work on Draco's trousers quickly. He didn't care if everyone thought he was mad. Draco wasn't

gone and Harry would *not* believe he was. There was no way.

"Harry," Ron said, voice pained. "Harry, don't do this."

Harry ignored him.

"Harry, what are you doing?" Remus asked, coming into the room.

Harry didn't answer, pulling on Draco's trousers now, sliding them down his legs and off of him. He then reached for his own, still breathing heavily.

Remus stepped over and grabbed Harry's hand stopping him. "Harry, talk to me," he said harshly. "What are you doing?"

Harry glared at him hatefully. "I suggest you let go of me," he growled dangerously.

"He's going to try and have sex with him," Ron exclaimed. "Harry, don't! It'll only make it worse!"

"Just tell me why," Remus said, letting go.

"I'm going to save him," Harry answered in a hard voice, unzipping his fly.

Remus shook his head sadly. He walked to the door, pushing Tonks and Ron ahead of him. "It's his husband," he said to them. "If this is what he feels he has to do, then we aren't going to stop him." He closed the door behind him as he left.

Harry's hands shook as he pulled his trousers off, gritting his teeth at the pain of trying to move quickly. *This is okay*, Harry told himself. *This is only like when we forget. That's all this is. It's only like when we forget.*

Harry reached forward and flipped Draco's limp body over with both hands, telling himself that this is what he did every time, but Draco was freezing cold, so cold he made Harry cold, but Harry tried to keep that from his mind. Taking deep, calming breaths, Harry closed his eyes and lubed his fingers before pressing them to Draco's entrance to prepare him quickly. Just like always. But there was another voice, a malicious one: *But this isn't like always*, it said. *He's too cold.*

Harry gritted his teeth again, lubing his erection that he hadn't even been aware he'd made. *He's making you cold and you're not even in him yet.* Harry took another deep breath and was very thankful that he wasn't pregnant anymore. They were very careful not to forget when

he'd had Valen still inside him. *Valen only has one daddy now.*

"No," Harry said aloud to the voice, lifting Draco's hips for entry. Yes. "No," Harry said again, pushing forward into his husband.

Harry shook with both cold and creeping fear. Draco didn't respond to his entry, but this had happened before. They'd done this before. *No you haven't*, said the voice. *You've never felt him so cold.* Harry closed his eyes, shivering. He'll be okay. He thrust. He'll be okay. He thrust again. *You know this is pointless. You know he's not going to wake up. You never know when to quit. He's said it before himself.* Harry let out a dry sob as he thrust yet again. "No," he said, teeth chattering.

Draco still didn't respond and Harry clutched his hips tightly. "Draco, wake up," he demanded. Nothing happened. *You knew that wouldn't work. You can't bring him back this time.* Harry was actually sobbing now. "Draco, please wake up," he said. *Please isn't the magic word,* the voice laughed at him. *That's a Muggle saying.* Harry thrust into Draco again, still hanging on to whatever hope allowed him to do this. He thrust and thrust, each one bringing with it a pang of fear and dread as Draco did nothing. The voice was laughing, high and cold. "Draco, please!" Harry screamed. "Draco, please don't leave me!" He thrust harder into him, ignoring his own pain. "Please!" The voice was so loud, too loud. Harry couldn't bear it. He felt like he couldn't breathe. "Please, Draco!"

Draco's body twitched, a shiver rippling through the cold flesh.

Harry gasped, eyes going wide. He continued to thrust, hardly daring to hope that he hadn't imagined the shiver. The voice's laughing was a little quieter now.

Heat centred low in Draco's body, pouring into his cold, dead flesh. That's the first sensation he could remember afterwards. Heat and then pain. Pain as dead flesh warmed. Harry's magic pushed into him, shoving itself into his body and through him. He gasped as his lungs came to life.

Harry nearly screamed with relief, crying loudly as he thrust into Draco. "Yes, please," he sobbed, his heart beating quickly and an actual wild smile stretched across his lips, probably making him look mad.

Draco began to shiver next, teeth chattering as he sucked air into his lungs. He could feel Harry fucking him. The man's cock was hot

inside him and Draco trembled at each thrust.

Harry thrust and thrust, determined to come, still gripping Draco's hips very tightly. "Draco," he sobbed, opening his eyes to look at him. "I'm here."

"Yes," the blond managed, not much more than a hiss of breath as he spread his aching legs wider.

Harry let out a choked laugh, throwing his head back and feeling like he could probably float away with the feelings inside him. The taunting voice was nowhere to be found. "Oh, Merlin, thank you!" he shouted loudly, feeling his release coming now.

Draco moaned, magic flaring inside him, pulsing in his body with his husband's thrusts and his own body beginning to turn pain to pleasure.

Harry managed to thrust a few more times before he came, laughing as he did. He felt utterly insane with relief, more so than he ever had. He hardly noticed the pleasure of the orgasm, the relief stronger than that even.

"Harry!" Draco shouted as his husband's orgasm spread liquid fire through his body and brought his own orgasm as well. He felt feverishly hot now as he lay panting under Harry.

Harry was panting too and he pulled out of Draco gently, but quickly, falling to the mattress beside him and then wrapping arms around him, pulling him to his body tightly. "I thought you were dead," he whispered. "Merlin, I thought you were dead." He was sobbing again.

Draco was still trembling and hot as Harry took him into his arms. "I think I was," he whispered.

Harry sobbed a little harder at that. "Oh, God," he groaned, clutching Draco even tighter. "But you're okay," he said. "You're okay. You're okay."

"I am yours," Draco replied, turning his head to find his lover's lips and closing his mouth over his.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE –

Ten Fingers, Ten Toes

Harry took in a shaky breath as he kissed Draco back, clutching him like he would never let go. "Always," he whispered.

Draco still felt weak, but warm, and he lay panting in his husband's arms.

There was a knock at the door. "Harry?" Remus asked though the door. "Are you ... okay?"

Harry laughed. "I'm wonderful!" he called, kissing Draco again.

"I'm coming in," Remus said.

Harry was too busy kissing Draco to care what Lupin or anyone else was doing.

Draco opened his mouth to Harry, enjoying his enthusiastic kiss. His eyes fluttered closed and he relaxed in his arms.

Remus opened the door and stuck his head in. "Draco?" he asked.

"What's going on?" Harry heard Ron ask.

Remus pulled his head back and closed the door. "Apparently," he said to the others, who were anxiously looking at him, "Draco is alive."

Everyone's eyebrows shot up.

"But I thought ... I thought Tonks said he was" said Bill, frowning and looking sort of amazed at the same time.

Remus looked at his feet. "I am not sure exactly what happened." He hesitated. "But he seems very much alive at the moment."

"Merlin," said George, looking like Bill.

"That's" said Fred, but he seemed unable to say what exactly it was.

Draco's last memories came back slowly. "Harry?" he said, pulling back from the kiss to look into his eyes. "How's Valentine? What happened?"

"He's fine," Harry answered, smoothing Draco's hair back from

his cut and bruised face. "Mrs Weasley has him. He's completely fine."

Draco looked around the basement room. "My mother? Macnair?" he asked.

"I don't know," Harry answered. "You're the only one that was here. You don't know where they went?"

"The last thing I remember was you got away and Macnair was furious," Draco said.

"That was when it started?" Harry asked in a high voice. "Merlin." He hugged Draco again.

"I knew we were in trouble," Draco said. "I couldn't have carried you up the stairs. That part wasn't a lie. I was cold and weak. After you left he started beating me. That's when I passed out." Draco didn't add that Macnair had made Narcissa watch.

Harry winced. "What happened?" he asked. "What happened when you left that first time and came back dressed?"

"Harry?" Draco asked. "Can we go home and talk? I want to hold him."

"Yes," Harry breathed and it was almost a sigh. "Let's go home." He kissed Draco again before pushing himself up gently, once again, trying to hide his discomfort.

"You're in pain," Draco said, frowning. "I have some potions at home you need to take." He sat up and looked around for his trousers.

"I took four of them," Harry said, getting to his feet and putting his trousers on.

Draco shook his head. "I will make sure you get on the right schedule for taking them when we get home," he said. He winced as he moved, but at least he was moving. He really hadn't ever expected to wake up again. Dying in a cellar - his childhood fear come true.

"Are you okay?" Harry asked, after his trousers were finally on him. "Oh," he said, "here." He pulled Draco's wand out of his pocket and handed to him.

Draco smiled, taking his wand from his husband. "Nothing wrong that a good potion won't handle," he said, tucking in his shirt and fastening his trousers.

Harry nodded as Draco tucked his shirt in. He came up and

kissed his cheek gently, unable to get enough of him.

"So who is with you besides Lupin?" Draco asked.

"Fred, George, Ron, Tonks, and Bill," Harry answered.

"Merlin," Draco said. "And they are all out there waiting?"

Harry nodded. "They thought you were Tonks was the one who checked."

"I was dead, wasn't I?" Draco asked, looking at Harry.

"That's ... what she said," Harry said, taking a deep breath.

Draco frowned. "How long?" he asked.

"How long what?" Harry asked.

"Don't be evasive, Potter." Draco winced. "How long was I dead?"

"I - I don't know," Harry said. "I didn't get here until just about an hour had gone by."

Draco looked at Harry. He was pretty sure it was longer than that, but he didn't say anything. "Better open the door and get this over with," he said, bracing himself.

Harry nodded. He walked over to the door and opened it before stepping back, standing close to Draco.

Remus walked into the room, looking uncomfortable. "Draco," he said, "I'm glad you are ... well, I am glad we were able to get here."

Ron came in next, white. "Are you okay?" he asked, sounding disbelieving.

Draco nodded. "I believe I will mend." Then he looked up at the others peering in through the doorway. "Thank you," he said to them all, "for coming for me."

"No problem, mate," said Fred, frowning.

"Yeah - we're just - we're just glad you're ... okay," said George.

Bill nodded.

"Is the place secure? Is there anything here?" Draco asked, feeling very weary.

"We didn't find anything," said Bill, but he looked over his shoulder warily.

Tonks pushed past the wall of redheads. "I think it was just the two of them," she said. "At least from the things left behind."

"What was left?" Harry asked.

"Just some clothes and toiletries," she said, looking at Draco as

she answered. She walked to stand in front of him and smiled into his eyes. "I am not sure if I understand how," she said to him, as she reached a hand out to cup his cheek, "but I am glad you are alive, cousin."

Harry smiled softly at Tonks, holding Draco's hand.

"We should get going," said Bill. "It's not safe, even if there isn't anyone here. And besides, I think there's someone probably waiting eagerly for you both at home." He smiled.

"Thank you, cousin," Draco said, blushing slightly at her open display. "Yes, I want to go home," he answered Bill. "Someone should Apparate each of us as I don't think I can yet and Harry shouldn't be using so much of himself right now."

"Come on, Harry, I'll take you," said Ron, moving to help him.

"We'll get the brooms," said Fred, and he and George left the room.

"I'll take Draco," Tonks said, helping him as well.

"Well, if everyone's ready" said Bill looking around the room. "Let's go."

Ron gripped Harry's arm very tightly before he Disapparated with a crack, appearing a moment later in the entrance hall of Malfoy Manor. There were more cracks as everyone arrived around them.

Draco was dizzy and nearly lost his balance when they arrived in the hall. Tonks held on to him until he caught himself.

Harry breathed a little sigh and moved over to Draco slowly, hand pressing into his stomach.

"We need to sit down," Draco said. "And where is Valen?"

"Mum's got him in your room," said Ron, moving after Harry, seemingly prepared to catch him if he stumbled. "Do you want us to Apparate you up there or do you want her to bring him down here?"

"My potions are up there," Draco said, swaying again. "Let's go to our sitting room."

Harry reached a hand out and gripped Draco's shoulder.

Ron sighed and nodded. "All right," he said. "Brace yourself," he told Harry, gripping his arm again.

Harry released Draco's shoulder and nodded to Ron, who Apparated them to the sitting room.

Harry groaned a little and moved to sit down on the couch. "Get

your mum, yeah?" he said to Ron, who nodded and left to the bedroom.

Tonks helped Draco to sit beside his husband. He told her which potions to bring for the two of them and she headed off to find them.

Harry took Draco's hand and Mrs Weasley came in a moment later, eyes tearful as she walked over to them, holding Valen.

"Oh, Draco dear," she said, passing the baby gently.

Everyone in the room smiled softly at them.

Valentine was sleeping but woke the minute Draco touched him, his eyes opening suddenly as if surprised. Draco tried not to tremble as he took the small, warm body into his arms. He had only held his son briefly before and then he hadn't been able to feel him like he did now. He sucked in a breath at the feel of the small life in his hands and that familiar magic.

"Hello, my son," he said softly, his eyes intent on those green ones. Valen replied with a series of small cooing and burbling noises.

Harry smiled and felt tears in his eyes as he reached to touch Valen's face gently with one finger. "We can get through anything," he whispered, the rest of the world disappearing.

Valen reached a tiny hand up to touch Harry's finger, wrapping his one around it.

Draco's face was soft and full of wonder and pride. "He knows who we are," he said.

Harry let out a small laugh. "He does," he said, staring at that little face. "He's so tiny."

"His body is," Draco said, his voice nearly a whisper.

Harry smiled widely at Draco's words. He nodded gently in agreement, kissing Draco's cheek again as they touched and held their son.

Draco carefully unwrapped the bundle. Underneath, Valentine was wearing a nappy and a long gown. Laying him in his lap, Draco unbuttoned the gown too.

Harry watched, wondering what Draco was doing.

Draco undressed his son while the little boy cooed and moved. Each part he undressed, he looked at, slowly moving arms and legs and lifting the little body so he could see every inch of him.

Harry smiled and ran his hand over Valen's warm skin, letting him grasp his finger again. He wiggled the finger gently and then kissed that little grasping hand.

Draco didn't stop until he had stripped his son bare, and examined him. Running his fingers over that soft skin. He stopped to kiss fingers, toes and belly. Then he slowly began to redress the infant.

Harry couldn't stop smiling. "He's perfect," he said. "Ten little fingers and ten little toes."

"Perfect," Draco agreed, and little Valentine made a kind of snorting sound at that.

Harry laughed gently, smoothing Valen's white-blond hair.

Draco looked from one set of green eyes to the other and grinned.

"I suppose you got what you want," Harry told him with a small, quiet laugh. "He looks like you and has green eyes, although I think those are my lips."

"Indeed," Draco grinned, kissing Harry's lips.

Harry grinned as well and kissed Draco back.

There was a sniff and Harry looked around to see Mrs Weasley and Hermione, who had entered the room with her, crying.

Tonks was standing nearby holding the potions, watching with a happy smile on her face. Everyone else in the room was staring happily at them as well.

"Congratulations," said Mr Weasley, stepping forward and kneeling to get a good look at the baby. He smiled at him with crinkled up eyes.

"He's so small," said Fred, staring over his father's shoulder.

"He's gorgeous," said Mrs Weasley with another sniff before she laughed a little at herself and dabbed at her eyes with a handkerchief.

"He is all that and more," Draco said.

Valen looked up at the new faces and made more noises.

Everyone let out little chuckles.

"What's his name?" asked Charlie, looking down at Valen too.

"Valentine Leander Malfoy," Harry answered, still staring happily at his son.

Remus laughed and Tonks grinned, putting her arm around the

man's waist.

"Congratulations, Harry," Hermione said, happy tears still falling from her eyes. She bent to kiss him on the cheek.

"Yeah, mate," said Ron, sounding a little choked up himself.

"Both of you," said Hermione, staring at Draco. "He couldn't have better parents."

Harry grinned at his two best friends.

Draco felt wet warmth spreading in his lap from the baby. "Merde'," he cursed, laughing. "Is someone going to show us how to change a nappy?"

Harry laughed too. "Looks like he takes after someone," he whispered in Draco's ear.

Mrs Weasley was smiling and shaking her head. "I'll go and get one," she said, walking back to the bedroom.

Draco rolled his eyes and shook his head at his son. "You are going to be trouble, aren't you?" he asked him.

Valen seemed to look a little mischievous and Harry laughed again.

Mrs Weasley returned with another nappy and a new little gown similar to the one Valen was wearing already. "Now you need to put him down on the couch, dear," she said, bending to show them how it was done.

First, Draco did Cleaning and Drying Charms on himself. Then he watched as she showed them how to go through the process and secure things correctly. Valen squirmed and seemed determined to make it take as long as possible.

"And make sure his little pee-pee is pointed down or else he'll go right out of the top of it like he just did," Mrs Weasley said, making many of the people in the room chuckle. "If you put a Drying Charm on the cloth, it should prevent anything from leaking every time he goes. You'll just have to remember to do it."

Harry was grinning widely and nodding as he watched her dress Valen again.

Draco raised an amused eyebrow at her language but nodded at the instructions.

Mrs Weasley smiled at the baby before handing him back to Draco and getting to her feet again. "You'll do fine," she said to both

Harry and Draco.

"I have a feeling we will," Harry said, petting Valen's head again.

Valen was squirming and making faces. "He's hungry," Draco said. "What do we feed him?"

Everyone made strange faces and looked at Harry.

Harry flushed a bit now, no longer in a dire situation like he had been before. "Erm ... I feed him ... or at least it's worked twice now," he said quietly.

Draco's eyes widened and his mouth fell open a bit. He blinked several times. "What?" he managed after a minute.

Harry gave a little embarrassed shrug. "Yeah," he said.

"Well, you just take your potions and we'll leave you alone," said Mrs Weasley quickly into the silence of the room.

"Yes, we can talk later," said Mr Weasley, getting to his feet from where he was still kneeling.

"Yes," Draco said, "I think that would be better."

Harry nodded quickly and looked to Tonks who was still holding their potions.

Draco handed Valen carefully to Harry, and then reached for the potions. "Thanks," he said to his cousin.

She smiled broadly. "No problem," she said, taking Remus's hand and leaving the room with him.

Everyone else cleared out as well, Hermione giving Harry's shoulder one last squeeze.

Harry let out a small sigh when the room was empty and he felt better with only Valen and Draco there. He placed Valen carefully in his lap and reached to pull his shirt off again, grimacing at what his stomach looked like. He picked his son up again and placed him at a nipple where he began sucking immediately. He gave another shrug and looked up at Draco. "I don't know why it's doing this, but it is," he said.

"You are truly amazing," Draco said, swallowing around a lump in his throat.

Harry gave him a gentle smile before looking back down at the baby, holding him close.

Draco was staring, unable to pull his eyes from his son suckling at his husband's nipple.

"I love you," Harry told Valen, smiling down at him and holding his little hand. "I love you so much."

"I love you both," Draco said quietly, laying a hand on Harry's thigh and leaning in closer, watching them.

Harry smiled and turned his head to kiss Draco.

Draco kissed him and then remembered the vials in his hand. He pulled back and looked down. "So you took quite a number of them already," he said. "I will need to see how you react to them. I also didn't plan on the ... breastfeeding part. This means we have to be careful of what you take in, because it will also go into him."

Harry nodded. "This doesn't ... freak you out or anything, does it?" he asked.

"Freak me out?" Draco asked curiously. "Do you mean does it disturb me? No, it doesn't." He swallowed again. "I mean, it's ... beautiful," he said softly.

Harry smiled and nodded. "I'm glad," he said quietly. "Do you think my ... stomach will stay how it is?" he asked, frowning.

"No, I have a potion I have been working on that will help," Draco said, "especially if you get enough exercise." He smiled looking up at Harry, smirking. "Which I am sure I can help with."

Harry grinned widely. "Yes, I'm sure," he said, relieved. "You should take what you need, too. You're all banged up."

Draco nodded, realising he was staring again. He looked down at the potions and set several on the table before selecting one for contusions. He drank it, only wincing slightly at the taste. "Have you eaten?" he asked Harry.

"Not for a while," Harry answered.

Draco called for Babb and she brought them dinner. He leant back, feeling the potion helping already. "What does it feel like?" he asked.

"What?" Harry asked, smiling at Draco.

"Feeding him," Draco asked.

Harry looked down, smiling at Valen, thinking. "Like - I don't know. Really ... right, I guess. It's hard to explain. I feel a little closer to him."

Valen had released Harry's nipple and was blowing little milk bubbles at them.

Harry laughed gently, bending to kiss him.

"Now what?" Draco said, watching the baby. "Does he sleep?"

"He did the last few times," Harry replied. "Don't real little babies like him sleep all the time?"

"I don't know. I have never been around one," Draco said.

"I think he's supposed to be burped or something first, though," Harry said, picking Valen up and holding him to his shoulder like he had seen Mrs Weasley do. He patted his back. "Or at least I think this is what I'm supposed to do."

Valen squirmed a bit and then, after a minute, let out a loud burp and spit up milk on Harry's shoulder.

Harry made a face. "Ew, what was that?" he asked, holding Valen slightly away from him.

"There is white goo on your shoulder," Draco observed, chuckling.

Harry scrunched his nose up. "So he pissed on you and he spit white goo on me," he said, shaking his head. "Quite the troublemaker, I think."

"He is as messy as his birth-father," Draco teased, and reached for his wand, doing a Cleaning Spell on Harry's shoulder.

Harry snorted and brought Valen close to him again. He sighed happily, making a silly face at the baby.

"Hand him over and eat," Draco said, reaching for the baby. "You are still feeding two."

Harry sighed again and nodded, giving Valen to Draco. He reached for a plate and began piling it with food. He was hungry and hadn't really been paying any attention. After a few moments of staring at the baby as he ate, he frowned a little. "What happened, Draco?" he asked.

Draco wagged his eyebrows at Valentine and the baby made little scrunched up faces back, trying unsuccessfully to mimic his father. "Macnair wants control of the Malfoy estate," Draco said quietly. "He thought that by turning us over to the Dark Lord and marrying my mother, he could have that. He didn't plan on Valentine."

Harry's eyes widened considerably. "What do you mean 'didn't plan on Valentine'?" he said, heart speeding up a bit. "I thought you said he didn't know about him."

"He didn't. Until he saw you and then the blood," Draco said, kissing the forehead of the baby. "And then mother told him apparently."

"Your own mother went along with this?" Harry said, knowing the fear and anger could be heard in his voice.

Draco still didn't look up at his husband, tracing the outline of those tiny lips as Valen's green eyes seemed to study him. "He didn't give her a choice," he said.

"Then what happened?" Harry asked, watching the movements of Draco's hand over Valen.

Draco could hold Valen in one hand, the child was that small, but those green eyes shone with awareness. And his magical signature was bright. Draco didn't want to think about his mother right then. He had no idea where she was or what had happened after he'd left. And he had taken a vow not to look for her. He sighed, glancing up at his husband. "He used the Imperius Curse on her," he answered.

Harry frowned, watching Draco's face. "She took us from our bed," Harry said quietly. It wasn't a question. "Is she okay now? Do you know where she went?" he asked worriedly, looking intently into Draco's face.

Draco closed his eyes and Valen squirmed where he held him. "No, I don't," he whispered. "She wouldn't cooperate with him when she found out the entire plan. Even under Imperius, she resisted him."

"But then we have to find her," Harry said quickly, touching Draco's face with a hand. "We can find her, Draco."

"No, we can't," Draco whispered. "I swore an oath."

"What?" Harry asked, confused.

"Mother and I, we took oaths when Macnair wasn't in the room," Draco said, wincing. "She made me promise not to look for her if I got away. She said it would put us in too much danger."

Harry looked at the pain on Draco's face and he knew there was nothing he could say to make him feel any better. He pulled him and Valen close, wrapping his arms around them. "I'm sure she'll be all right," he whispered, having to try.

"I have to reset the wards to bar her from the Manor, just in case," Draco whispered, barely able to say it. "And Macnair won't

give up. He will try again if he can."

Harry only held Draco tighter, unable to imagine what a hard thing it was he had to do. "We won't make it easy for him," he said quietly, stroking both Draco's and Valen's hair. "And we can have Tonks and the others look for your mother, like they did before."

"They won't find her unless she wants them to," Draco said, not saying, "Or unless she is dead."

Harry sighed quietly, simply holding his family close. He didn't know what else he could say.

Draco just breathed for a minute, holding his child and being held by his husband. Then he remembered something. "Oh, apparently I am immune to the Imperius Curse," he said.

Harry pulled back a little. "You are?" he asked, and then, frowning, "How would you even know that?"

Valen squeaked and Draco looked down at him. He realised then that the infant reacted to their emotions. Then he remembered Harry had asked him a question. "Walden tried it on me, to get me to cooperate," he said. "I think something about the way your magic has bound me repelled it."

Harry scowled at the thought of Macnair casting that spell on Draco, but he had to admit that it was valuable information to know. "Good," he said gruffly.

"Macnair will be back, not just because he wants my family's money or the Dark Lord's favour. It's much more personal. He wants revenge," Draco said.

Harry scowled again. "He's the one who helped take us," he said, voice filled with quiet anger. "It's not our bloody fault he's an idiot."

"You shoved a knife into his lover's throat and then fucked his lover's son next to his body. How do you think he feels about that?" Draco said.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Lover?" he asked, confused.

Draco snorted. "I thought that was obvious. He and Father," he answered.

Harry made a face of disgust. He simply couldn't help it when it came to Lucius. The very name irked him. And Macnair was not his favourite person in the world either. "I don't give a damn about what Macnair thinks or how he feels. I'd do it all over again," he said, voice

hard.

Draco nodded, picking up some bread from the tray and nipping on it. He patted Harry affectionately. "I know, I agree," he said, "but that does make for a powerful hate. And like love, hate can be a strong kind of magic."

"If he tries to come anywhere near my child or you again, I will send him through the wall with my bare hands," Harry said, voice still low and angry. He was afraid of the fact that Macnair knew about Valen, afraid of what the man would do with the knowledge. It put him on edge as he thought more about it.

Valen had nearly settled down but he squeaked again, eyes wide. "It's fine, we're safe," Draco tried to soothe both of them, rocking Valen a bit.

Harry closed his eyes for a moment and kissed the side of Draco's face. "Yes," he said. "We are."

They eventually turned back to eating and did so in silence for a bit. "Where does the baby sleep?" Draco asked.

Harry looked up, chewing. He didn't know if he was willing to sleep very far from Valen. "Well ... with us. For a bit at least," he said. "Can't we set up a little cot next to our bed or something?"

Draco smiled, nodding quickly. "Good," he said, relieved. "I don't want to send him to the nursery."

Harry smiled too. "Me either," he said. "I actually don't really want to leave his side" he said slowly. "I only left him to get you."

"We may have to put a Silencing Charm around his cot." Draco smirked.

Harry snorted. "Probably," he said, smiling crookedly.

"Right now, I just want to curl up with both of you and sleep," Draco said.

Harry sighed tiredly. "Yes, that sounds very good," he said, finishing off his juice.

Draco waited until Harry had got to his feet and then carefully handed him their son before getting up himself. He led his little family into their bedroom.

Harry laid Valen carefully on the bed and toed off his shoes. He got out of his trousers and then picked the baby back up and climbed into bed with him, laying him in the space that would be between

himself and Draco when Draco got in. He ran his hand over Valen's soft hair, smiling at him gently.

Draco settled himself so that their son was cradled between their bodies and he lay on his side, looking at his husband. "Today is March 20th - a year ago is when I decided my life was over," he said softly, "and now I feel like it hasn't even begun yet."

Harry smiled and reached out to tuck Draco's hair behind his ear. "There's no telling what it's going to be like now," he said quietly.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO –

Complementary Opposites

A week and a half had passed since Valen had been born. Madam Pomfrey had made another visit to the Manor and had determined both Harry and the baby healthy, as long as Harry carried on with taking the potions he needed. The breastfeeding had come as a surprise to her, but a welcome one, as it was more healthy for Valen than the substitute they had planned on feeding him.

Once Harry and Draco had been assured that everything was safe, no time was wasted in getting back to work, and one thing was definitely for certain, the work of Lily and James Potter was complicated, very, very complicated. Harry had expected it to be, but he could hardly make heads or tails of any of it. The notebooks that he had got from the basement were filled with notes; some seemed to be filled in on random pages, not in chronological order. Harry's father's writing was messy and some words were difficult to read. Two of the books he'd grabbed were written completely in Latin and Harry didn't understand a word of any of it. They'd been looking through the materials intently, they meaning Draco, Harry, Hermione and Ron. Lupin hadn't been joking when he'd said he wanted to help, and he was there as well.

The library was like their second home again and they barely left it except to do things for the baby, although there were so many volunteers to take him that Harry felt like he and Draco barely saw him at all. Harry had Valen now though and was leaning back in his chair with the baby on his chest and a notebook open in one hand as he tried to decipher his father's writing.

As usual, Draco had a pile of books around him, half a dozen were open to pages and he was taking notes. As the only one of their team who could read Latin, he had those spread out around him along with several texts and some historical books. He had one quill in his hand and he had forgotten the one stuck behind his ear. He

even had ink stains on his lips where he had tapped a quill against them while thinking.

Remus had one of James's notebooks. He had the most experience with his friend's handwriting and did a lot of the translating for the team. He looked up at Harry and smiled approvingly.

Harry sighed and gave up on the notebook. "Well, I think it has something to do with the Ministry, but I don't know," he said, passing it to Lupin and shaking his head. Valen hiccupped and Harry smiled down at him.

"Hiccoughs again?" Draco looked up. "Pat his back, it helps."

"I know," Harry said, looking up at Draco with a raised eyebrow. He grinned a bit and began patting Valen's back gently.

Hermione was smiling at him but then looked back down at the book in her hands. "There is certainly a lot to go through here," she said.

"Themes," Draco said aloud, more to himself than the others. He listed them off. "Love and hate, blood and magic, sex and death."

She nodded.

Harry sighed again. "So what does that tell us?" he asked.

Draco looked up surprised by the question. "What?" he asked, distractedly, tapping the quill against his lip again.

"What do those themes tell us?" Harry asked, still patting Valen.

Draco raised an eyebrow. "That they are all connected. That they both beget and oppose each other. For example, where does life begin, for people at least?"

"Sex," Harry answered, blushing a little and then smiling down at Valen.

"Very good." Draco grinned. "So many people mistakenly say birth. Birth is part of the process but I could feel life inside you before he was born. So sex complements and opposes death. Look at us, look at what happened to me recently."

Harry nodded. "I saved you with it," he said. "But that's because of our bond which would be ... the blood and magic part?"

"Exactly," Draco smiled, "which in part was based on the dual feelings of hate and love that we battled with over the years. Opposites are not separate things. They are related."

Harry nodded again and then let out a little laugh. "So all of this basically sums up our relationship," he said.

"Love is your power, isn't it?" said Hermione.

"That's what I've been told," Harry replied.

"Well, look at it, Harry," said Hermione. "Your magic is the most powerful whenever you seem to be dealing with protecting Draco or someone else you love. I think it's partly why your magic has reacted so much more powerfully since you've been with him. He's the only person you've ever been in love with."

"Love manifested through sex, blood and magic," Draco said, nodding in agreement. "Blood is a metaphor for the material body - for our flesh."

Harry sighed. "But love doesn't have a tangible form, does it?" he asked. "How am I supposed to control the power of something like that?"

"That's what we're trying to find," said Hermione. "The tangible form may be in that room, if there is such a thing."

Draco smiled fondly up at his husband. "Magic and love are intangibles in that they are seen by their results," he said. "Except to people who feel them."

"I suppose," said Harry, shaking his head at all the information. "I think Hermione is right though," he said. "I should get in that room just to see what's in there. Dumbledore was the one who told me it was the force I have that Voldemort doesn't, so I know it's important."

Remus stared at Draco like he had never even seen the young man before. He cocked his head. "Did you ever hear the expression 'opposites attract'?" he asked.

Draco looked at him and nodded. "It is drawn from the understanding of magnetics and polarity in magic," he said.

"I think it's true in other things as well," said Harry. "Look at us," he said to Draco. "Even you two," he said to Ron and Hermione. He didn't say anything, but he also thought of Lupin and the people he was attracted to. While Lupin himself was laid back and quiet, he seemed attracted to dangerous, wild people: Sirius and Tonks.

"And your parents," Remus said.

Harry nodded, thinking of the memory of Snape's he had viewed

and how much his mother had seemed to hate his father.

"Even Mr & Mrs Weasley," Draco laughed. "It's all around us."

Harry laughed as Ron nodded firmly at Draco's comment.

"So whatever it is that they were studying is all around us," said Hermione. "That must be a good thing, for Harry at least."

Harry shrugged. "I suppose," he said. "I just need to figure out how to use it."

Draco nodded. "You have been using it. You created life in your own body and then fed that life. You have continuously used your friendships, your love of others, to defeat him. And that love is returned to you especially when you have needed it most. Remember what you told me about the battle in the graveyard?"

Remus was wide-eyed and staring at the blond. He stared at the text in front of him, trembling.

Harry nodded. "Yes. What happened there was nearly too coincidental to have just - happened."

Draco was smirking now. "Do you remember what you told me about Cedric?" he asked.

Harry blushed a little and nodded.

"Your ability to love and the love of others for you," Draco continued, "they are a tangible force and one that the Dark Lord continuously underestimates."

"That's basically what Dumbledore said," said Harry. "And Voldemort's terrified of Death. It's his greatest fear. Love and Death."

"But he has it all wrong," Draco said, excitedly. "He is trying to use hate and death to oppose death. That doesn't work. It's the wrong polarity!"

"Exactly!" said Harry and Hermione in unison. Valen jumped.

Draco was so excited that he was gesturing wildly and his stack of books fell over, scattering across the floor. He laughed and reached to pick them up, but stopped when he saw the picture one had fallen open to show. He had marked the page months ago when they were looking for the brooch. Now he picked it up and stared at the drawing of the Hogwarts founders.

"What?" asked Hermione, smiling widely as she leant over to get a look at what Draco was staring at.

Draco's eyes widened and pointed to the drawing of Godric Gryffindor. "Look at that," he said. "There is the sword but do you see the matching dagger?" Then he was silent for a few moments, thinking hard. "I think I read something about that somewhere" Draco handed her the book and began frantically looking through the stacks of other books, trying to remember the reference.

Hermione stared down at the drawing, looking even more excited now.

"I thought Dumbledore said the only surviving relic of Godric Gryffindor was his sword," said Harry, frowning but excited as well.

"The only *known* surviving relic," said Hermione, eyes wide.

"Here it is," Draco said, pulling out a book bound in uneven leather. "Ron, hand me the small blade on the desk," he said.

Ron reached his long arm over and grabbed the blade Draco had asked for, handing it over to him.

Draco pricked his finger with the blade and smeared it on the cover. The cover shimmered, absorbing the blood. Then he opened it and began turning pages until he found what he was looking for. "Nex Culter," he read.

Harry raised an eyebrow, rocking a squirming Valen. "What's that mean?" he asked.

"Nex is murder, Culter is knife," Draco translated. "This is a book on uses of murder and magic. It says here that a murder knife can absorb part of the soul of both victim and murderer. It has instructions on how to accomplish it. It doesn't actually use the word, but it is essentially a form of Horcrux."

Harry's eyebrows rose. "Godric Gryffindor had one of those?" he asked. "Sounds more like a ... Slytherin thing to me"

"No." Draco frowned. "I didn't say that this book was about that knife. I said that a knife can be made into a Horcrux if used to murder someone and the person knows the right incantation."

"Ahhh," Harry said, comprehending. "So you're saying that Gryffindor's dagger would have been easy to make into a Horcrux?"

"Yes," Draco said, setting the book down and searching again through the pile of books until he found Regulus Black's journal. He pulled his wand and cast the Reveal Spell again.

Harry frowned. "What would he have anything to do with this?"

he asked, looking at the journal in Draco's hands. The others watched, interested as well.

Draco flipped back from the end until he found a passage. "I can't believe I didn't see this before," he grumbled. Then read, "*Our Lord always carries with him a dagger. When one of the others asked why he would carry a blade when he could kill with magic, he said that it was to kill traitors.*" He looked up at them. It was a short enough passage to have been easily looked over.

Hermione's eyes were wide. "I can't believe you didn't see that before either, but - then Voldemort must have the dagger!" she said.

"But ... why would he carry a Horcrux around with him?" Harry asked, frowning. "They're meant for back-up if he dies. He wouldn't keep that so close. The snake he keeps close, but Dumbledore said she was a temporary holder for the soul piece."

"But what if he hadn't made it into a Horcrux yet?" Draco said. "Maybe he did, and that is why it hasn't been seen since?"

Harry bit his lip, still rocking Valen and thinking. "Yes," he said. "He would definitely have made it into a Horcrux if it was Gryffindor's. And that means ... that this one would be a really recent one if he hadn't made it yet when Regulus was alive" He gulped.

Remus had followed the conversation, seeming impressed. "So how do we find out where it is now?" he asked.

Harry sighed heavily. "That's the hard part," he said.

Hermione nodded. "So far, it's been places that have been important to him during his lifetime. The problem is, there isn't anything about Voldemort we can just look up, unless it's in a recent book that usually talks about Harry as well. That's not what we need. We need things from his early years, or even from when he was still Tom Riddle. But the thing is, most people don't even know that Tom Riddle and Voldemort are the same people."

Harry nodded. "And we're not even sure of that," he said. "He could've hidden it somewhere recently important to him. The point is, we have no idea."

"If a part of a person's soul is taken and they are killed," Draco asked, "where does the rest of their soul go?"

Harry shrugged.

"Wherever the dead go I would imagine," said Hermione.

"So whomever he killed with that knife," Draco said, "is on the other side of that portal in the Ministry?"

"If a portal is what it is," said Hermione.

"They were studying death there, so why couldn't it be?" said Harry. "That seems the most likely to me."

"Yeah, and that's what these notes are about," said Ron, indicating the notebooks.

"I wonder if he can feel the missing piece," Draco said, sounding both frightened and intrigued by the idea.

"Dumbledore said that Voldemort can't really feel his anymore," said Harry. "But he's corrupt. Whoever was killed probably can feel it."

"Then they might know where it is," Draco said. Valentine was starting to cry and fuss louder. Draco looked over and held his hands out. "Let me hold him."

Harry got up from his chair and passed the baby to Draco, sitting on the floor next to him.

"Too bad there's no way to communicate with the dead," said Ron. "They can't be brought back."

Draco raised an eyebrow but didn't say anything. "He's wet and hungry," Draco said to his husband. He looked his child in the eyes. "Harry is thick, kid, you should yell at him when you need something."

Harry raised his eyebrows and shook his head at Draco. He sighed. "Well, let me go change him and feed him then. I think this is enough research for one day anyway. We got a lot done."

Draco nodded. "I'll clean up here," he said. "Are you going to the room or the parlour?"

"Room," said Harry, taking Valen back from Draco. "I think I want a nap myself."

"I'll be up soon," the blond said, beginning to organise the mess around him into neat piles.

Remus hung back, helping clean up the room.

Harry got to his feet with Valen, held him to his chest and exited. Ron and Hermione followed, going their own ways.

Remus fidgeted a bit and Draco pretended not to notice. Finally the man cleared his throat. "Draco, I have something I wanted to ask

you about."

Draco set the books in his hands aside and looked up at Remus, who sat down on the edge of the couch. "Certainly," he said.

"Back at that house, when we found you" Remus began.

"Was I dead? Is that what you want to know?" Draco asked.

Remus sucked in a breath and nodded.

Draco paused, looking at the man. "I believe I was and I also believe it wasn't the first time," he answered.

"But a person can't be brought back from the dead," Remus said.

"That's what they teach us," Draco answered. "But I am not sure if I know what that means. I don't think my soul left my body. So my heart and lungs had stopped but I was still in there. Do you understand?"

Remus nodded slowly. "So the soul cannot be reunited with the body once it has left," he said, "but if they were never separated, it may be possible."

Draco smiled. He knew exactly where this was going. "His body went with him," he said. "I don't know what that means, or how one would get it back through, but yes, it does mean that he may not have been separated from it."

Remus took several unsteady breaths and then nodded. "Thank you," he said, and got up.

Draco watched him cross the room to leave. "Remus?" he said, catching his attention. The older man paused by the door. "I'll tell you if I think of anything," Draco said.

Remus nodded and left the room.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE –

Blood Feud

Harry and Draco had managed to get their own child away from the horde of overly willing babysitters and were in their own bedroom. They had decided to take a day off from constant research. Especially since they seemed no closer to finding the dagger than they were days ago.

Draco lay on his belly, chin in his hands, watching Harry feed Valen again. He never tired of watching such an amazing sight. Harry's body was looking more like it had before, except for the scar on his belly. Draco found the sight of his husband "breastfeeding" their baby was as odd as it was beautiful.

Harry was smiling down at Valen as he fed him. It was strange, but he sort of ... liked doing it. It made him feel closer to his son, even if it wasn't something he had ever planned on doing - but then again, he hadn't ever planned on marrying Draco Malfoy or giving birth either. He looked up and saw Draco watching him. He raised an eyebrow and grinned. "You bored or anything?" he asked. "I don't mind if you don't want to sit here with me." But he knew it was exactly what Draco wanted to do.

Draco raised an eyebrow, knowing he looked like someone had cast an Enthral Spell on him but not really caring. He was in love with his husband and their child. He watched as Harry pushed back his unruly hair that fell forward every time he looked down at their son. He watched the little faces his husband made at their son. He watched everything.

Harry snorted happily at Draco, pleased with the look on his face and pleased that he could help make him so happy. "I think he's nearly finished," Harry said, looking down at Valen again, and sure enough, a few minutes later, their son had fallen asleep. "Put him in his cot?" Harry asked Draco quietly, gently moving Valen from his chest.

Draco rolled over and sat up, reaching for their son. He gently lifted him to his shoulder and rubbed his back until the baby burped. Luckily, this time, without goo. He carefully laid the tiny boy in the cot beside the bed, tucking a blanket around him. He stood staring for another minute, watching that little face.

Harry smiled, watching Draco and the look of adoration on his face. It made his heart feel bigger and his stomach flutter with happiness.

Draco turned his head, cocking it slightly, and raised his eyebrows, looking mischievously at his husband. He withdrew his wand and cast a Silencing Charm on the cot.

Harry raised an eyebrow and smiled questioningly before stretching out and putting his hands behind his head.

Draco's smirk stayed in place as he began slowly unbuttoning his shirt, his eyes never leaving Harry's.

Harry watched Draco silently and waggled his eyebrows, licking his lips.

Draco kept his pace slow and casual, finishing the buttons and slowly removing his shirt to lay it across the chair. He wasn't wearing shoes or socks. Then he unfastened his trousers, sliding them slowly from his hips and revealing that he wasn't even wearing shorts. He lay them on the chair, too and then stood with hands on his hips and one eyebrow raised, contemplating his husband.

Harry's breathing and heart had sped up as Draco had stripped - the man never ceased to do that to him. "Something you want?" he asked, smiling crookedly.

Draco didn't say a word. Instead, he slowly and sensuously crawled across the bed toward the other man until he was kneeling beside him. His cock was hard before he even reached Harry, swaying underneath him as he crawled.

Harry's breath hitched as he reached one hand out and pressed it flat to the skin of Draco's chest, watching his face.

Draco sat on his feet, so that his cock was standing from the pale hair in his lap. His hands were resting on his thighs and his back was straight. His eyes looked almost silver with the desire shining in them. Harry's simple touch did what it always did, it made him tremble.

Harry trailed his hand down Draco's chest and stomach very

slowly, eyes never leaving his face. He grasped Draco's cock and gave it a long, slow stroke biting his lip as he did.

Draco began panting, trying to hold still and passive under Harry's touch, eyes burning with his feelings. Harry had had to be more passive when he was pregnant, his body making it more difficult to play. Now that he was healed, Draco was curious to see what he would do.

Harry stroked Draco harder, but still slowly, his own cock hard in his trousers. His breathing sped up even more as he watched the flush of arousal creep across Draco's cheeks.

Draco's mouth opened slightly, a soft gasp escaping and he had to struggle to keep his eyes open.

Harry groaned quietly and very low in his throat, his trousers becoming uncomfortable. He reached his free hand out and passed it over the cloth, freeing his cock and groaning again. He sat up suddenly and slipped his tongue into Draco's open mouth, advancing upon him.

Draco's trembling increased with his anticipation. Harry's tongue entering him made his entire body react and he moaned around it.

Harry moaned as Draco did, wrapping one arm around his lower back and one across his shoulders, pulling him as close as he could. He pulled his mouth away but didn't break full contact with Draco's lips. Opening his eyes halfway, he whispered. "I'm going to fuck you so fucking hard."

"Please," Draco whispered, his cock twitching hard in approval.

Harry pushed Draco roughly down on his back, reaching for his legs and pushing them apart and then up to his chest, panting already.

Draco's heart was pounding at the fierce response. This was what he wanted - his lion claiming him. He held his legs where Harry had pushed them, looking up at him.

Harry gritted his teeth and advanced upon Draco again, biting at his bottom lip as he lubed his fingers and slipped one into Draco, growling with pleasure at the feel of that slick, tight heat.

Draco spread himself open, literally and magically, feeling Harry's power, and the growl made him so hard he thought he might come then.

Harry licked Draco's lips and mouth, slipping another finger

inside him. "Whose are you?" he growled, unable to resist a cocky smirk.

"Yours, completely yours," Draco responded, his magic responding as well.

Harry rewarded that with a stroke to Draco's prostate, licking his lips again.

Draco's lips tingled where Harry licked them, opening more in response as he shuddered at those fingers inside him. He forced himself to open his eyes and look into those intense green ones. His husband's look made him groan even louder.

"Do you want me to fuck you, Draco?" Harry asked, voice still dangerous and low. He emphasised the work fuck just a tad, his cock twitching.

"Please, please fuck me," Draco gasped. "I want to feel your cock inside me. Claim me."

"Mmm," Harry moaned, heat flooding his body. Within a quick moment, his fingers were removed and his cock was slick, pressing forward into Draco's entrance. He spread his own legs a bit to go deeper, eyes still focused on Draco's face.

"Oh, yesss," Draco hissed as he felt Harry's flesh entering him and the magic crackling up his spine. His eyes slid closed again, attention focused inward at the feelings inside him.

Harry sucked in a breath through his teeth. "Fuck, yes," he said. "I fucking love how you take me, Draco." He thrust all the way in - hard.

"Yes, all of you," Draco agreed. "Want you everywhere inside." He arched into each thrust, feeling stretched and full and trembling with heat.

Harry allowed himself to let go, pounding into Draco. He closed his eyes and held on to the blanket on either side of Draco's shoulders, using it to gather momentum with each thrust.

"Yes, deep, so deep," Draco cried out, grunting with each hard thrust.

Harry buried his face in Draco's neck. "Fuck, yes," he growled before he bit at Draco's skin.

Harry's teeth sent another shudder through Draco's body. "Yes, my lion," he gasped.

There was only so much Harry could take. His cock was throbbing inside Draco as he continued to pound into him, gasping, his teeth clenched.

"Claim me, fill me!" Draco gasped again, knowing he was close and wanting Harry's magic to bring him over the edge.

Harry thrust into Draco one last hard time, his eyes tightly shut. He let out a strangled cry, his knuckles white as he grasped the covers. He came then, filling Draco with his seed and panting harshly through his nose.

Draco groaned so loud he felt like it vibrated his bones as he came, Harry's magic and warmth flooding through him. He threw his legs around his husband's waist and his arms around his back, pulling him tight.

Harry groaned as the most intense part of his orgasm ended. He was still panting, pressed to Draco completely. He couldn't talk, not yet anyway. He still felt high.

Draco held Harry tight with every part of himself, not wanting to let go as he rode the waves of pleasure and floated in the aftermath. He felt he could stay this way forever and be happy. Just as he thought that, he felt a flare of magic nearby and chuckled deeply.

Harry smiled satedly and took a breath of Draco's skin, releasing the covers with his left hand and bringing it up to stroke Draco's hair.

"Valen's awake," Draco whispered into his lover's ear.

Harry snorted. "Won't let us forget him, will he?" he said with a small laugh.

"He has always liked it when we combine our magic," Draco said, chuckling. "He is a sensitive. I think it woke him."

"Oh," Harry said, raising himself up and pulling out of Draco gently. He crawled over to the side of the bed and smiled down into the cot.

Valentine was awake, green eyes bright, and his hands immediately reached up toward Harry.

Draco had collapsed, legs and arms falling back down as he lay in post-orgasmic bliss. He turned his head to watch his lover looking at their child.

Harry's smile grew as he did a Cleaning Charm on his hands before reaching down and picking Valen up, rubbing his nose against

the baby's gently and making a silly face at him.

"That child is going to be as sex crazed as you are if he feels it every time we come," Draco laughed, reaching for a wand and doing a Cleaning Charm on himself.

Harry snorted. "You act like I'm the only sex crazed one around here," he teased.

Draco couldn't argue with that so he didn't. "Lay him on my chest," he suggested.

Harry nodded and moved on his knees over to Draco. He kissed Valen's hair before laying him gently on Draco's chest, smiling down at both of them.

Draco bent his neck, looking down at the small face near his. "So, my son, you really like the magic, don't you?" He smiled at him. "All that heat and sparkle is hard to resist, isn't it?"

Valen burbled at him.

Harry laughed delightedly. "Merlin, it's like he knows what you're saying," he said, rubbing Valen's back.

Draco cocked his head, still looking into Valen's face. "Well, he knows I am talking to him," Draco said. "And he knows who we are."

"Good," said Harry, smiling at the baby. "I like him to know who we are." He looked back at Draco. "Isn't it weird to think of him older? Calling us Dad? We're dads." He sighed and shook his head in happy amazement. "It's so strange to have him here finally."

Draco glanced at Harry, laughing. "So does he call us both Dad?" he asked.

"Well, he's certainly not going to call me Mum," Harry said, laughing as well.

"But if he yells Dad, how do we know which one of us he wants?" Draco asked, looking down at Valen curiously.

Harry snorted and shrugged. "Different tones?" he suggested jokingly.

Draco snorted, rolling his eyes. Valen's eyes blinked and he made a snort sound too.

Harry laughed again. "How about ... Daddy Harry and Daddy Draco? Although, I suppose that would be odd for when he's older"

"No stranger than having two fathers," Draco said. "Let alone one of them being Harry Potter."

Harry gave a shrug. "I guess that's what it could be then," he said. "But really, he can decide what he wants to call us. We could be completely off the mark."

"I am sure he will have his own ideas," Draco said, intently watching the boy's reactions to their conversation. He definitely liked the sound of their voices. "Harry, do something wandless from where you are," he said.

Harry smiled curiously and raised his hand, thinking of what he could do. He shrugged and simply shot golden sparks into the air.

Valen did a little shudder and struggled to turn his head to see. Draco laughed.

Harry grinned widely and moved so that he was in Valen's line of vision. He shot up red sparks this time, watching his little face.

Valen wriggled around on Draco's chest and Draco had to bring a hand up to keep the infant from rolling off him. Green eyes were wide as an owl's and Valen started burbling again.

"Brilliant," Harry said delightedly, smiling at Draco. "He's going to be powerful. Hogwarts better watch out." He chuckled.

"Hogwarts? We had better watch out," Draco laughed. "If he figures out wandless before he is old enough to use a wand, we are in a world of trouble."

"Merlin," Harry said, laughing. "I didn't, so maybe he won't" But as he stared down at Valen, it was almost as if there was a little warning in those green eyes. Harry raised his eyebrows and laughed again.

"I am glad we aren't the only ones keeping an eye on him," Draco said. "It may take the red horde to keep him in line."

Harry smiled, touching Valen's hair again. He couldn't keep his hands away from it, just like with Draco's. "Hey," he said to his husband. "I've been thinking. Should we name someone his godfather? Godmother? In case something happens to us"

"Certainly," Draco said, his fingers stroking the soft skin of his son's cheek.

"Well ... who should it be?" Harry asked, already having two people for the job in mind.

Draco gave Harry that look that said he knew he was being set up. He arched an eyebrow.

"What?" said Harry, grinning. He rolled his eyes. "You have to know who I want it to be," he said.

"Hermione and Ron," Draco said, rubbing his son's back and rolling his eyes.

Harry nodded. "Can you think of anyone better?" he asked, raising his eyebrows.

Draco tried really hard to do just that. Actually, he did have an idea. But how to talk to Harry about it was the problem.

Harry tapped his fingers on his knee, waiting for an answer.

"Bill and Fleur," Draco answered, watching Harry's reaction.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Bill and Fleur?" he asked. "Why them?"

Draco sighed. "First, they are older and already married," he said.

"Yeah, but - but I would feel odd asking them," Harry said, frowning a bit.

"Second, Fleur speaks French and has citizenship there," Draco said, and then paused. He knew that Harry would not like the last reason.

"So," said Harry with a snort. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"And third," Draco said, pausing again and looking down at his son, "they are both from long lines of pure-bloods."

Harry raised an eyebrow and narrowed his eyes. "So what," he said slowly. "Valen's not pure-blood. Fleur isn't even pure-blood."

Draco would have known Harry was angry even without the tone in his voice as his magic started to buzz. Valen started to cry. Draco huffed, taking both hands to hold the baby while he rolled over and sat up. He stood and got a bit of distance between them and Harry, making soothing noises to Valen.

Harry scowled and crossed his arms, still staring at Draco with narrowed eyes.

"Leakey," Draco called out, ignoring the fact that both he and Harry were still naked. The house-elf appeared moments later.

Harry huffed and rolled his eyes before closing them and putting his head in his hands.

"Leakey," Draco said, "please ask Mrs Weasley to come to our parlour and take Valen for a bit."

Harry sighed heavily, preparing himself for an argument that he wished he wasn't about to have.

Draco set the baby in his cot and Valen promptly began to cry. The blond reached for his dressing gown and belted it before picking up the child again and trying to soothe him. "It's fine, Valen," he said. "Your daddies just need to talk."

Harry looked up again, frowning sadly at the crying child. He tried to push his anger aside just until Mrs Weasley came. He tried shooting sparks up again.

Draco held his tongue, a number of cutting remarks coming to mind. Valen just looked confused. Draco heard a pop in the other room and walked out of the bedroom. Mrs Weasley looked concerned, but he told her they just needed a break. She left through the door with the baby and Draco allowed himself a moment, head falling back.

Harry flopped onto the bed on his back, staring up at the canopy and shaking his head, eyes narrowed again.

Draco walked back into their bedroom, closing the door behind him. He stood looking down at his naked husband. Harry's belly still had Draco's dried come on it and the blond shook his head.

Harry raised his head a bit to look at Draco, rolled his eyes, and flopped back again.

Draco rested his arms above him on the canopy frame and waited.

Harry took an angry deep breath. "Draco," he began, voice dangerous. "There is nothing that gets me more pissed off than when you stand there and look at me like you are now. You're the one who said what you said. Please, do elaborate."

Draco shook his head, thinking how odd it was that Harry was starting to talk more like him. "First, a married couple would provide a more stable home, if he should need to be raised by someone besides ourselves," Draco said.

"I get that reason," Harry snapped.

Draco gritted his teeth at the sharp spike and walked away from Harry, leaning against a wall. "Second, I want my child to speak

French. But more than that," he continued, trying to keep his voice even, "if something goes wrong, the French citizenship would provide refuge if they needed it."

"Okay," Harry said, drawing the word out angrily. "And the final reason?"

"He is the heir to the Malfoy heritage," Draco said, his voice taking on an edge, "a heritage that goes back centuries all the way to France. If I am not there to raise him, I want him to be prepared for that responsibility. Fleur has a better chance of doing that than any of our friends."

"What does that have to do with them being pure-blood?" Harry asked, sitting up now. "What responsibility? The money? Ron and Hermione can't teach him how to handle money? I'm not seeing the connection here."

"No you don't see it," Draco sneered, "and I don't know if you ever will!"

Harry glared, his face distorting in anger. "Valen's not pure-blood!" Harry said again. "I'm a half-blood! Looks like the Malfoy line has been tainted!"

"Merde!" Draco cursed, jumping out of his chair and stalking out of the room. In the sitting room, he picked up a glass trinket and threw it as hard as he could into the fireplace.

"Fuck you!" Harry called after him, throwing himself back in the bed again and crossing his arms.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR –

Bloody Rich

Draco was panting and trembling. He grabbed the mantle of the fireplace and leant forward, using it to keep himself from collapsing to his knees. Unbidden, tears were running down his face.

Harry was breathing harshly through his nose, trying to get control of himself. Valen was not going to be some stuck-up, prejudiced prat. Absolutely no way!

Draco tried to breathe deep but he ended up sobbing instead. He gave up and collapsed to the floor.

After a few moments, when Draco had not returned, Harry's guilty conscience started to nag him. Perhaps shouting "fuck you" had been a little over the top. He was still angry, but he got slowly to his feet and walked over to the door, opening it a crack and looking out. He frowned sadly and winced as he saw Draco on the floor. He stepped out quickly and made his way over to him, kneeling on the carpet next to him. "Draco," he said, frowning. "Draco, I - I'm sorry. I didn't mean it."

Draco was on his hands and knees face buried in the crook of his right arm. He tried to breathe again. He could feel Harry near him but couldn't face him yet.

Harry bit his lip and looked away, waiting and feeling guiltier by the second.

Draco wiped his eyes on the sleeve of his dressing gown and then rested his forehead back on his arm again. Harry's magic was calming now and he ached to reach for him. "Is that what you still think of me?" he whispered.

Harry stared at Draco, frowning, and then shook his head. "No," he said quietly, sitting on the floor fully now and pulling his legs up to rest his chin on his knees.

Draco snorted. He sat up, still kneeling, and stared at the shards of glass on the stone of the mantle. "You think I am ... like my

father," he whispered.

Harry took in a breath sharply. "No," he said, hurt by that. He released his own legs and moved closer to Draco, pulling him into his arms. "I would never think that."

Draco was stiff, resisting him at first, but then he allowed himself to be held. He couldn't resist Harry. Never could for long. He winced in pain as he moved, realising only then that he was kneeling in broken glass.

"Draco," Harry exclaimed, frowning as he looked down at the glass and the bloody pieces.

"Harry," Draco said, resting his head on his husband's shoulder, ignoring the pain.

Harry sighed and brought a hand up, stroking Draco's hair. "I don't think you're like your father," he said quietly. "But I don't understand the pure-blood stuff. They're not any better than anyone else, and I don't want Valen to think that. That's - that's the way Voldemort thinks."

"I think you will never understand me," Draco sighed, trembling again.

"Please don't say that," Harry whispered. Draco's words actually scared him a little. "Please, tell me what I don't understand. Anything."

Draco sighed. "I need to get up," he said. "It hurts."

Harry closed his eyes, knowing good and well that Draco could easily sit through the pain if he wanted to. He knew that Draco simply didn't want to talk to him. He didn't say anything about it and nodded, helping Draco to his feet silently.

Draco looked down at his legs. There were shards of glass embedded in his shins and blood trickled down to his ankles. He reached for his wand and realised he had left it in the bedroom.

"Merlin, Draco," Harry said, wincing and frowning as he looked at Draco's legs as well. He dropped to his knees in front of him, testing himself. He did a silent Summoning Charm to get all of the glass out of Draco's legs and then pressed his hands to the bloody, torn skin, trying to heal him. It sort of worked. There weren't as many cuts, anyway.

Harry's magic caressed his skin and made Draco shiver.

"Someday you may not need a wand for anything," he said quietly.

Harry looked up at Draco and gave a little shrug. "Maybe," he said as quietly as his husband, getting to his feet again. "You should go heal the rest up." He looked down at his bloody hands. "I'm going to go get cleaned up and dressed."

"No," Draco said quickly, "don't."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Why?" he asked, glancing down at his hands again.

Draco stepped in close, pressing himself against Harry and putting his arms around his shoulders.

Harry sighed and shook his head, wrapping arms around the small of Draco's back. "Your legs are covered in blood," he whispered reasonably.

"Blood doesn't bother me," Draco said. "Mine looks the same as yours. Both bind us together. In each other. And in Valen."

Harry stared up at Draco seriously. "I know," he said. "It shouldn't matter. It doesn't."

"It matters a great deal," Draco said. "Remember the discussion we had in the library? I am not saying pure-blood is better. I am saying that it is different."

"I can agree to that," Harry said slowly.

Draco smiled a bit sadly, sighing. He took one of Harry's hands in his and led him over to sit on the sofa, turning to face him as he did.

Harry raised his eyebrows slightly and stared at Draco questioningly.

"What is the purpose of a godparent?" Draco asked Harry.

"To protect a child when the parents aren't able," Harry said.

"Yes," he said. "To help the parents raise the child, if possible. But to take over as parents, if necessary."

Harry nodded slowly. "Yes, I know," he said. "Which is why I think it should be people important to us. People we trust absolutely. I trust Bill and Fleur, and of course they're important to me, but they're not - they're not the first people I think of in ... well ... any situation really. Ron and Hermione are."

"If you and I both die, what is the most likely cause of that?" Draco asked, trying to lead Harry to a place of understanding.

"Voldemort," Harry said quietly, frowning.

"Are Ron and Hermione likely to survive long if you die?" Draco asked.

Harry sighed, looking away. He didn't answer, but he figured his silence was answer enough.

"That's the mistake your parents made," Draco said. "By choosing their best friend, they left you unprotected when he was set up as well."

Harry bit his lip. It was true. He sighed.

"I want Valentine protected if we lose," Draco said. "If he needs to go into hiding, then he would need a pure-blood family to shelter him."

Harry sighed again. "Well, Merlin, Draco," he said. "Wouldn't it have been easier if you had said that in the first place?"

"I was trying to," Draco said. "You became angry before I could explain that part."

"Sorry," Harry said grudgingly, looking at his knees.

"As for the training Valen will need," Draco sighed, "do you have any idea the difference in managing an estate the size of the Malfoy assets and that of someone of Weasley or Granger's background?"

"Bill has the same background as 'Weasley'," Harry said, raising an eyebrow. "And 'Granger's' mum and dad were both dentists, which isn't too bad a profession in the Muggle world." He sighed.

"Valen will be one of the wealthiest wizards in the entire world," Draco said quietly. "Do you realise that?"

Harry shrugged. "I guess," he said, although he wasn't really sure about how much money Draco had.

"This Manor is only a portion of the estates we own," Draco tried to explain. "We also own an estate in France, including a villa and a vineyard."

"I've heard you talk about other places," Harry said slowly and paused. "Draco ... exactly how much money do you have?"

"I don't know the exact amount," Draco said. "Since investments shift the figure and some of the properties haven't been evaluated in quite a while."

"Merlin, you don't even know how much?" Harry said. "Well, I don't know how much is in my vault, but it's not *that* much."

"I know it's at least in the millions of Galleons," Draco said. "Not even counting the fact that the Manor is priceless."

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Oh," he said quietly.

"If he had to, our son could live in exile in France," Draco said, "with the Delacours' protection. They are distant relatives, after all."

"They are?" Harry asked. He hadn't known that.

Draco rolled his eyes. "First, all European wizarding families are related. Second, Malfoy was originally French," he explained.

"Ah, yes," said Harry. "Sirius told me that before. That all of the pure-blood families were related in some way."

"Some closer than others," Draco said. "You and I are related as well."

Harry snorted. "Hopefully not that close," he said, raising an eyebrow.

"No, not that close." Draco smirked. "But it means that one can claim kinship with other families when the need arises. Valen might need it."

Harry sighed again. "I suppose," he said.

"Hermione and Ron are like a brother and sister to you," Draco said. "I understand that. They will be there for Valen as long as they can. I am a Slytherin, Harry. It means I always think of the worst case and prepare for it."

Harry nodded. "I understand," he said quietly. "And I'm a thick Gryffindor and I think with my heart, right?" he said, smiling softly.

"Exactly," Draco smiled, "my lion."

"All right," Harry said, shaking his head. "Bill and Fleur can do it if they want to, but I want to explain to Ron and Hermione why we're not making them the godparents."

"Agreed," Draco said.

Harry nodded and then looked down at his hands, the blood on them dry. "Can I go and get cleaned up and dressed now?" he asked, holding them up to show Draco.

Draco smirked. "Can I get clean with you?"

Harry grinned. "I think I'd like that," he said.

"Harry?" Draco called out to his husband in the bathroom. Valen was propped up among some pillows on their bed and seemed happy to

watch Draco, making strange little noises as his father got dressed.

"Huh?" Harry called back, his mouth full of his toothbrush.

"Why is your trunk from Hogwarts still taking up room in here?" Draco called out.

Harry sighed, finishing brushing his teeth. He tossed the toothbrush on the edge of the sink and walked out of the bathroom to see what Draco was talking about. "My stuff's still in there," he said when he was standing next to his husband.

Draco frowned at him, shaking his head. Without house-elves, he would've gone nuts living with such a slob. "You have a chest of drawers and a closet to put things in," he tried to explain. "We don't need this ugly old chest in here. What's in it?"

Harry shrugged. "Stuff," he said. He hadn't cleaned out his trunk in ... well, actually, he wasn't sure if he had ever cleaned out his trunk.

Just the way Harry said it had Draco worried. He frowned as he looked at it and imagined all manners of unsanitary things that it might contain. Wondering if he needed gloves and with wand ready, he lifted the lid. And promptly closed it. "Eww," he complained.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "What?" he asked, lifting the lid of the trunk himself. He looked in. It looked just the same as it always did. There were bits of parchment balled up in the bottom, an ink spill in one corner that Harry had simply covered with a pair of Uncle Vernon's socks, a pair of underwear that he had left in there since the last time he'd been at Hogwarts, and a number of other ... questionable objects. Harry shrugged.

Draco closed his eyes and counted to ten - in French and then in German. "Is there any reason we can't just dispose of everything in there?" he asked. "Preferably by incineration."

"Hey," Harry said indignantly. "There could be good stuff in here." He reached down and pulled out the bottle the ink had spilled from. "See, it's still half full," he said, showing it to Draco.

Draco stared at the filthy bottle and the new ink stains on his husband's fingers. "It is half dried out and a poor quality to begin with," he said. "Harry, we are worth millions. We don't need that."

Harry frowned and huffed. "Well, my map's still in here," he said, reaching in and pulling out The Marauders Map.

"We are cleaning this out," Draco said decisively. "Benedict and

Boaz," he called out for the elves.

Harry huffed again. "You don't need to call a house-elf for everything, Draco," he said, shaking his head and standing slightly in front of his trunk protectively.

The two house-elves appeared and bowed to them. Draco ignored Harry's comment. "Harry, here's how this is going to work. You pull something out. If it is worth keeping, you hand it to Benedict who will clean whatever it is. If it isn't, give it to Boaz to dispose of."

Harry sighed. "Fine," he said. "I guess it could use a cleaning" He looked down at his trunk with his head slightly cocked to one side.

"The clothes all go to Boaz," Draco said to his husband.

Harry rolled his eyes and then dropped to his knees, pulling out the ink-covered socks and the questionable underwear. He got rid of a bunched up t-shirt that had been from third year, at least five broken quills - it was hard to tell with all the pieces - the bits of parchment, another pair of old socks, two empty ink bottles and the one that had spilled, and when he reached his hand in to grab what looked like an old package of Hedwig's owl treats, he brought his hand out quickly, hissing.

"Ow," he said, sticking his cut finger in his mouth and glaring at the trunk like it had bitten him.

Draco was not surprised to find something dangerous in that trunk. He raised eyebrows and looked cautiously over Harry. "What is it?" he asked.

"I don't know," Harry said around his finger, peering into the trunk. He reached in and pulled out the offending object: a broken piece of glass with a bit of blood on the sharp end.

"What broke?" Draco asked. He glanced over at the bed as Valen seemed to be asking them something. "It's fine, Valen." Draco smiled at him.

Harry looked over his shoulder and smiled at the baby as well before turning back to the trunk. He frowned, trying to remember. What had it been? Then a memory came to him: himself throwing a mirror in his trunk in anger. He sighed sadly. "It was ... a mirror from Sirius," he said, staring at the glass.

"A mirror? Magical?" Draco said, moving closer. "Careful not to lose any pieces and we can fix it."

"Doesn't matter," Harry mumbled. "It doesn't work." He dropped the glass back inside with the rest of the pieces.

Draco frowned, kneeling down and holding a hand close to the mirror pieces. "It's damaged," he said with his eyes closed, "but it is still charmed."

"It didn't work when it wasn't broken," Harry said. "Well, it probably did, but it's useless now. It's a two-way mirror. The other half is gone. I don't know where Sirius put it."

"Do you want to repair it or have me do it?" Draco insisted, sighing.

"There's no point," Harry said, but he held his hand over the trunk and muttered, "*Reparo*," and the pieces flew back together, forming the small square mirror again.

Draco shivered at the casual power displayed in the wandless magic. Valen cooed and burred louder, making Draco laugh as the baby's reaction mirrored his.

Harry smiled gently at Valen and then simply passed the mirror to Draco, turning back to the mess in his trunk.

Draco examined the mirror, glad to see that it was completely mended and the magic was still in place. He walked over and sat on the bed next to Valen while Harry continued to clean out his trunk. The little boy was making excited noises and reaching for him.

Harry frowned at the contents in his trunk and then huffed. "I suppose you can just throw it all out," he said to the elves, picking up his map and putting it in his pocket. "There's not really anything much worth saving, I guess."

Draco lay down beside the infant and looked into the mirror.

When the house-elves took over Harry's work, seeming relieved that he was leaving them to it, he walked over to the bed and lay on his back on Valen's other side, picking him up to lay him on his chest. He made a funny face at him, bending his head down to kiss his little nose gently.

Draco watched and Valen wrinkled his nose in response to the kiss and made little smacking noises. Draco moved closer so he could lie touching his husband and child.

Valen turned his head suddenly - or as suddenly as he could - and wobbled on Harry's chest, reaching, wide-eyed, for the mirror Draco was still holding. Harry laughed, steadying the baby so that he didn't roll off.

"Yes," Draco said, holding the mirror up so the infant could look into it. "See the pretty baby?"

Valen made some more of his little noises, still wobbling excitedly as he stared at the mirror. Harry smiled widely at him.

"Wonder what he sees?" Draco asked, watching Valen. "So it's a Communication Spell. You said your godfather had the other one?"

Harry nodded. "He gave it to me to contact him if I needed him," he said quietly. "I tried to use it ... after he was gone. It didn't work and I broke it."

"How does it activate?" Draco asked as a tiny hand batted at the surface of the mirror.

"You say whoever has the other mirror's name," Harry answered. "But I don't think anyone has it. I tried to say Sirius's name and nothing happened."

"Do you want to try it again?" Draco asked.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "There really isn't any point," he said, absently playing with the small little strands of Valen's hair that wouldn't lie down in the back. "But it's not like it's hard to try it. You just have to say his name into it."

Draco was thinking. "Did he carry it on him?" he asked.

Harry shrugged. "I guess he might have," he said. "I was supposed to use it whenever I needed to talk to him. I don't think he had it that night though Like I said, it didn't work."

Valen was making little smacking noises while he looked in the mirror. Draco raised an eyebrow at the infant. "I think he likes himself." He smirked.

"Well, he is the cutest little bloke in the world," Harry said, smiling.

Draco did agree with that so he nodded and then leant over to kiss his husband.

Harry smiled against Draco's lips and kissed him back, chuckling low in his throat as Valen squirmed even more.

Draco's tongue slipped along his lover's lips and he sighed

happily at the taste.

Harry opened his mouth, taking Draco's tongue inside. "Mmm," he hummed, still smiling.

Draco had forgotten about the house-elves until he heard a couple of small pops as they left. Valen made a kind of chirping noise.

Harry snorted and pulled away from Draco, looking down at their son again.

"Aww," Draco drawled, "Valen feel left out?" He leant over and kissed the infant on the forehead.

Harry sat up with Valen and turned slightly, laying the baby on his belly on the bed before flipping to lie on his own stomach, facing him. He rested his chin in his hands, sighing happily as he watched Valen continue to wobble and make noises. If he was already doing this much, Harry wondered how he would be when he started to crawl.

"I wonder if it is normal to be happy so much of the time," Draco asked wistfully.

Harry laughed quietly. "Well, I certainly don't see any problems," he said.

"I guess I just thought babies cried all the time," Draco said, setting the mirror aside and petting Valen's back again.

"Nah, not him," Harry replied, covering his face with his hands and then bringing them away again quickly, making another face at Valen.

Valen's eyes widened and he made more burbling noises. Draco felt he could lay there and watch his husband and child forever. It felt safe and comfortable. He wished it could stay this way.

Harry chuckled again and reached out and smoothed Valen's hair, sighing. "What time is it?" he asked, wishing he could ignore the fact that they had more searching to do today.

"Time to join the others." Draco sighed. "You should feed him again before."

Harry nodded. "Yeah," he said, sitting up and pulling his shirt off. "I think someone's going to need a nap soon anyway." He picked Valen up again and scooted with him to rest against the pillows before situating the baby's mouth at his nipple.

Draco openly stared again. He really couldn't help himself.

Harry looked up at Draco, smiling and shaking his head. "What's up for today?" he asked.

Startled into thinking again, Draco smiled back. "More research." He shrugged. "And I need to go over the financials again."

Harry nodded and sighed. "I swear, sometimes it feels like we're never going to be finished with research. After all of this is done, I don't care if I ever do research again."

Draco smirked, holding his tongue on his sarcastic thoughts about who actually did most of the research. He knew Harry worked hard at it even if he didn't do as much of it. Personally, he liked the research part of things much better than the fighting.

It wasn't too long before Valen was asleep. Harry Summoned the cloth they used when Valen needed to be burped and threw it over his shoulder. He knew better now. He picked Valen up gently and burped him. He spit up, but at least it wasn't on Harry's shoulder. "Lupin's probably here already," he said to Draco, still patting the baby's back in case he had another burp in him.

Draco rolled off the bed, standing up. "I'll go down ahead and set up."

"Yeah, all right," Harry said, pleased when Valen burped a second time. He stood up as well and laid the baby gently on the bed. He pulled his wand out and shrunk Valen's cot, putting it in his pocket to take down with him. When he reached over and grabbed his shirt from where he'd tossed it on the bed, it sent the mirror clattering to the floor. Harry cocked his head, staring at the mirror. He looked over his shoulder and saw that Draco had left the room. Feeling like a fool, he pulled his shirt on and then bent over and grabbed the mirror, staring at it as he fingered the edge of it. Rolling his eyes, he whispered. "Sirius," his breath fogging the glass like it had last time. And also like last time, nothing happened. He wasn't surprised. He sighed and shook his head, tossing the mirror on top of the mattress. He picked Valen up again and held him to his chest, making his way across the room.

"Harry!"

Harry froze in his tracks, not moving a muscle.

"Harry!"

There was a voice coming from the bed.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE –

Rearview Mirror

Harry's eyes widened beyond belief and his heart began beating quicker. He didn't dare to hope. Perhaps he had imagined it.

"Harry Potter!"

Harry spun around and it was a wonder Valen didn't wake up. He rushed over to the bed, grabbing the mirror up quickly and holding it level to his face.

Harry hardly believed it, but there was Sirius, just as Harry remembered him. Harry's mouth dropped open and he couldn't even draw a breath.

"Harry," Sirius breathed, an unidentifiable emotion in his eyes.

Harry sat down heavily on the bed so as not to fall over. "S-Sirius?" he asked breathlessly, mouth still hanging open.

"I've been trying to get a hold of you," Sirius said. His expression then looked like one of relief, but that wasn't quite it.

Harry could still hardly speak. "B- but – but you're-"

"Dead?" He nodded, a small frown wrinkling his brow. "I think so anyway."

Harry felt faint. "Is this – is this real?" he asked.

"Real to me," Sirius answered. He seemed to be trying to look past Harry. "Where are you? What's been going on? I don't even know how long it's been."

Harry was a bit overwhelmed by the questions. "I – I'm at home," he answered.

Sirius gave him a questioning look.

Harry laughed, but it was one more of hysteria than of humour. "Malfoy Manor," he said, voice high.

Sirius's eyes widened considerably. "What?" he asked. "What are you doing calling there home?"

Harry gave another laugh, sounding even more hysterical. "I'm married," he said. "I married ... Draco Malfoy."

"What?" Sirius asked again, looking highly confused. "The one that was always giving you trouble in Hogwarts?"

Harry nodded slowly. "I'm married," he said again. "And I have a baby." He pointed the mirror down a bit to reveal the sleeping Valen. When he brought the mirror back to his face, Sirius looked speechless.

"Are you telling me the truth?" Sirius asked, his mouth open a bit.

"Of course I am," Harry said. "His name is Valentine Leander Malfoy. He's my son and Draco's my husband. It's been nearly three years now since you"

Sirius frowned a small bit and nodded.

Draco walked back into the room then. "Harry, have you seen my" He trailed off at the look on his husband's face.

Harry looked up at Draco, still wearing much the same face he'd had when Sirius had first started talking to him.

"Who is that?" Sirius asked quickly, trying to look and see, even though there was no way he could as Harry was still holding the mirror to his face.

Draco took in the look and the mirror. "It works?" he asked.

Harry gave three very slow nods. "It's ... Draco," he said to Sirius, and despite the fact that Harry had already told him, Sirius looked surprised.

"You're not lying about that?" he asked.

"I'm not lying about that," Harry answered.

Draco walked around to stand next to Harry and look into the mirror.

Sirius looked even more surprised, looking at Draco.

"Merlin," he said. "You're *married*."

Harry nodded, slowly again. "Since October of this past year. It's April now."

Draco raised an eyebrow, smirking a bit. He nodded when Harry spoke. He glanced behind them at their sleeping child but didn't say anything.

"How did you end up with ... him?" Sirius asked, raising an eyebrow at Draco in turn.

"It's a long story," Harry said, still feeling numb from shock.

"Sirius, where are you? Are you okay? What happened? Are you

alone? Why didn't you answer the first time I tried to talk to you?"

"I'm fine," Sirius answered. "I didn't even know you tried to reach me before. I've been trying as long as I've been here. And as far as where here is ... I really don't know. It's ... difficult to explain when I don't know all the facts myself."

"Can you get out?" Harry asked quickly.

"If I could I would already be there," Sirius said quietly.

Harry frowned, not knowing how to respond to that.

Draco nodded. "Is your brother, Regulus, there?" he asked.

Sirius looked surprised at the question, but nodded.

Draco looked at Harry questioningly, but continued. "We have some questions for him," he said, and then hesitated. "And Lupin is downstairs."

Sirius paused, staring at Draco. "He – he is?" he asked. "How's he been?"

Harry smiled softly. "Why don't you ask him yourself?" he said, still hardly able to believe that he was talking to Sirius again.

Sirius seemed to falter a bit, something Harry might have found odd if he didn't know what the situation between Lupin and Sirius was.

"I – yes," Sirius said, actually looking uncharacteristically nervous.

"He will want to see you," Draco said, a ghost of a smile in his expression. He turned to Harry. "Mrs Weasley will be here to watch Valen in a minute. We should go to the library. The others are waiting."

Harry nodded, taking the cot out of his pocket and unshrinking it again.

"So that baby really is yours?" Sirius asked, still sounding a bit nervous.

Harry smiled and nodded as he got to his feet again and laid Valen gently inside the cot.

"May I ask how you two got a kid?" Sirius raised an eyebrow.

"Another long story," Harry said with a small smile.

Draco smirked, suppressing a colourful retort about how children are conceived. Instead he just said, "Magic."

"Ah," said Sirius, nodding, an eyebrow still raised.

"I'm going to put you in my pocket for a minute," Harry said,

anxious to get down to the library and not wanting to have to explain to Mrs Weasley right at the moment.

"Okay," said Sirius with a nod. Just then, there was a knock on their door.

"Harry, dear?" It was Mrs Weasley.

"Yeah, come in," Harry called and he explained to her that Valen had been fed and burped and had just been laid down for a nap.

He walked out into the sitting room to Apparate without waking Valen up.

Hermione, Ron and Remus were already in the library when Harry and Draco arrived. Draco looked quickly between Harry and Lupin. He had some idea of how the man would feel about talking to his dead lover. He wondered if the other two had ever guessed about the relationship.

Everyone looked up when Harry and Draco entered.

"Oh, Harry," Hermione said right away. "I think I found something in one of the notebooks that could be-"

Harry held a hand up. "Erm," he said, not really sure how to go about this, "Remus?"

Remus was sitting in one of the overstuffed chairs and had one of James's notebooks open. "Yes, Harry?" he asked. "Is Valen all right?"

"Oh, yeah. Yeah, he's fine," Harry answered.

Ron and Hermione were staring at him strangely.

"I think – I think there's something you should see," Harry said, reaching into his pocket and pulling the mirror out.

Draco nearly held his breath as Harry handed the mirror to Lupin. Personally, he would have warned the man, but Harry had his own way of doing things.

Remus reached for the small mirror and looked at it. He nearly dropped it when he saw Sirius's face.

Harry bit his lip, not knowing if he should watch or not.

Sirius swallowed, opening and closing his mouth before he actually spoke. "Hey, Moony," he said quietly.

Remus was speechless for a moment. "Padfoot?" he managed to whisper.

"In the flesh – well, sort of," Sirius answered with a small half-grin, but it was sad too.

"Harry is that – " Hermione began, looking at Harry with widened eyes.

Draco nodded to both Hermione and Ron.

Remus was choked up and he had trouble speaking. "How?" he asked in wonder, stroking the mirror like he could touch the other man through it.

"You remember these old things from school," Sirius said. "I gave one to Harry, remember?"

Remus's eyes were teared up and he nodded. "Yes, I remember now," he said hoarsely.

"I've been trying to reach him, but I guess he didn't have his mirror lying around. Can't say I blame him."

Harry bit his lip again.

"It's ... it's been a long time," Remus said, swallowing hard. "A lot has happened."

"So, I heard," said Sirius, smiling sadly. "Harry's married and has a baby."

Remus rolled his eyes, smirking. "With Draco Malfoy," he added.

Sirius snorted. "Yeah. He told me that too," he said. "So ... how have you been? You been ... okay?"

Remus looked a bit embarrassed but shrugged. "I miss you," he said quietly.

Sirius smiled sadly again. "I miss you," he said, and Harry could hear that they both wanted to say more.

"What's it like?" Remus asked.

Sirius frowned. "I hate it," he said quietly.

Draco didn't want to interrupt but he was curious himself. He looked at Harry and the others, judging their reactions as well.

Harry frowned and bit his lip again. All of this was so very odd, and so very frustrating. He could do nothing to help Sirius and he knew it.

"I don't know where I am," Sirius continued. "I have to assume it's some sort of holding place, where anyone goes from here I don't know. It seems as though all the people I've talked to have something in common: all of our deaths were by murder."

"Dumbledore," Draco said, practically under his breath.

Harry's eyes widened and he looked to Remus. "Dumbledore," he

said, louder than Draco had Remus caught the exchange. "Sirius, I think the boys need to ask you some questions relating to our work," he said. "But ... it means a lot ... to hear your voice, to see you."

"Talk to me later," Sirius said quickly and a bit insistently, seeming almost scared to let Remus out of his sight. Draco took a deep breath, not liking to be reminded of what that would feel like if it happened to Harry and himself.

Harry bit his lip yet again and reached his hand out to take the mirror from Remus. He let out a small breath when Sirius' face was in front of his own again. "Is Dumbledore there, Sirius?" he asked, heart beating a little quicker.

Sirius' eyes widened and he was silent and shocked-looking. "Dumbledore is *dead*?" he asked, mouth agape.

Harry closed his eyes. "Then he's not there," he said, clenching his teeth for a moment.

Sirius still seemed highly alarmed with this news. "He was murdered?" he practically hissed.

"I don't know," Harry answered. "He was killed, but he literally asked for it to happen – planned it even." And Harry explained the situation between the Headmaster and Snape.

Sirius was scowling when he was finished. "I should be there," he said, voice harsh. "I should be there, dammit!" He took several deep breaths through his nose.

Sirius' anger and frustration cut Harry like a knife. He clenched the hand that wasn't holding the mirror.

Draco closed his eyes for a minute, his own guilt rising to the surface before he pushed it back down. "We have to focus on what is now," he said coldly.

Harry blinked the wetness from his eyes and took several deep breaths like his godfather. "We need to speak with your brother," he said. "He may have information very important to us. Is it possible for us to talk to him?"

"I can call him to me," Sirius said, and he looked as if he were trying to calm himself.

Harry nodded. "Please," he said.

Sirius took one final breath before turning slightly and calling, "Regulus Black!"

There was suddenly another voice. "What?" The voice sounded similar to Sirius', but was just a tad higher perhaps.

"I got the mirror to work," Sirius said, frowning at a space slightly to his right.

There was silence.

"Harry Potter wants to talk to you," Sirius continued.

There was another bout of silence before the mirror was passed, and then Harry was looking into the face of Regulus Black. He was a thinner, smaller version of Sirius and looked much more angular and sharp. He raised an eyebrow.

Ron and Hermione rushed over to look at the mirror over Harry's shoulder.

Draco sat up higher on his knees, head near Harry's as he peered into the small mirror, too.

"Yes?" Regulus asked expectantly when Harry simply stared for a moment.

"You knew about Voldemort's Horcruxes," Harry said. "You found the locket."

Regulus's eyes seemed to widen just a tad before he hid it with a cool expression. "You know of them?" he asked.

Draco nodded. "We destroyed the locket," he said.

Regulus looked at Draco and seemed a bit suspicious of him. "Are you Lucius Malfoy's son?" he asked.

"Is he there too?" Draco asked, suddenly cool.

Regulus was as cool as Draco. "I saw him once."

Harry frowned.

"I killed him," Draco said, coldly but almost defiantly.

"I heard that his son killed him only a short while ago," said Regulus with small smirk of a smile.

"It was personal," Draco said, "but this concerns you. We need to know if you know anything about the knife the Dark Lord always carried with Him. Gryffindor's dagger."

"Ah. Searching for them, are you?" Regulus said with that same little smirk. He didn't ask how Draco knew of the knife. "You said you destroyed the locket. I must admit, it rather befuddled me. How did you do it?"

"Parseltongue," Harry answered, seeing a bit why Regulus had

annoyed Sirius so much.

"The dagger?" Draco asked again.

Regulus looked back at Draco. "Eager, are we?" he asked, and Harry frowned at him with dislike.

Regulus let out a quiet snort. "He killed me with it," he said.

Harry's mouth fell open.

"In the Forbidden Forest – you know the one, I'm sure," Regulus continued. "The area He called me to was supposed to be some sort of place where there used to be a mansion owned by Rowena Ravenclaw. Thousands of years ago. Not even Dumbledore knew about it. The Dark Lord told me all of it before He drove that dagger through me. Perfect place for Him to have placed a Horcrux. I had actually thought that He'd known that I knew. Obviously, He didn't."

"Why did he kill you then if he didn't know you knew about the Horcruxes?" Harry asked.

Regulus narrowed his eyes a bit. "Why don't you serve the Dark Lord and see how long it takes you to want to get out," he said stonily. It was obviously a touchy subject with him. "Trying to get away from it all is considered traitorous."

Harry narrowed his eyes as well.

Draco nodded. It made sense to him. "How do we find the place?" he asked.

Regulus sighed. "He had me fly there starting from the edge of the Hogwarts grounds. I'd say it's about ... 150 to 160 kilometres from there, give or take a few. If it's still sitting how it was then, there should be a large empty spot in the trees from the air. It looks like a giant Dark Mark; I believe the Dark Lord made it Himself. Easy to miss, but not if you're looking for it."

Draco nodded again. "Do you know of any obstacles to getting the dagger?" he asked.

Regulus snorted humourlessly. "He didn't tell me that He made it into a Horcrux or what we were going there for. I know of nothing – I'm dead." He said it as though Draco had asked a ridiculous question.

Harry frowned again. "So you don't know anything about it then?"

"No. Only where I was killed. That's it."

Draco nodded. "Well, it is helpful. As was your journal," he added.

Regulus looked at Draco and raised an eyebrow once again. "You found that old thing, did you?" he asked. "Good to know that it didn't fall into ... the wrong hands. I hadn't ever planned on leaving it out in the open, but one never knows when one will be leaving the glorious world of the living."

"They're asking questions, Regulus," came Sirius' voice, slightly hard. "They don't need your sarcasm."

Regulus rolled his eyes. "If that is all," he said. "I take it you'd like my brother again?"

"Yes. If you don't have anything else to tell us. Draco?" Harry said, wondering if there was anything else they could ask the man about.

Draco only shrugged.

Regulus raised an eyebrow one last time and then Sirius was in the mirror again. "Bloody prat," he muttered bitterly. "Now what was all that about?"

Remus moved a bit closer at the sound of Sirius' voice again.

Harry began trudging through the whole mess about Horcruxes with Sirius, pausing for his outbursts and questions. Once finished, Sirius was angry again.

Harry sighed and was silent for a few moments. "Sirius ..." he began slowly, unable to hold back this one question any longer. "Are my parents there?"

Sirius looked at Harry and his anger turned to sad resignation. "Yes, but it's not as simple as you're thinking."

Harry frowned, waiting for more.

"I can't call them to me like I can Regulus. For some reason he's the only one I *can* call. It must be because he's my brother. I ran into Lily and James *once*." He seemed angered by this. "But we got separated and I haven't been able to find them since. It's nearly impossible and I'm lucky I got the time that I did. I hate it here," he said again through his teeth.

"Sirius," Harry said, hurting for the man again, "if there were anything I could do I would-"

"Don't," Sirius said, cutting him off. "I don't need it. I know you

would, Harry."

Harry swallowed the lump in his throat and there was silence yet again.

"I don't want to see you here," Sirius said suddenly and fiercely. "So be careful."

Harry stared hard and nodded firmly.

Draco's grip on Harry's arm tightened.

Remus smiled sadly, looking at Sirius as he moved up beside the chair.

Harry felt Draco's hand and moved his arm out of his hold to grasp it, squeezing. He looked up at Lupin. "You take this," he said, but before he actually gave it to him, he looked down at Sirius again. "If you ever happen to ... come across them"

"You will be the first to know," Sirius said, obviously trying to give Harry a parting smile, but it was more of a grimace.

Harry handed the mirror to Lupin then, who took it with hands that shook slightly. He walked over to a chair and sat down.

Harry smiled sadly at him and turned to look at Draco, Ron and Hermione. "Should we head upstairs?" he asked, feeling overwhelmed.

"Yes," Draco said, still holding his husband's hand and helping him to his feet.

"Sitting room," Harry told Hermione and Ron, wrapping his arms around Draco's waist and Apparated them.

Mrs Weasley was sitting on the sofa, reading a magazine when they arrived. She jumped slightly at the noise they made and then again when Ron and Hermione entered. "Finished already?" she asked.

Harry nodded. "For today at least," he said.

She nodded. "Valen is in his cot still," she said, sounding a little disappointed. "He didn't wake up once."

Harry smiled and nodded.

"Well, I guess I'll go down and help Arthur. Goodness knows how often he gets hurt trying to charm those Muggle contraptions." She got to her feet and Disapparated.

Draco sighed and walked over to the cot, looking down at the baby who made a silly face in his sleep.

Hermione dropped onto the sofa, wide-eyed. "We actually talked to him? Talked to Sirius again? I didn't know you had that mirror, Harry."

Harry walked over beside Draco, looking down at Valen as well. "I'd forgotten about it," he said. "I didn't think it worked anyway."

Draco didn't say anything. Part of him wished they didn't have the mirror now. He felt a shiver down his spine and realised he was afraid.

"The dagger *is* the Horcrux," said Ron. "We know for sure now."

"And we know where it is," Harry said quietly. "The last one."

Draco looked in confusion at his lover, realising that he had probably missed part of the conversation.

"What do I do after all of this is done?" Harry asked, frowning. "Do I just bloody go after him?"

"Of course not," said Hermione seriously. "We'll need a plan after the Horcruxes are destroyed."

"I don't know what sort of plan I would come up with," Harry said, slightly bitter and not even really knowing the reason for it.

Draco frowned. "The last one is still the damn snake," he said.

All three of the others sighed and frowned.

"But getting to the snake includes me going after him," said Harry, finally looking up from Valen.

"Well, you can't just march in," said Hermione. "You need *some* sort of plan."

"I know, Hermione," said Harry, glancing at her and sighing again.

"There's still those journals," she said. "You could still very well find something in there."

Draco was still scowling. "You will need more than wandless magic to defeat Him," he said. "The monster can read your mind."

Harry huffed. "I don't know what you want me to do about that," he said. "I'm a terrible Occlumens."

"Well, you could learn it," said Hermione. "It didn't go very well because ... well, Snape was teaching you."

Harry frowned, remembering the time with distaste.

"You never learn anything with him," Draco said with a sigh. "Do you remember that I trained in both Occlumency and

Legilimency?"

"You've said so before," said Harry. "Are you saying you could teach me?"

Draco smiled a little at that. "I have some ideas of how," he said.

Harry raised an eyebrow.

"It would be good to know," said Hermione. "Blocking your mind and being able to see into other's makes for very skilled wand-work."

Harry nodded, remembering his 'battle' with Snape at the end of sixth year. "So I learn it then," he said.

"Yes, you should," said Hermione.

Harry nodded again, and then a thought came to mind and he frowned a bit. "Do you remember what I told you after the battle in the Ministry?" he asked Ron and Hermione.

"Which part?" asked Ron.

Harry glanced at Draco. "When Voldemort possessed me," he said.

"What?" Draco nearly shouted in reaction, his eyes wide with fear.

Harry sucked in a quiet breath. "It's fine, love," he said. "He was only inside for about a minute."

"Inside you?" Draco asked, horrified. "Tell me."

Harry took another breath and turned to face Draco. "Voldemort and Dumbledore were duelling," he said. "I was in the room as well. Voldemort possessed me and spoke through me, basically taunting Dumbledore with my body and voice. But he couldn't stay inside for long, according to Dumbledore anyway."

"Why couldn't He?" Draco asked, heart pounding.

"Love," said Harry. "Dumbledore said that Voldemort couldn't stay inside because there was too much love. He detests it and it hurt him. Dumbledore said he felt agony, I believe."

Draco tried to take in the information, taking deep calming breaths as he thought through the implications. "You didn't tell me about the scar until Christmas and now this," he said. "Anything else about your ... connection ... with Him that you haven't told me?"

Harry winced. "Sorry, I just ... forget all that you weren't there for. It feels like you've been here forever. And, no, I don't think

there's anything else I haven't told you. You know about the dreams already, and the scar, and I think this is it."

Draco huffed, feeling annoyed and frightened by the surprise information.

Harry sighed. "Well, why I brought it up anyway," he said, "is because I wanted to ask if possession was a form of Legilimency."

Hermione nodded. "It is," she said. "It's a bit harder to do, but it is a form."

Draco tried to push his fear away and concentrate on the information. "Most likely made stronger by the link you have through the scar," he said.

Harry thought for a few moments again. "What do you think would happen," he began slowly, "if I were to try and possess him?"

Both Hermione and Ron looked apprehensive about the idea. "Wouldn't that hurt you, mate?" Ron asked.

"Probably," said Harry, still speaking slowly. "But I think it may hurt him more than me."

"Yes," Draco said, "you could control Him that way." He shuddered. The idea was still distasteful to him but he could see the logic of it.

"But Voldemort is a master of Legilimency," said Hermione, frowning. "How could you expect to be able to stay inside Him for longer than a few moments? And even if you were able to, what would you do? The pain you would suffer could very well be too great for you to accomplish anything other than hurting him for as long as you could stay inside."

Harry huffed. "But what if I could force my power on him? Wouldn't enough of it kill him if it causes him such pain?"

"Regardless, you need to study Occlumency and Legilimency," Draco said with a sigh. He was tired.

Hermione sighed too. "And there are those journals, like I said before," she said. "If you could use Legilimency to force your own power on Voldemort and hurt him, imagine what you could do if there's some sort of power you could use from the Ministry. It would probably be safer as well. Using your own power and going inside Voldemort's body could ..." She trailed off, frowning. "Well, it probably wouldn't be good."

Harry frowned too. "So then we should definitely try to get into the Ministry," he said.

"Yes," Draco said, sighing again. "But first the Horcrux." His head hurt and he didn't want to think anymore.

Harry nodded.

"So, when do we go to see if Regulus was right?" Ron asked, frowning.

Harry bit his lip and looked down at Valen. "As soon as possible. As always," he said quietly.

Draco was staring at their son but not really seeing anything. He wanted to pick him up, grab Harry, and run. He wanted to see if they could get out of the madman's reach and damn the rest of the world to the hell. He closed his eyes and shuddered. "Not today," he said.

"No, not today," Harry agreed, taking Draco's hand. He frowned at Draco's shudder and thought he might have heard fear in his tone. "Soon though," he insisted. He didn't want to go, but he knew the quicker they went, the better. He kissed the side of Draco's face.

Draco squeezed Harry's hand, trying to bring himself back where he needed to be. All he wanted at that moment was to curl up in bed with his little family.

"Get prepared," Harry told Ron and Hermione, studying Draco's face intently, "we'll be going within the next few days." He didn't want them to go, to endanger themselves, but he knew they would insist, and he grudgingly acknowledged that he would probably greatly need their help.

They nodded.

"And then I'll have to start on Legilimency," Harry said.

Draco nodded and then looked at Hermione and Ron, hoping they would leave soon but not wanting to be rude to them. He almost laughed at himself over that. He sighed.

Harry sighed as well and turned to his friends. "I know everything that's happened today is sort of ... huge, and I want to talk about it, but do you think I could have just a bit with Draco alone?" He gave them a look that said, "Something is up with my husband and I want to know what it is."

Hermione got to her feet quickly, nodding. She looked a tad disappointed but grabbed Ron's hand. "Sure," she said. "Just come

and get us when you want." And the two of them Disapparated.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX –

Beloved Incubus

Draco sighed in relief when they were gone and reached into the cot to pick up Valen, holding him carefully and cradling him to his chest.

"Do you want to ... talk, love?" Harry asked, stroking Valen's cheek with a finger very gently.

Looking into those amazing green eyes, the last thing Draco wanted was talking. Cradling Valen in one arm, he took Harry's hand and led them to the bedroom. Draco sat down on the edge of the bed and kicked his shoes off before laying back and holding out his silver hand to his husband to draw him in.

Harry smiled gently and got out of his shoes as well before taking Draco's hand and getting on the bed with him. He pressed close to his side, staring at his face.

His husband and their child in his arms, Draco allowed his body to relax a bit and was surprised to find a small sob escape his lips when he did.

Harry's eyes widened just a little, but he had been thinking that something was bothering Draco, and so he wasn't surprised. He pressed closer still and kissed Draco's cheek gently, keeping silent.

Draco closed his eyes and wasn't too shocked to feel a tear escape as he did. He just lay there holding his family and feeling a powerful wave of fear and longing.

"I love you," Harry whispered very quietly, not knowing what else to say. "I'm here."

Draco nodded, holding him tight as he lay there and cried. He felt foolish. Harry was always there when he cried.

Harry kissed Draco's cheek again, bringing an arm around to stroke the other side of Draco's face. He whispered soothing words into his ear and let Draco's tears fall, knowing that it would probably make him feel better.

Valen began to squirm and then to cry.

Harry sighed quietly, still stroking Draco's face. He kissed him one last time and then sat up, holding his arms out. "Here, I'll take him," he said quietly, frowning slightly.

"He's hungry," Draco said as he passed their son to his husband.

Harry nodded, scooting back amongst the pillows as he usually did. He set Valen in his lap, took his own shirt off and situated the baby at a nipple, sighing again. He stared down at Draco quietly.

Draco wiped his eyes with his hand and took some deep breaths, feeling cleaner somehow. He watched again in awe as Harry fed the tiny boy, feeling the power in both the act and the magic. "I never thought I would have this," he said softly.

"Have what?" Harry asked quietly.

"This," Draco gestured to himself, Harry and Valentine. "Our little family."

Harry smiled gently. "I thought you said your parents had everything figured out for you," he said. "You never thought you would be a father?"

"Yes, I was supposed to be a father," Draco said. "I was supposed to mould the next Malfoy heir. Love was never part of the plan."

Harry nodded. "But you did get to marry someone you love," he said. "And we have a son - however that worked, but here he is." He smiled gently again.

Draco smiled. "Yes, and here you both are," he said wistfully.

"Here we both are," Harry repeated. "I'm not going anywhere and I'm sure Valen's here to stay as well."

Draco looked up into those green eyes and felt like he could melt. "You are trying to reassure me," he said with a smile. He sighed.

"Do you need reassurance?" Harry asked.

"You are upset because I was crying," Draco said, "but you haven't asked me why."

"I'm not upset," Harry said with a small sigh. "Not in any sort of angry way Why were you crying?"

Draco pursed his lips, frowning. "It matters more now," he said.

Harry frowned slightly. "What matters more?" he asked.

"That at least one of us live," he said.

Harry bit his lip and looked down at Valen. "I know," he said,

nearly whispering.

Valen's little suckling noises made Draco smile. He reached a hand out to touch the baby's tiny one. "We've never talked about what happened the last time we destroyed one," he said.

Harry looked up at Draco again. "It ... isn't something I particularly wanted to talk about," he said.

"I died. At least twice," Draco said quietly.

Harry swallowed heavily, just those simple words making his heart beat faster. "Literally ... dead?" he asked.

"Yes," Draco said. "And the third time was back at the house where Valen was born."

Harry clenched his hands. He bit his lip and nodded after a moment, looking down at Valen again. "Why was I able to bring you back?" he asked quietly.

"I think it is related to that clause of our binding promises," Draco said. "I was dead but not gone. You healed me, made my body work again."

Harry's breathing was deep and heavy as he thought about that. "It's been like that since the start," he said.

Draco frowned, unsure how much of what he was thinking he should share with his husband. "Have you heard of a magical creature called an Incubus?" he asked.

Harry frowned, shrugging. "I don't think so," he said, wondering why Draco was asking about a magical creature when they were talking about their binding promise.

"Succubi and Incubi are creatures who need sexual energy to live," Draco said, sounding like he was reciting from a book. "The males are called Incubus. In some ways, that clause seems to have mimicked their traits in me. Benefits and limits, alike."

Harry frowned again. "Limits?" he asked.

"Well, the most obvious is that my life energy appears directly tied to yours," Draco said. "Without it, I am ... empty. But we knew that. What is interesting is that you seem to be able to bring me back from things that have killed me as well. I think you have been healing me other times and we didn't notice it."

"Well, those sound like benefits to me," Harry said, looking up.

Draco blushed then, smirking. "You are aware that most people

could not have sex as often as we do and not be ... sore?" he asked.

Harry couldn't help it. He smiled a bit. "Yeah, I guess," he said.

"It may be that you heal me every time and we just were both so inexperienced, we didn't notice," Draco said, still blushing. "And there were other times, like the cuts I made on myself and the way they healed without even scarring when we did the second binding."

"That's a good thing," said Harry. "Otherwise, not only would you have a huge scar down your chest, your arse and my cock would be skinned."

Draco rolled his eyes. "Yes," he said with a smirk. "So the point here is that your magic has made me into something I wasn't. But there are always consequences to magic."

Harry went back to frowning again. "And what are these consequences?" he asked.

"Or rather limits," Draco corrected. "The problem with breaking the rules, Harry, is then you don't know the limits. At some point we may find them. Did it take longer to bring me back this time?"

"I think so," Harry said, thinking back to compare.

"Someday it might not work at all," Draco said, "or worse."

Harry frowned at Draco in fear and confusion. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Someday my soul may no longer be in my body when you try to bring me back," Draco said, sighing. "I see two possibilities if that happens."

Harry's breathing and heart sped up. "What are they?" he asked, nearly whispering.

"First, that I would remain dead. The lesser of the potential problems," Draco said, not able to meet Harry's eyes as he told him.

"What could be worse than that?" Harry said, voice still the same.

"You bring me back without a soul," Draco whispered.

Harry was speechless for several moments, fearful tears brimming his eyes. "Like a Dementor's kiss," he whispered.

Valen squeaked, flailing little arms in protest.

Harry looked down, and tears spilled over as he imagined Draco gone and himself and Valen left without him. "But you don't know for sure," he said to Draco, closing his eyes and lifting the baby to his shoulder.

Draco moved up to put his arms around them both, resting his head against Harry's forehead. "I need you to promise me something," he whispered.

Harry squeezed his eyes even more tightly shut. "What?" he asked, but he could hardly say it.

"Promise that you won't keep my body alive if that happens," Draco whispered.

Harry clenched his teeth to keep the sobs from escaping his lips. "I-" he tried to say, but no sound came out.

Draco brought a hand around to cup Harry's chin, tipping his face up to look into his eyes. "I would not want to live like that," he said.

Harry stared into Draco's face, knowing he was right. "I promise," he whispered, making his voice work.

"Valen's asleep," Draco observed quietly, kissing his husband gently and then reaching for the infant. "Let me put him in his cot."

Harry let Draco take Valen and sat wiping his eyes, still scared.

Draco Summoned the cot from the other room. He kissed Valen's forehead and laid him down gently. Then he climbed back onto the bed and sat kneeling beside his husband.

Harry didn't know if he could look at Draco without starting to cry again. He didn't know what to say. Draco had basically just told him that this next Horcrux could kill him - worse than kill him, leave him an empty shell left in his own despairing thoughts. Harry had grown so used to being able to save Draco through their bond. He'd never thought that limits were a possibility.

"I have always known that this war may kill me. It's not that I feel any less strongly about the need to do the job we are doing," Draco said. "In fact, Valen makes it even more important to me." He frowned. "I just never thought about what actually being dead would be like."

"Sirius hates it," Harry said quietly, still unable to look at Draco. He brought his knees up to his chest, staring at them instead.

"I didn't mind it so much when I just thought of it as an end," Draco said, nodding as he continued, "but the idea of being conscious but without you - I don't want that."

"I don't know if I could do it without you," Harry whispered,

thinking of Lupin only able to see Sirius through a mirror. Harry felt like that would make it worse somehow. He couldn't imagine looking at Draco through that tiny little frame, unable to touch him or kiss him, Draco unable to touch or hold Valen. He shivered.

"You have to survive," Draco said, sounding almost urgent in tone. "Valen shouldn't be left without at least one of us."

Harry suddenly reached out and grabbed the front of Draco's shirt tightly. He pulled him so that there were only centimetres between their faces. "Both of us," he said insistently, unable to take the thought of Draco dying.

Draco's heart sped up and he shivered. Harry's green eyes were flashing and his magic crackled over the blond's skin.

Harry's eyes brimmed with tears again. "I can't do it without you," he repeated. "I need you - we both need you. But, Merlin, *I* need you with me - forever."

Draco nodded, his left hand coming up to cup his lover's face. "Yes," he said, trembling.

Harry's hand tightened further on Draco's shirt, his own chest heaving. "I need you *right now*," he whispered. "Please, Draco." A few tears spilled over.

"Yes, yours," Draco said, his fingers stroking the trail left by the tears. He leant in and licked a tear from Harry's chin.

Harry closed his eyes and it caused a few more tears to fall. He unclenched his hand and trailed it down Draco's chest and then back up it, under the shirt this time.

Draco licked the tears as they fell, nipping at Harry's chin as well. He gasped as Harry's hand touched his skin. "Please, yes," he whispered.

Harry opened his eyes again and simply stared at Draco, his hand resting over Draco's heart, feeling it beat. After a few moments of silence, he moved forward and closed the very small space between their mouths, kissing Draco gently.

"Mmm," Draco hummed, his lips moving against Harry's and his right hand sliding back into the man's hair.

Harry slid his tongue across Draco's bottom lip slowly, kissing as if he didn't kiss him dozens of times every day. He breathed in his smell, savoured his taste and revelled in the simple feel of his skin.

Draco had been pulled forward by Harry, so that while the other man was sitting up against the headboard, Draco was leaning over him. He took hold of the headboard with his silver hand and slid a leg over Harry, so that he was sitting in his lap, facing him. He breathed into the kiss, every movement of Harry's intoxicating.

"I need you," Harry whispered between slow kisses. "I need you, Draco." He moved his free hand to Draco's back, moving it up his shirt as well.

"Yours, all yours," Draco responded, skin on fire everywhere Harry touched.

"Yours," Harry replied, pulling away from Draco only to remove his shirt. He moved hands slowly over his naked chest in wonder. "I love you," he whispered, moving forward to lay a kiss on Draco's collarbone.

Draco shivered when Harry slid his shirt off of him. He wasn't cold. Far from it. Warm, strong hands caressed his flesh and Harry's lips were firm and soft.

"I want you," Harry said, kissing Draco's lips again. "I want you and I don't care how. Just you."

"Yes," Draco moaned. "Whatever and however, but yes." He released the headboard and put that arm around Harry's waist, sliding forward so that the erection in his trousers pressed against Harry.

Harry gasped quietly, nails accidentally biting into the skin in Draco's back. "Inside," he whispered. "I want you inside me."

"Gods, yes," Draco said, as much to the nails as to the words. "Remove clothes," he said, too worked up already to want to fumble with them.

Harry hardly needed to concentrate with the Clothing Removal Spell anymore. It was almost second nature to him. Within a second their clothes were gone. Harry grabbed Draco's hand and did the Lubricant Spell as well, wanting Draco so badly now, he ached with it.

"Tell me what I am thinking, Harry," Draco said, smirking.

Harry was panting and hardly registered the words. "What?" he asked, confused.

"Tell me what I am thinking of doing to you, and I will," he purred.

"Fucking me," Harry replied immediately, trying to push up against Draco. He was still frowning confusedly, wondering why Draco would tell him to do that.

"Legilimens - use it on me," Draco said, still sitting astride his lover and not moving to do anything yet.

Harry groaned with frustration. "Now?" he whined, his cock hard and twitching in anticipation.

"Yes, now." Draco smiled, knowing the frustration would make Harry's magic more focused.

Harry groaned again, wondering if Draco was going to do this to him every time he wanted sex. He tried to remember what it had felt like to do Occlumency and tried to reverse that. He looked straight into Draco's eyes, concentrating on trying to see behind them. He groaned again. "Ugh, Draco, I can't," he said.

"Don't you want to know what wicked thoughts are behind these eyes?" Draco purred, smiling mischievously at him and lifting an eyebrow. He played with the lube in his hand, rubbing his fingers together.

Harry looked up at Draco again and found that he did indeed want to know. He tried concentrating again, frowning. "*Legilimens*," he said aloud, and he was shocked when he felt some sort of weird, tiny pull and a very blurry picture appeared, but it was strange as he could still see Draco's face. He blinked, trying to make the picture clearer, but the eye contact was broken and therefore, the spell as well.

Draco grinned. "Close," he said, taking his own cock in his hand and stroking it with the lube. "Try again," he encouraged.

Harry frowned heavily, staring directly into Draco's eyes again. Another few moments of hard concentration passed, and Harry said again, "*Legilimens*," a bit louder this time. Draco wasn't resisting or trying to hide anything, so it wasn't as hard as it would be on someone else, and he felt that little pull again. He saw that same blurry picture. Instead of blinking this time, he tried to focus with his mind. He was relieved when the picture became more solid. It was like he was looking at it without his glasses on rather than hardly being able to see anything at all. He saw himself on his knees on the bed, holding the headboard as Draco fucked him from behind.

He gasped and swallowed, his cock twitching again. He blinked accidentally and to his slight disappointment the picture disappeared. He grinned slyly at Draco.

Draco was stroking himself and he could feel it when Harry entered his mind. It felt so amazing that he had to stop his hand for a minute or risk coming just from Harry's magic. And that look on Harry's face after sent a shiver down his spine.

"May I please be fucked now?" Harry asked, licking his lips. He smirked.

Draco climbed off Harry's lap and raised an eyebrow, waiting to see if he'd got a good enough picture to assume the position Draco had been thinking of trying.

Harry waggled his eyebrows and flipped around before raising himself to his knees and holding the headboard tightly, looking over his shoulder at Draco.

"Gods, yes," Draco said, and moved up behind him. He reached fingers down, sliding down the crevice of Harry's arse until he found his entrance and pushed in. "I am going to fuck you," he said in a low, husky voice.

Harry let out a breathy, low laugh. "I expect to be pounded after seeing that," he replied with a gasp as he felt Draco's fingers inside him.

"You get whatever you want now," Draco purred, working him quickly. "I can't wait to be inside you, fucking you until you scream."

Harry's arse clenched around Draco's fingers and his hold on the headboard tightened. "Mmm, fuck yes," he groaned. "I want to scream."

Draco's cock twitched as Harry's muscles clenched around his fingers. "Fuck, yes," he answered, removing his fingers and pushing his cock in to replace them as soon as he could. He slid into his lover, shuddering with pleasure as he did.

Harry moaned loudly, throwing his head back and forward, the muscles in his arms and shoulders flexing as he held on to the wood of the bed and tried to push back against Draco.

Draco grabbed Harry's hips with both hands and began to thrust hard into him, using Harry's hips to control the angle and the speed. "Inside you," he growled. "Always inside you."

Harry cried out and hissed with pleasure, his cock bobbing with Draco's movements. "Fuck, yes, always!" he shouted.

"Tell me, use that beautiful hot mouth of yours to tell me how it feels to have my cock in your arse," Draco told him.

"Oh, fuck," Harry groaned at Draco's words. "So stretched," he growled, being rocked forward. "Fucking owned."

"Yes, you're mine," Draco growled, his body wet with sweat now as he pounded into Harry's. "I am going to come hard inside you," he said, "fill you!"

Harry cried out again, his sweaty hands slipping slightly. "Gonna come so fucking hard," he panted, flushed with heat. "You're cock in me is gonna make me fucking come all over this bed, Draco."

Draco could come just hearing Harry talk like that. He growled again, his fingers digging into the flesh that covered Harry's hips. He flexed his own hips hard forward, screaming as he came inside his lover.

"Fuck, yes, come inside me!" Harry cried, letting go of the headboard with one hand to reach down and finish himself off. He came only seconds later, crying out again and trembling with the effort of holding himself up.

Magic rolled over Draco in waves and he clung to Harry, holding himself inside, pulling the other man's hips against his own. He moaned loudly, his head falling forward to rest on Harry's back.

Harry panted, still trembling. He reached his now sticky hand up and grasped the bed with it again, eyes sliding shut.

Draco was still trembling as he ran his hands around his lover's waist, holding him tight against his own body still, his face pressed to the back of his neck. "I love you," he whispered. "I don't want any existence without you."

"I won't allow that to happen," Harry answered. He needed to say it.

Draco nodded, hoping that it was a promise Harry could keep. He kissed the back of Harry's head and then carefully pulled out and back so that he was sitting on his own feet, still on his knees. The view was fantastic, he thought.

Harry took a deep breath and gingerly lowered himself so that his arse wasn't in the air. He felt a bit sore and he loved it. "Did we wake

the baby?" he asked, glancing over at the cot.

"Yes," Draco chuckled. "But he seems happy enough."

Harry smiled and laughed, turning so that he could lie on his back.

Draco knelt beside him still, and grinned. "Do you realise what you did?" he asked.

"Had some great sex," Harry replied with a goofy smile.

"That too," Draco smiled. "And performed Legilimency without a wand."

"Wasn't very good though," Harry said, but he was still smiling.

"Wandless, Harry," Draco said. "I can't do that. Few people can do even the simple spells wandless."

Harry nodded slowly. "So you think I can do it?" he asked, face serious now.

"I am pretty sure you can master the art, yes," Draco said. He Summoned his wand and did a Cleaning Charm on Harry, himself, and the bed, and then climbed over his husband and reached into the cot to pull out a wriggling infant. Valen was burbling happily at his parents.

Harry smiled and sat up a bit. "I hope so," he said, staring at their son.

"Watch this," Draco said, and laid their son face down on the bed. Valen wiggled fiercely for a minute, pushing at the bed and then managed to lift his own head and look at Harry.

Harry gasped quietly and smiled hugely. "Brilliant," he said, pushing himself up more and then lying on his own stomach to face the baby. "Valen's strong, huh?" he said to him in a funny, gruff voice. He kissed his nose.

Valen wrinkled his face up in response to the kiss and burbled some more.

Draco lay down on the other side, looking at his child and his husband, grinning from ear to ear. "He can lift his head now. That means rolling over next and then ... crawling."

"Oh, Merlin," Harry said, pretending to be afraid, but actually wondering what sort of trouble the little boy before him could get into. "At this rate, he'll be going off to Hogwarts when he's five!" he said with a laugh.

Draco picked up the infant, rolled onto his back and held him face to face. "Listen to me," he said in a mock stern voice. "Slytherin. Sly - ther - in."

Harry grinned and huffed in mock indignation. He pinched Draco. "Don't listen to him. He doesn't know what he's talking about," he said, rolling and scooting close to Draco so that he was pressed side-to-side with him and could easily look at Valen.

Draco laughed and Valen's eyes shone as bright as Harry's. He brought the little boy down to lie on his chest and smiled as Valen continued to make strange noises as them. "He talks a lot, doesn't he?" Draco teased.

Harry snorted. "He'll probably talk your ear off one day," he said. "Is it just me, or does he seem to be getting balder?" He reached and fluffed the little bit of blond hair the baby had.

Draco snorted. "Probably because you are always rubbing his head."

Harry smiled and ceased the movement of his hand. "I can't help it," he said. And it was true; he couldn't help but touch the baby's head, especially when he was feeding him.

"I am sure it's fine." Draco laughed. "You pull at mine all the time and I am not bald yet."

Harry laughed. "True," he said, pulling at a strand.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN –

Once More My Friends

After the conversation Harry and Draco had had the previous day, they both thought it very important for Valen to have appointed godparents before they went looking for the Horcrux. As much as Harry told himself over and over again that he would keep both he and Draco alive, he couldn't ignore the possibility of something happening to them, and if he was honest with himself, the possibility wasn't so small.

Harry had agreed with Draco on Bill and Fleur being made Valen's godparents, but he still wanted to talk to Ron and Hermione about it. The four of them and Valen were in one of the smaller downstairs sitting rooms. Hermione was sitting on the couch with Valen in her lap, Ron next to her. They - like everyone else - had both taken a great liking to the baby and were playing with and talking to him. It made Harry feel guilty watching them. He glanced at Draco next to him on the second sofa and gave him a slightly sad smile.

Draco shook his head and sighed. This wasn't about who they liked best. This was a matter of safety.

Harry sighed as well. "Hey?" he said, getting Ron and Hermione's attention.

"What?" said Hermione in a baby voice, still talking to Valen. She looked up, smiling sheepishly. "What?" she asked again, normally this time.

Ron snorted at her and looked up as well.

Harry cleared his throat. "Draco and I are going to appoint Valen godparents," he said. "We want to do it before we go off for the Horcrux ... just in case."

Not the way Draco would've started, but this was Harry's place to tell. He sat and waited.

Hermione cocked her head to the side and sat staring at Harry,

waiting for what he wanted to say.

"I don't know why," Harry began slowly looking down at the floor slightly, "but I wanted to talk to you two before we did it."

Ron raised an eyebrow.

"We've decided to ask Bill and Fleur," Harry said sort of quickly, glancing up again.

"Oh?" said Hermione, raising her eyebrows.

"Er, yeah," said Harry.

"Why them?" Ron asked curiously with a shrug, going back to staring at Valen.

Harry sighed with relief when he realised that neither of them were hurt. "They're already married, Fleur speaks French and Draco wants Valen to, and they could take him to France if things got bad here," he said.

Draco smiled, watching Valen with the other two. He was imitating the faces they made at him.

Hermione nodded. "Yes, it makes rather a lot of sense. Good idea," she said.

"Have you talked to them yet?" Ron asked, looking up again.

Harry shook his head. "No, not yet. We were going to today."

Hermione let out a little laugh, both at the face Valen made and at Harry. "Well you certainly don't need our permission," she said.

"Well, I know," Harry said, smiling at his friends. "I just didn't want you two to think ... that I didn't consider you both, because I did."

They beamed.

"It's just that, you'll both be coming with us to get the Horcrux and then after ... with Voldemort and all and, well, he'll be safer if Bill and Fleur are his godparents," Harry finished.

Draco nodded, relaxing now that things had gone well.

Hermione laughed again. "Oh, Harry, you're so ... you," she said, shaking her head at him.

Ron snorted.

Harry raised an amused eyebrow. "What's that supposed to mean?" he asked.

"Nothing, mate," said Ron, shaking his head as well.

Draco smirked, agreeing silently with the other two.

Harry grinned and shrugged. "I guess," he said.

"When are we going?" Ron asked, turning serious.

Harry sighed. "As soon as Valen has godparents," he said.

"Ah, Bill? Fleur?" Harry asked, standing in the doorway of the main sitting room. Draco stood slightly behind him with Valen. After the talk with Hermione and Ron, there was nothing stopping them from asking Bill and Fleur.

Fleur looked up from her magazine and smiled.

Bill was lying on his back near where she sat; a wireless radio on next to his ear. He turned his head and propped himself up on his elbows. "Hey, Harry," he said. "And Draco," he said, tilting his head so that he could see him behind Harry.

Harry smiled and nodded, stepping into the room. He was glad that there wasn't anyone else there, not that this needed to be kept a secret, but he wanted to talk to them alone first.

Draco stepped forward and walked up with Valen to sit down in a chair near the couple. He waited for Harry to sit down as well.

Harry pulled another chair up next to Draco and took a seat.

Bill switched the radio off, cutting off a man's sentence about recent attacks near Brighton. "Something you need?" he asked.

Fleur was smiling at Valen and waving at him with one slender finger.

"Well, there's something we'd like to ask you," Harry said.

"We ask that you do us and our child the honour of being Valen's godparents," Draco said.

Bill sat all the way up, staring at Harry and Draco with a confused look.

Fleur looked up at them, her face surprised. "Us?" she asked.

Harry nodded. "Draco and I have thought about it and we came to the decision that you two would be the best for the job," he said.

"We trust you and we know that you would be able to take care of him," Draco said.

Harry nodded in agreement.

Bill still looked a little confused, but there might have been a slight smile on his lips. "Us, though? Not my mum and dad or even Ron and Hermione?"

Draco smiled. "In addition to our trust of you," he explained, "if something happens to us, you two have the best chance of hiding Valen. Delacours are distant relations to the Malfoys."

Fleur smiled and nodded. "Yes," she said.

"We - we wanted to get it set up as soon as possible," said Harry. "With everything that's been going on, anything could happen."

Bill and Fleur exchanged looks, seeming to have a silent conversation that Harry and Draco couldn't understand.

"We would be very 'appy to do eet," Fleur said finally, smiling at them both and Valen. "Eef, of course, you are certain?"

"Yes, I think we're pretty certain," Harry said, nodding and looking at Draco.

"Definitely," Draco said, nodding.

Bill took a quiet, deep breath, staring up at the baby with a half-grin. "Well, this works out," he said, looking over at Fleur and smiling.

Fleur smiled hugely and nodded to him.

Harry raised an eyebrow at them.

"You two are the first to know then," Bill said, taking another breath. "Even before my mum and dad - or hers."

Harry frowned, confused. "Know what?" he asked.

Draco laughed. "Congratulations," he said happily.

Bill and Fleur beamed.

Harry was still confused.

"I am pregnant, 'Arry," Fleur said happily.

"Oh," Harry said, smiling now as well. "Oh, well, that's great! Congratulations. How long have you known?"

"Only for a few days," said Bill, raising up and sitting on the sofa with Fleur.

She nodded. "We were going to tell everyone tonight," she said.

Draco looked down at his son, smiling. "Looks like you will have someone to play with around here," he said to him.

Harry simply smiled, finding the knowledge that Valen wouldn't have to grow up without anyone his own age was a bit of a relief.

"Give us the day you want to do the ceremony and we're there," said Bill, placing a hand over Fleur's stomach.

"There's a ceremony?" Harry asked, smiling at how Bill reminded

him of Draco right then.

Draco snorted and shook his head. "Yes, Harry," he said rolling his eyes. "And we would like it as soon as possible. Is tomorrow too soon for you two?"

Bill raised his eyebrows in mild surprise but shook his head. "No, that's fine. Dear?"

Fleur shot him a stony look. "I told you not to call me zat," she said.

Bill snorted.

Turning back to Harry and Draco, she smiled. "Zat iz fine," she said.

Draco smirked. "I will make arrangements," he said. "Thank you both."

"No need for zat," Fleur said, shaking her silvery hair out from behind her. She smiled at Harry and Draco. "We have our hands full, do we not?" she asked Draco in French, first looking at Bill and then at Harry. She let out a small laugh.

Draco smirked and nodded, "Merce', Madame."

Harry pulled on his cloak. It was warmer outside now, but still a little chilly. It was the day after the magical ceremony making Bill and Fleur Valen's godparents and Harry, Draco, Hermione and Ron were all getting ready to Apparate to Hogsmeade to retrieve the possible Horcrux.

Harry was scared out of his wits. He sort of wished that Draco hadn't said anything about any limits now. He preferred to think that he could save Draco no matter what the circumstance. *No, I can*, he told himself. *I can save him no matter what the circumstance. We're all going to be fine.*

He sighed quietly and finished with the fasteners on the cloak before looking over his shoulder at his husband.

Draco was dressed and ready. He took Valen from Remus, holding him so that he could look directly into his eyes. "I love you," he said to the child. "Remember that." He kissed him on his forehead.

Harry frowned slightly and bit his lip, coming to stand next to Draco. He kissed Valen's cheek very gently. "We'll only be gone for a

little while," he told him. "Be a good boy? Hmm?" He smiled gently, but his heart was pounding.

Draco smiled and handed the baby back to Remus. "Don't let him fool you," he said to the man, "he is always plotting something."

Harry let out a quiet, amused breath through his nose, watching Draco handing Valen off and resisting the urge to take him back and decide to find the Horcrux another day.

Hermione came up quietly beside Harry. "We're ready if you are," she said, and when Harry turned his head to look at her, there was a knowing gleam in her eyes.

Draco stepped beside him and looked at their friends. "Ready?"

Harry took a very deep breath. "Yes," he said quietly, nodding. He held out his hand and Summoned his Firebolt from the closet.

Hermione was already holding a borrowed broomstick and Ron had his too.

Draco had his broom as well. He looked at it strangely for a moment, remembering the last time he had tried to use it. He hadn't even tried to ride since getting his new hand.

Harry turned to Draco. "We should - we should go now," he said, still feeling like he wanted to grab Valen.

"I love you," Draco said, and Apparated to Hogsmeade.

Harry turned to Lupin quickly. "You - you already know where everything is," he told him. "Thanks for watching him." And then with a nod over his shoulder at Ron and Hermione, Harry Apparated as well.

Draco kept his hood up and scanned the street for possible danger, waiting for the others to arrive.

Hermione and Ron were there seconds later and they both looked to Harry for instruction.

"We're going to have to get to the edge of the Forbidden Forest," he said, looking off in the direction of Hogwarts. "Regulus said it was about 150 kilometres from there, although I'm not sure which point he was talking about. That's not too far a distance though - not with brooms anyway."

Draco nodded and headed toward the gates of Hogwarts. School was in session these days and he wondered how many of his old friends were still there and which ones had left to join Voldemort.

Harry stuck very close to Draco, though they weren't in any real danger - yet. He couldn't believe there was very possibly a Horcrux so close to Hogwarts that Dumbledore hadn't been aware of.

Ron and Hermione walked closely behind the couple in front and the four made their way across the Hogwarts grounds, keeping as far from the school as they could so as not to be spotted.

Draco stopped at the edge of the forest, frowning. "Should we fly from here?"

Harry looked over his shoulder back at the castle again. "I guess," he said. "Fly high so that we can see the mark Regulus was talking about, plus, it'll help us keep out of sight."

Ron and Hermione nodded.

Draco peered into the forest but didn't say anything. He mounted his broom and nodded to Harry.

"All right, up," said Harry, and he mounted his broomstick as well. When he kicked up from the ground there was a fleeting feeling of freedom that flying always provided him with, but it only lasted for a moment. He flew up very high, looking out over the vast green of the forest.

Draco loved flying. It was sad to realise he was finally flying with Harry but wouldn't be able to really enjoy it. At least he was able to hold and handle the broom this time. He followed Harry up and then flew alongside him.

Harry took a deep breath and waited for Ron and Hermione to catch up to him and Draco. When they did and Harry looked at them, he saw that Hermione's face was rather white, but she gave him a nod and he nodded back.

"A little higher," he said. "We need to be able to see a good distance ahead." He flew higher himself and then forward, eyes darting around at the many trees below. There was a huge clearing where Harry figured Hagrid had kept Grawp and many twisting shapes in the trees, but Harry kept in mind that Regulus had said they would know it when they saw it. He kept close to Draco, even in the air.

Draco loved the feel of the wind in his hair and Harry beside him. He scanned the forest below, looking not only for the area described, but for any odd magics that he might sense.

They flew forward over the trees for a small while. Harry ordered Ron and Hermione to fly slightly more to the left so that they were spread out. As more shapes and gaps in the trees flew by, Harry began to wonder if it were possible that they had passed the area accidentally, but right at that moment, he saw a large twisting clearing in the forest below. "Stop!" he called out to the others. The clearing looked a lot like it took the same shape of the snake on the Dark Mark. "Do you see it?" he asked Draco beside him, pointing.

Draco nodded. He took a deep breath and turned toward the area. Draco hated the forest and this promised to be worse than his last encounter with it.

"You think that's it, mate?" Ron asked, coming up beside Harry.

"Yeah," Harry answered. "Let's get closer and see if Draco feels anything." He dipped down very quickly until he could skim the tops of the trees with his toes.

Draco stayed clear of the trees, falling back a bit as they got closer. The closer they got the more uneasy he felt.

Harry paused in the air and looked behind him. "This it?" he asked, knowing that it was and almost hoping that Draco would say it wasn't.

Draco nodded quickly, his hands clenched on the handle of his broom.

Heart beating quicker now, Harry nodded to him. "Let's land," he said, dipping lower. He landed on an edge of the snake-shaped clearing and pulled his wand almost as soon as his feet touched the ground. Ron and Hermione landed next to him, doing the same.

It took Draco two tries to get himself to land and he was sweating when he did.

Harry felt like demanding Draco to Apparate away when he saw him, but he closed his eyes for a moment and tried to get rid of that thought. "You're going to have to lead us there," he said to him in a calm voice that wasn't fooling anyone. "But please, *please* if you feel another trap or whatever it was last time, don't get near."

Draco didn't say the entire area felt like a trap. Like they were literally standing in the middle of a Dark Mark. The ground virtually stank of Dark Magic and it made him feel queasy. He nodded and tried to focus on feeling magic more subtle than that surrounding

them.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT –

Breathless

With the absence of the wind in his ears, the silence of the forest felt heavy, like it was literally pressing down upon Harry. "Stick close," he told Ron and Hermione, although they were already close. "Keep your eyes on the trees. Anything could be in here."

Draco could feel something old beneath the ground and looked carefully. There were several places where stone jutted from the earth and he realised it must've been the stone foundation of Rowena Ravenclaw's mansion. He let his eyes unfocus, feeling for the magics in the place.

Harry watched Draco intently, his heart pounding. He took deep, slow breaths, feeling like he was completely in the dark despite the rays of weak sunlight spilling between the branches above.

Hermione and Ron kept eyes on Draco as well, Hermione holding on to the back of Ron's cloak.

Draco stumbled on some stones but kept walking around the perimeter of the odd-shaped clearing. He occasionally stopped and crouched, resting his hand on the ground and frowning. Toward the middle of the S, he stopped and felt the ground and then jumped up, stumbling back and falling on his arse.

Harry gasped quietly and the air felt a tad thick. He moved quickly forward and got to his knees beside Draco. "What is it?" he asked, voice cracking a bit with his worry.

Draco tried to breathe but it felt like the air had suddenly turned heavy in his lungs. He pointed to the spot and managed, "There."

"There what?" Hermione squeaked, looking at the spot Draco was pointing at.

"Are we going to have to dig for it or something?" Ron asked, panting slightly.

Draco couldn't seem to catch his breath. He nodded and picked himself up, bent over and trying to breathe.

Harry stood as well, panting like Ron. "I'm not fucking digging for anything," he said, pointing his wand. He backed up a bit and blasted some of the earth away. "How deep?" he asked Draco.

Draco staggered forward and looked into the spot. He frowned and began digging with his hands.

Harry moved up close again and reached down to help him. After a moment, Ron and Hermione did too, the four of them digging with their hands.

Harry was getting increasingly nervous, hoping that whatever it was they were digging for, they would be able to touch.

Draco felt it when he touched bone and drew his hand back quickly. He was starting to get lightheaded. Every breath seemed to take too much energy and not enough air.

Harry, Ron and Hermione stopped as soon as Draco did. They were all panting and Harry knew there was something wrong now. They had done nothing to make them so out of breath. The pressing feeling he had got when they'd first landed was back and then Harry realised it hadn't ever left him; it had only got stronger.

"What is it?" he nearly wheezed, feeling the panic rising in his chest.

"Can't ... breathe" Draco gasped but he didn't know if he was heard or not. He gestured for them to back up.

Harry, Ron and Hermione stumbled back. Ron actually fell over, trying to take slow breaths.

Draco closed his eyes and felt around the edges of the body so he could have a clearer idea of the boundaries of the spell. Once he had it figured out, he reached to the middle where Regulus's heart would have been and began carefully moving the dirt, uncovering the handle of the knife still there.

Harry moved forward again. "Is it ... there?" he gasped, knowing that they needed to get out of there as soon as possible.

Draco waved him back again. He sat back, sweat pouring down his body now. He pointed to Harry and then up, trying to tell him to get off the ground.

Harry was trying to concentrate on breathing and it took him a moment to realise what Draco was trying to tell him. "No, please," he said in a desperate whisper. "Let me stay here with you." That one

sentence cost him and he felt pain in his lungs as he tried to breathe after that.

Draco shook his head and gestured stronger. Harry was costing them time and he was worried he would pass out before he did what had to be done.

Ron crawled over to Harry and grabbed his cloak, attempting to drag him away from Draco. "*Accio Harry's Firebolt!*" he wheezed. "Go, Harry," he said, clutching his own chest as the broom came speeding over.

Harry, his breaths even weaker now, looked at Draco like he was about to leave him forever. He clambered onto the broomstick and rose up a few feet, the pressure on his lungs letting up slightly, and then he knew that they would need to leave the clearing completely to be able to breathe properly again.

Draco waited for Harry to get clear. He wanted to get this over with, but not if Harry was close enough to be hurt by whatever trap was waiting.

"Go, Harry!" Hermione said this time, falling to her knees beside Ron.

Grimacing like it physically hurt to leave, Harry flew up higher and could breathe even better. He shook his head to indicate that he wasn't going any further.

Draco reached in and wrapped his right hand around the handle of the dagger and pulled. He felt the energy of the blood magic running up his arm and through his body and he could taste blood in his mouth. The dagger began to slip from the corpse. Just as the knife was free of the ribs, a hand closed on his wrist. A hand made entirely of bones.

Harry watched intently from where he was, unable to really see anything that was going on.

Hermione gasped, or at least took a breath as close to a gasp as she could manage.

Draco cursed himself silently for using his wand hand to grab the dagger. He pulled harder but the bones only dug into the flesh of his wrist and the rest of the skeleton began to rise from the ground, reaching its other hand for his neck.

Ron's eyes widened and he fumbled with his wand, pointing it at

the skeleton of what had to be Regulus Black, but he seemed unwilling to shoot anything at it in fear of hitting Draco.

Harry could see that something was going on and his grip on the broom handle tightened as he prepared to fly back down.

The bone hand closed on Draco's neck and what little air he had been getting was cut off. He used his silver hand to grab the dagger and toss it to Ron.

Ron reached a hand out and clutched at the dagger where it had landed on the ground, stuffing it hurriedly into the inside of his robes.

Hermione pointed her wand now, shooting off a nonverbal spell at the skeleton's head, but it didn't release its grip on Draco.

Harry could stand it no longer and he flew back down quickly, feeling the pressure building the closer he got to the ground. His eyes widened as he landed and he leapt forward and grasped at the hand on Draco's neck, trying to pry the fingers away.

The Inferius didn't release Draco and he felt his skin give under the vise of its hand around his neck, blood seeping and his throat being crushed.

Gasping for breath again now, Harry pulled with all his might at the hand, his fingers slipping in the blood. "No!" he shouted.

He could see Ron and Hermione trying to help, but they couldn't breathe.

He tried to think of a spell he could use to get the Inferius away, but all he could do was pull at the hand.

Draco reached his silver hand up and grabbed the arm at his throat, trying to break the bones before he lost consciousness. His other hand was still in the grip of the Inferius.

Harry took a gasping, searing breath when he finally felt bones beginning to bend back from Draco's throat. He pushed harder at them, hearing them crack. They were very strong, despite having lain here for years. He broke two of the fingers off and then pulled the hand away from Draco, reaching forward to grab the arm when the hand reached for Draco's neck again.

Black spots swam before his eyes now and he knew he was losing consciousness. Draco barely felt it when his neck was released and he fell backwards, the Inferius still holding his right wrist and dragging

him forward into its grave.

Harry barely noticed Ron and Hermione behind him, but he could see that they were doing something and he knew what when one of their figures flew up on his broom. Harry, still holding on to one skeletal arm, began trying to stomp on the other, the pressure on his lungs getting close to being exactly as it was before he had flown up.

Draco blacked out.

Harry stomped on the arm, grasping Draco very hard. The strange pressure in the air was closing in on him rapidly. Even with as hard as he was stomping, it took several moments to break the arm of the Inferius. Finally, Harry heard a crack like a gunshot and the bone snapped under his trainer. The skeleton twitched when the arm was broken but showed no signs of pain, obviously it could not - it was already dead. It only continued to grab for Draco and now at Harry, grabbing at anything it could reach, dragging the arm, still only just hanging on, through the air.

Harry began trying to drag Draco away from it. It was not an easy thing to do, especially with his lungs seeming to clog. Suddenly, there was another pair of hands helping him pull at Draco. Harry looked quickly behind him and saw that it was Hermione. He could also see Ron climbing weakly onto his Firebolt, nearly blue in the face from lack of oxygen.

"Hurry, Harry!" Hermione said frantically to him. "We need to get him in the air!" She was already beginning to pant again.

Harry's lungs were searing now as he pulled with all the strength he had. The Inferius seemed dead set on getting at least one of them. As Harry and Hermione dragged Draco out of its reach, it started to get up from the earth all together.

It was not like skeletons that Harry had seen in some Muggle films when he was younger; it was much, much worse. The holes where the eyes should have been reminded him of a Dementor and dirt and grime spilled from them. It still wore very tattered robes, now thin and worn with huge holes, and covered in dirt as well. The bone of the Inferius was discoloured and disgusting-looking and the face a mindless show of teeth, a grin seeming almost as if it were mocking Harry as he tried to drag his bleeding, suffocating husband

to safety.

Ron had landed again now and was holding his wand pointed at the Inferius as it pulled its legs free from the ground and staggered to its feet, unaffected completely by the drawn wand.

"Take Draco!" Ron yelled at Hermione, casting a quick Lightening Charm on the blond and then Summoning the other broomsticks.

Harry and Hermione both fell over slightly as Draco was lightened.

Hermione recovered from falling. She picked Draco up quickly and hurriedly climbed onto one of the brooms, looking very awkward as she held Draco like he was an over-grown child.

Ron waved her on wildly. "Go! I'll get Harry!"

Harry clutched at his chest, his breathing rapid and short.

Hermione threw terrified looks to the two men but then shot up in the air.

The Inferius was stumbling towards Harry and Ron now, seeming angered by Draco's departure.

Harry didn't need to be told to get on a broom. He began crawling as fast as his body would allow towards his Firebolt, longing for the clear air up above. He actually thought, for a glorious half-second as he climbed onto his broom, that he was going to get into the air with Ron, have the Horcrux and never have to come back here, but he was mistaken.

The Inferius closed the fist with the broken fingers and swung that arm through the air with a loud whooshing sound. It was as if the sun itself hid in fear. Everything darkened and the trees on all sides of them seemed to bend inward.

Harry's heart, though already pounding, seemed to beat double the speed. He knew it wouldn't work - everything around him, his mind, his body - everything told him it wouldn't work, but he had to try. He shot upwards on his broom, but just as he suspected, it was not going to be that easy. Vines shot out of nowhere and held him very firmly in place. He fought them violently as they dragged him and his Firebolt back down the few feet he had made it into the air. All he could think was, *At least I managed another breath.*

He turned his head to see that Ron was fighting vines as well,

wriggling and struggling with all his might, his face as red as his hair.

As Harry continued to fight the vines holding him, everything around him began to swarm like a horde of angry bees. Leaves, sticks, dirt, everything the forest floor provided. The wind blew harder than Harry had ever felt it and his lungs hurt as he tried to draw gasping breaths, panic once again settling into him.

The bramble of the forest began to close in on them like a dark cloud, swirling all around them. It closed out nearly all light, and though Harry could feel the air rushing past him, he could not take a breath of it. It was as if he were drowning, drowning in the middle of the forest, the swirling sticks and leaves taking even more of the oxygen away it seemed. He could now just very barely take a breath and he struggled harder than ever at the vines holding him, but they did not break.

Suddenly, flashing images, visions and memories flew through his mind, all of them of the two blonds most important to him in the world. Valen's little face full of wonder as Harry or Draco did magic for him, Draco's face smiling and laughing at their son. No, Harry was not going down this way, no fucking plant was taking him out.

He took hold of the vine holding his left arm, squeezing it hard. It caught fire and wriggled away from him. Feeling relief at that, Harry reached for another vine, catching it on fire with his bare hand as well. He was soon free but more vines snaked out to take hold of him while the others burned on the ground. He held his hand out and sent fire at them, the magic powerful and stealing his energy quickly.

He stumbled over to Ron, whose face was turning purple now as he struggled to breathe and get away from the vines. Harry had never been so relieved that he was able to do nonverbal magic. He couldn't speak at all and all of the magic he was using came directly from him with no help from his mouth.

He grabbed at the green plant-ropes holding his friend, setting them ablaze. Ron fell to the ground, sputtering and trying to breathe, clawing at his own throat. Harry, amazed that he still had his head, silently Summoned his Firebolt and Ron's Cleansweep and climbed atop his broom again, hoping that Ron would be able to fly his.

To his relief, Ron struggled onto his broom and nearly fell off it

again, but at least he was on. Harry shot another round of fire at the oncoming vines and felt himself grow weaker. He was very lightheaded and had been feeling faint for several moments now. Not even going higher into the air made his breathing any easier. When he looked down, he could see Ron following him, the Inferius trying to reach the tails of their brooms.

Everything still swarming was blocking their way to the sky and Harry raised his hand and tried to sweep it away, his vision darkening. To his dismay, it did not work. It was like a thick, swirling cover that allowed no passage. Taking the last tiny breath he could muster, Harry raised his hand again and blasted at the leaves, dirt and sticks like he had earlier at the earth when they had been trying to dig for the Horcrux. He blasted a hole through the covering and a sharp stick cut his cheek. He shot upwards, the flecks of dirt stinging his eyes as he flew through the rapidly closing opening. Ron followed just in time and they both took gulps of sweet, clear, wonderful air, gasping and drinking it in.

"Harry, Ron!" Hermione cried, speeding towards them, still holding Draco. Her face was tear-streaked and her hands bloody. "I don't know what to do! He's not breathing and I didn't want to leave you -"

"Give him to me," Harry gasped, opening his arms. He still felt weak, but he had to try to heal Draco.

Shaking, Hermione carefully handed Draco over, his head lolling about.

It was not easy to hold Draco to him in the air, but Harry did. He closed his eyes and placed his right hand over Draco's throat, almost as if he were choking him, and rubbed at his neck, trying to heal him like he had healed his own wound when Valen had been born.

"What are you doing?" Ron panted, still taking in great lungfuls of air.

Harry didn't answer him, just kept on focussing his power into his hand. He could feel it working; could feel the wounds closing in Draco's skin and could only hope that the inside of his throat was healing too.

When Harry felt his own power seem to shut off, he opened his eyes again, staring down at the bloody mess of Draco's throat and

now his hand. "Draco, wake up, breathe, anything," he demanded, hoping that it had worked.

– CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE –

Breath of Life

Nothing happened at all. Draco remained unmoving and limp. Harry let out a sob, his head falling forward. "Please, Draco, please," he said weakly.

Hermione was watching the whole thing with wide eyes. "Harry, did you just heal him?" she asked.

Harry couldn't bear to answer that question as it was apparent to him that he had not. Draco still wasn't breathing.

"Harry, did you heal him?" Hermione demanded loudly now, flying nearer to him.

"I t-ried to," Harry gasped, clutching Draco to him.

"Harry, if you did he needs to be resuscitated!"

Harry's head snapped up. "What?" he asked weakly.

"Resuscitated!" Hermione repeated quickly. "CPR!"

Harry's eyes widened but his heart fluttered with hope. "Up here?" he asked incredulously.

Hermione looked quickly down to the ground. "Let's land over there," she said pointing to a spot a very good distance from the Dark Mark clearing.

Harry's mind was racing now and he nodded, holding Draco to him securely as he flew down. Ron and Hermione followed hurriedly.

He touched down to the ground and lowered Draco gently, kneeling next to him. He looked up at Hermione with wide eyes as she landed.

"I don't know how to do it," he said fearfully.

"Breathe into his mouth," she said, speaking quickly. "Press down on his chest and breathe into his mouth."

Trying to keep from panicking again, and slightly confused, Harry lowered his mouth to Draco's. He placed his hand on Draco's chest, pressing down. He had a strong feeling that this was not how it was done. He had a vague idea of what CPR was and this was not quite it.

He tried willing his magic to do anything it could to help through his hand on Draco's chest.

He heard Hermione open her mouth with an audible breath to protest what he was doing, but she paused and didn't say anything.

Draco's chest filled with air and magic. His body twitched and arched under Harry's hands and mouth.

Harry gasped and pulled away, eyes wide. "Draco?" he asked, heart beating quicker than it had that day.

Draco's body stopped breathing when Harry pulled back.

"Do it again," Hermione said, eyes intent on the two men in front of her. "Whatever you just did, do it again."

Harry hastily lowered his mouth to Draco's again, breathing into him and pushing his magic through his chest.

Draco's lungs filled and his right hand clenched into a fist.

Under his hand, Harry felt a weak beat of Draco's heart.

"Keep going Harry," Hermione encouraged as Ron stood by and watched, looking very nervous.

Harry did. He breathed into Draco again, feeling the beginnings of relief now that he could feel a heartbeat. He continued to push air and magic into him, waiting for Draco to take a breath of his own.

Suddenly there was a gasp as Draco sucked air into his lungs and his body arched up off the ground.

Harry gasped with his husband, watching him. "Draco?" he asked once again, to judge Draco's consciousness.

Draco arched and then shuddered violently, coughing harshly.

Harry tried helping Draco sit up, hands fluttering over him frantically.

Draco felt like someone was choking him. It was like someone had ripped out his throat. Every breath was like fire. He rolled onto his side, spitting out blood.

Harry's eyes widened even further in shock and fear. "Oh, God," he said, hoping that he had healed the inside of Draco's throat. He would shove his fingers down there to heal him if he had to.

Draco coughed up blood and bits of other stuff from his lungs and throat. Moaning in pain. His eyes were still tightly closed but he brought a hand to his throat as if to confirm he still had one.

Harry grimaced, both with the fear he still felt and at the sight of

what Draco was coughing up. "Are you okay?" he asked weakly, bringing a hand up to touch Draco's neck where he was holding.

Ron and Hermione moved closer.

Draco forced himself to open his eyes and look up at Harry. He tried to swallow but it resulted in more pain than he was prepared for. He was writhing on the ground.

Harry hissed, holding Draco tightly. He didn't know what to do besides try to help with his magic. He pressed his hand once again to Draco's neck, trying to work soothing magic into him now, but he was weak and tired and his magic reflected that. He didn't know if he would be able to do much of anything.

Draco's hands scrambled over his pack, trying to open it.

Hermione, obviously seeing what Draco was trying to do, rushed forward to help him. She ripped the pack open and held it for him, unsure of what he needed out of it.

Draco reached in the side pocket for the Healing Potions he had packed and found one, but then dropped it.

Harry groaned and felt he was going to die as he watched the glass bottle tumble from Draco's hands and crack on the ground, the contents leaking out. "Fuck!" he screamed, feeling tears coming on.

"Calm down, Harry," Hermione said quickly, her hands scrambling inside Draco's bag. "There's another. Here." She handed the potion to Harry.

Harry took a gasping breath, thinking that his emotions had never been toyed with more in his life, and pulled the stopper from the bottle. He lifted Draco's head with one hand and carefully tipped the potion into his mouth with the other.

The taste was horrid, but the feeling of the potion soothing the sore flesh of his throat was fantastic and Draco fell back with a sigh, swallowing it and breathing in big gulps. Never had breathing felt so good.

Ron and Hermione let out sighs as well, both of them looking very thankful that it seemed Draco was going to be okay.

Harry had finally given in to his tears and they ran silently down his cheeks as he hugged Draco tightly, pulling him more into his lap.

Draco looked up into Harry's face. He saw green eyes glistening and he smiled weakly. "Did we get it?" he croaked, his voice

sounding rough.

Harry bent and kissed Draco's lips gently before letting out a strange laugh and looking to Ron.

Grinning crookedly and with a victorious gleam in his eyes, Ron pulled out of his robes the ruby encrusted dagger of Godric Gryffindor.

"We got it," Harry said in a choked whisper.

"Good," Draco mouthed, not even trying to use his sore vocal cords for the moment. He grimaced. His mouth tasted like blood and Healing Potion. "Water?" he asked.

Hermione quickly Transfigured a small, nearby stick into a glass and conjured water before handing it to Draco.

He sat up a bit with Harry's help. The first drink he swirled around in his mouth and spat out again. Then he took several small sips of the water, swallowing cautiously. His throat did seem to be working again, even if it still felt a bit sore.

Harry kissed Draco's cheek and temple over and over again, smiling at him and stroking his hair like he was some precious, fragile doll.

Hermione and Ron both smiled widely and with some amusement as they watched him.

Draco smiled at the enthusiastic petting of his husband. "Scared you again, did I?" he whispered.

"Must you ask?" Harry whispered back, eyes filled with serious emotion. Harry thought the word 'scared' was a bit of an understatement.

"Regulus's body attacked us, right?" Draco asked, making sure his memories made sense.

Ron raised his eyebrows and nodded, looking a bit uneasy at the thought of it.

Harry nodded as well. "Yes," he answered.

Draco looked around. "Still in the forest?" he asked, even though it seemed pretty obvious.

"Yes," Hermione answered this time. She gave them all a rather nervous look and then looked quickly around herself. "We're actually not that far from where the Horcrux was. Perhaps we should get back."

Draco nodded and then moved to get to his feet. He was still pretty shaky.

Harry helped Draco and then Summoned his Firebolt to the hand that wasn't still holding the blond.

"We're a broom short," said Ron, holding his own broomstick.

Hermione had the one that she had come with, but since Draco had been unable to fly a broom, his had been left in the clearing.

Draco took a minute of deep breathing to get his sense of balance back. He felt tired. He wasn't sure if he could fly but walking seemed like an even worse idea.

"I can just take you on mine," Harry said to Draco, raising an eyebrow in question. "You don't look like you can fly on your own anyway."

Frowning, Hermione asked, "Can a broomstick hold two people when they're the proper weight? Draco might be a bit too disoriented to go under a Lightening Charm all the way back."

Eyebrows raised high as they both looked at her, Harry and Ron said in unison, "It's a Firebolt."

Draco smiled weakly. "I can hold tight to Harry."

Nodding and rolling her eyes at Harry and Ron, Hermione mounted her broom again. "Let's get out of here," she said warily, kicking up a few feet. Ron followed her and they both waited for the two others.

Harry let go of his broom and it hovered at the exact height for him to comfortably mount it. He did and looked to Draco. "Should you sit in front of me or behind?" he asked.

"Behind," Draco said, still smiling. He climbed on, holding Harry as he did, and then wrapped his arms around his husband's waist and pressed his face against his shoulder. Damn, it felt good.

Harry smiled softly and bent a bit lower on the broom before shooting up out of the trees. Once into the sky, Harry took a great breath of fresh air and let it out slowly. He looked off at the pink clouds on the horizon where the sun was sinking below. His path to Voldemort was now clear. He would train to form his powers, kill the snake, and it was a straight road from there.

Ron and Hermione caught up with him and the four friends began their way back towards Hogwarts.

Four cracks broke the semi-silence of Harry and Draco's bedroom, the only other noise the quiet cooing of Valen as Remus played with the little boy.

Harry's heart leapt at the sight of his son. He realised that he had been very unsure about he and Draco making it back together, both alive and virtually unharmed.

Draco slumped, nearly falling to his knees in exhaustion. "Home," he croaked.

Remus startled and looked up, looking quite relieved. "You're back," he said. "Draco? Is he okay?"

Harry held Draco tightly, tossing his broom off to the side. He walked Draco over to the bed and sat him down on it. "Yes, just very tired, I think," he answered. He, himself, was very tired, and he felt his own shoulders sag.

"Valen," Draco whispered, falling back on the bed.

Harry looked over at Lupin and walked over to him to retrieve the baby, smiling as Valen tried to turn his head to see him.

Valen was squeaking and wriggling as Harry approached.

Harry gently took Valen from Lupin and held him close to his chest, sighing as he breathed in his baby smell. He kissed his hair and carried him over to Draco, laying him belly-down on the man's chest.

Draco sighed in relief as Valen was brought to him. He laid his right hand on the infant's back and looked down at him. Valen lifted his head, burbling at him. Draco nodded. "Yes, your daddies are back," he told the baby, "and we are glad to see you too."

Harry smiled hugely as he lay on the bed beside his husband and child, forgetting that there was anyone else in the room and that Ron had a Horcrux in his robes.

Draco looked at Harry and sighed. "Godric Gryffindor's dagger," he whispered. "What a thing to use that way."

Draco's words brought Harry crashing back to reality and he frowned slightly, looking over at Ron.

Ron pulled the dagger out of his robes again and held it out as if afraid it would burn him now that it wasn't so important to protect.

"Not near Valen," Draco said quickly. The infant actually began to cry.

"Put it away," Harry said, frowning and rubbing Valen's back to try and get him to stop crying.

Ron winced at the dagger and stuffed it back inside his clothing, not seeming to know what else to do with it. He took a few steps back from the bed.

Valen cried a bit more but seemed to settle once the blade was gone and Harry was petting him. "We won't let the bad magic hurt you," Draco told the infant seriously.

"Never ever," Harry agreed, leaning forward and bending his neck to kiss Valen's forehead gently.

Valen sniffed a bit but settled down to gurgling at them.

Draco looked up at Ron. "He can feel magic the way I can," Draco said. "I would suggest you put that in my lab for now."

Remus was standing at the end of the bed. "What?" he asked.

Ron nodded to Draco and turned to do as he had said.

Harry stared up at Lupin. "We found the Horcrux," he said, figuring that was what the man was talking about.

"Yes, I see that. What do you mean about Valen though? Draco is a sensitive? And Valen too?" Remus asked.

"Oh," Harry said. He nodded. "Yes, both of them. I'd forgotten you didn't know."

"That's amazing," Remus said. "I've heard of them but I've never known anyone to admit it. It's a rare gift."

Draco nodded, still watching Valen. "Skipped a few generations in our line," Draco said. Then almost to Valen himself, "But we have it back, don't we?"

Harry smiled. "He has my power as well - whatever that is," he said. "Draco says he can feel it."

Draco nodded. "It's a kind of wild magic," he said. "Answers to will better than to command."

Harry shrugged and nodded.

"I would love to talk more with you about this at some point," Remus said, "but it's clear that you need rest right now."

Harry sighed and nodded thankfully.

Ron came back into the room then. "I hid it behind the potions on the back wall," he told Draco.

"Thank you," Draco said.

Ron and Hermione smiled and nodded and Harry nodded as well.

"Thanks isn't enough, but I don't know how else to put it. Thank you, thank you, thank you," he said, truly meaning it.

Ron rolled his eyes at him, shaking his head. "I'm the one that would be dead back there, Harry," he said, sounding amused. "Sometimes I wonder if you really know how much you do." He took Hermione's hand and, still shaking his head, exited the room. Remus followed the pair out.

Harry raised an eyebrow, staring after his friends.

Draco laid his silver hand on their baby's back and reached his right hand to cup Harry's cheek.

Relieved to be alone with Draco and Valen, Harry smiled. He closed his eyes and sighed at Draco's touch. "Here we go," he whispered to him.

"Yes?" Draco whispered.

Harry opened his mouth to explain further, but then closed it, not wanting to ruin this small peace with thoughts of Voldemort or even training. "Never mind," he said with a small sigh, leaning in to kiss Draco.

Draco kissed him back gently. Then pulled back enough to whisper against his lips. "Put Valen in his cot," he said. "He's asleep."

Harry brushed his lips lightly against Draco's for a moment but then sat up, smiling and taking Valen gently from Draco's chest. He got to his feet with the infant and walked over to his nearby cot to lay him inside it. He stared down at him for a moment, full to bursting with love for the little boy. Harry turned his head and smiled at Draco before padding back over to him, kicking off his own shoes and then bending to pull Draco's from his feet. He lay back down next to him, sighing again.

"I feel like I could sleep a week," Draco whispered. "How are you? I don't even know what happened after"

"I'm fine," Harry answered quietly. "To be honest, I'm not even sure what happened, but I'm okay. Just tired."

"Good," Draco said, rolling onto his side and putting his arm around Harry.

Harry kissed the bridge of Draco's nose and then closed his eyes.

"Good," he echoed with a quiet yawn.

– CHAPTER FORTY –

Fractured Soul

Harry had never wanted to do anything less in his life. He had only got himself and Draco safely home a day ago after finding the Horcrux, and now they had to destroy the fucking thing, which was just as dangerous - to Draco at least.

The couple had handed the baby off to Fleur, who was very happy to have him it seemed. She had kept calling him "her little godson" while Harry had been gathering a few of Valen's things for her to take downstairs.

He, Draco, Ron and Hermione were in Harry and Draco's sitting room with the ominous dagger lying on the table in front of the sofa.

"So how do we get this one?" Hermione was thinking out loud. "The locket you had to open and then burn the hair inside, and the cup you had to drink from" She looked at the pointy blade of the dagger nervously and cleared her throat.

Harry felt much the same about the dagger - if the feelings were magnified about a million times.

Draco took a deep breath, sighing loudly. "I have had an idea about this one since we figured out what it is," he said.

Harry winced and turned his head to look at Draco. "Please tell me it doesn't involve stabbing anything," he said, his voice cracking a bit on the word "stabbing".

Draco nodded. "Nex Culter," he said. "Murder knife."

Harry's heart sped up a bit. "You can't be serious," he said, going rather pale. "I can't allow you to be stabbed."

"It would appeal to the Dark Lord's sense of humour," Draco said, "that you have to kill someone to destroy it."

"Well, it's not going to be you," Harry said firmly, voice shaking a bit. He let out a slightly hysterical sounding laugh. "Ridiculous."

"It is really quite clever," Draco said in a flat tone. "In order to destroy the piece of his soul, the person has to fracture their own."

Harry's eyes flashed, but he felt a sort of relief that Draco didn't disagree with him.

Hermione was very quiet, a sort of gleam in her eyes.

"I could do it," Draco said. "For you and for Valen."

Harry frowned heavily. "I'll do it," he said.

"No," Hermione said, her head snapping up. Her voice was a bit hard and she sat straighter. "Ron killed Bellatrix, his soul is torn. Draco killed Lucius, his is torn, too. Harry, you can't. I have a very strong feeling that your soul being intact makes you even more powerful against Voldemort. I'll do it." The way she said those last three words made Harry and Ron both frown.

Draco nodded. "And I know who," he whispered, looking her in the eyes.

Hermione looked at him and gave him a Professor McGonagall-like, piercing stare, but didn't say anything.

"Who are you going to bloody kill?" asked Ron, still frowning at Hermione.

Draco held his tongue, waiting for her to speak.

Harry knew exactly where this was going, and frankly, he could not think of any other way to do it.

Hermione was silent for a few moments but then looked from Draco to Ron. "One of the Lestrage brothers," she said, voice scarily calm.

Draco nodded, face grim and determined.

Harry let out a heavy sigh and rubbed his forehead. "There's no other way," he said resignedly, nodding.

Hermione's eyes gleamed again.

Ron swallowed and bit his lip. "Hermione, I'll do it - you don't have to, I-"

"I'll do it," she said firmly.

"We have a place," Draco said, eyes staying on Hermione's. "It's call the Room of Offering. It is appropriate for this. I can take you there and bring one of them to you. Do you care which?"

"Whichever you prefer," she said, voice still very, almost unnaturally, calm.

Draco stood.

Hermione got to her feet as well, her posture as stiff as her

sudden mood.

Harry and Ron stood too.

"I don't think we need all four of us for this," Hermione said, looking at them. "Draco?"

"You would prefer it without them?" Draco asked.

Harry and Ron frowned.

She walked over to them and bent to pick the dagger up before straightening again. "Just let me do this," she whispered.

Harry was very confused as to why she wanted to do it so badly, and judging by the look on Ron's face, he was as well. Harry turned his head slightly and gave Draco a hard, questioning look.

Draco's look was expressionless. This was Hermione's decision. One he completely agreed with. He knew Harry well enough to know he wouldn't understand even if he explained it.

Knowing that he would get no answer from Draco, Harry turned back to his friend. "Fine," he said quietly, frowning slightly. "I don't know why you want to do it, but ... you can. Ron and I will stay here if you want."

Ron looked like he was going to protest, but then closed his mouth and sighed quietly, looking at Hermione like she was some strange confusing creature.

She nodded, stepping over to Draco.

Draco held out his arm to her and waited, Apparating them from the room when she took hold.

Harry and Ron exchanged looks, both of them silent.

Hermione and Draco Apparated into the huge Room of Offering, the crack sounding like a boom almost in the silence. Hermione took a half step away from Draco and looked around, her eyes falling onto the altar in the centre.

Draco turned to her. "You understand what this will do to you?" he asked.

Hermione nodded. "Yes," she said. She looked at Draco again. "You survived."

"I killed to save my life and Harry's," Draco said. "That is easier. If, for any reason, you change your mind, just tell me and I will finish it."

"I don't think that will be a problem," Hermione said quietly, staring off at a wall.

Draco nodded and Apparated to the cell of the two prisoners. He returned a few minutes later with his uncle slung over his shoulder. He laid the man on the altar. Rodolphus was unshaven and unkempt. "He is Stupified," Draco said. "Should I revive him or leave him like this?"

Hermione stared hard at the man lying on the altar. "Wake him," she whispered, but her voice sounded harsh beneath it and her eyes filled with what looked like angry tears.

Draco cast a binding spell first, securing the man's hands and feet to the altar. Then he Rennervated him. He could have killed his uncle without waking him but understood Hermione's need to face him.

Rodolphus woke cursing. "Draco, you fucking shit," he spat. "What the hell is going on here?"

Hermione took a shuddering breath and a very small sign of fear flitted across her face, but she replaced it with cold determination. She took a step towards Rodolphus and held the dagger up for him to see. "This is a Horcrux," she told him, and her voice did not shake.

"What's this Mudblood bitch doing?" Rodolphus sneered.

Hermione's eyes flashed at those words. "The spell used to create it is called Nex Culter, or Murder Knife," she continued. "To destroy the Horcrux, one must kill with the dagger. This dagger is Voldemort's Horcrux, and we have to destroy it."

Draco stood on the other side of the altar but ignored his uncle, keeping his eyes on Hermione. His face was a mask of indifference as he listened.

Rodolphus gasped and scowled at her. "Draco, get this bitch away from me," he snapped. "It's not too late to prove yourself. Our Master would reward you."

Hermione had paused now and shook her head slightly at Rodolphus's words. "You all think exactly alike," she said. "And none of you care about anyone's life." Her voice was finally starting to waver.

"Kill me and you will pay dearly," Rodolphus threatened, finally acknowledging her.

"I have already paid dearly," she said, her grip on the dagger

tightening. "Your death will help our side and Voldemort can finally be killed. What can you possibly say that will stop me?"

"Mudblood coward," Rodolphus sneered. "Untie me and fight me. Or are you too weak?"

Where Harry and Ron would have failed, Hermione did not. She actually smiled for a moment. "Coward," she repeated, shaking her head again. "Mudblood coward." She raised the dagger up higher, preparing herself for what she had to do.

Draco allowed himself to look at his uncle then. The man had held a knife to his balls while his aunt had cast *Cruciatius* on him. He felt nothing but disgust for him now.

"We will destroy all the filth like you," Rodolphus yelled at her, "and blood traitors like Malfoy here."

Hermione grasped the dagger with both hands, breathing heavily through her nose. "Not if we get to you first," she said, and then with a scream like a roar, she brought the dagger down with all of the strength she had and plunged the blade into the man's heart.

Draco watched the dagger enter into the man's body and heard the two of them scream. There was a moment of silence afterwards and then the dagger itself seemed to scream, blood pouring not only from Rodolphus but seeming to well up like a fountain.

Seeming unable to let go, Hermione stood shaking, clutching the handle of the dagger still and watching all of the blood. With tears spilling from her eyes, she whispered, "That is for my father," and then let the bleeding knife go, sinking slowly to the ground to hold her own knees to her chest.

Blood welled up and out, dripping off the altar and down to pool on the floor. For a minute, Draco was frozen, remembering the last time this floor was covered in blood - his father's. When Hermione let go, he shook himself and strode around the altar to find her on the floor. Draco looked down at the brave young woman for a moment, unsure what her reactions would be to anything he could offer. Finally, he sunk to his knees beside her.

Hermione's face was buried in her knees and she was crying, trying to keep the sobs as quiet as she could, her hands covered in blood and her robes slowly absorbing it as it pooled on the floor.

Draco had no words to offer yet, so he stayed beside her. He was

close enough to be there if she wanted support but not touching in case she needed time.

Hermione wept and sniffed and didn't bring her face out of hiding for several minutes. When she did, it was thoroughly tear-streaked, her eyes were puffy and red and yet the tears still fell. "I killed someone," she choked out with a gasping sob, staring at Draco. "I killed him."

"Good," Draco said. "He needed killing."

Hermione let out another sob and covered her face with her hands, but she quickly drew them away, looking disgusted with their state. She stared at them, going silent except for her gasping breaths, even though the tears wouldn't seem to stop. "Yes," she whispered in agreement with Draco.

Draco stood up again and held out his hand to her.

She sat on the floor for a few more moments and then looked up at Draco, taking his hand with her slightly shaking, blood-covered one. She stood and, surprised by herself even, stared at the body still dripping crimson. "Yes," she said again.

"Yes, look at him," Draco said. "This man would cheerfully have sliced open any one of us, including Valen. His death is no loss to the world."

Hermione looked disgusted and she clenched her teeth and her hands. She nodded very decisively, her eyes fierce.

Draco walked forward and pulled the blade from the corpse. He turned and held it pommel first to her. "This was Godric Gryffindor's," he said. "Now it is yours."

Hermione looked at Draco, her brows pulled together in a frown of confusion before it turned into a look of slight wonder. She nodded once and took the dagger from Draco, holding it firmly in her hand.

Draco pulled his wand again and did a Cleaning Charm on himself and then raised an eyebrow, silently asking her permission to do one for her.

She gave him a very small smile and another nod.

He performed the charm. "I will clean this mess later," he said, referring to the body and blood. "We should return before Harry works himself into a fit. Are you ready?"

Her smile grew slightly at the comment about Harry. "I'm ready," she said, and she moved closer to Draco. Instead of grabbing his arm stiffly, she grabbed and held his hand. Looking at him intently with eyes brimmed with tears, she whispered, "Thank you for understanding."

"I am privileged to know you," he said.

She let out a small laugh, a single tear falling that she quickly wiped away.

Draco smiled and nodded, Apparating them both back to the sitting room where their partners waited.

Ron was sitting on the couch, staring at the table where the dagger had been with a sort of sick-looking face. He jumped up when Hermione and Draco arrived.

Harry, who had been pacing, spun around wildly.

"Did you do it?" Ron demanded quickly, rushing over to Hermione.

She gave Draco one last smile and nodded to Ron.

"Blimey," Ron said weakly, and he pulled Hermione into his arms and gave her a tight hug, for which Hermione seemed thankful.

Draco stood quietly, waiting. He watched Harry to see how he was handling this.

Harry took in a breath and let it out slowly, relieved that Hermione seemed to be okay. "What happened?" he asked quietly.

Hermione turned her face to Harry, but didn't pull away from Ron. "I killed him," she said simply.

Harry raised his eyebrows, slightly worried.

Hermione pulled back from Ron and stood up on tip-toe to press her lips to his right in front of Harry and Draco, something they very rarely did. "Let's go," she said to the stunned redhead.

Harry's eyebrows rose further and he looked over at Draco.

Draco's face was impassive. He nodded to the two as they left.

– CHAPTER FORTY-ONE –

Beyond Their Years

Harry was still staring at the closed door that his friends had just left through. "What ...?" he said, but he didn't really know what to ask.

Draco sat down on the sofa and waited. He knew Harry would have questions.

Harry looked back at Draco and shuffled over to sit next to him. Still looking confused, he said, "Is she okay?"

Draco thought about the question. "Yes," he said. "She did what she needed to do."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Did it work?" he asked, although he figured it had.

Draco stood up and held his hands out to his husband. "Yes, it did," he said.

Looking up at Draco for a moment, Harry took his hands and pulled himself up. "Who did she kill?" he asked, looking at his husband seriously.

"My uncle," Draco answered, then began leading his husband to their bedroom.

Harry followed, but still had questions. "Where is it?" he asked, noticing that Draco didn't seem to have the dagger.

"It belongs to her now," Draco said, closing their bedroom door. He then sat down on the bed and removed his shoes and socks.

Harry frowned and gave a shrug. "I thought we were giving the stuff to the school," he said, kicking off his shoes as well and then climbing into bed.

Draco stood and began removing his clothes.

Harry simply watched as Draco undressed himself, thinking that he could do it in two seconds if he wanted to remove his own clothes. "What did you do with the body?" he asked.

Draco laid the last of his clothes aside, and turned to face his husband. He waited to see how Harry would react to his arousal at

this point.

Harry's eyes normally would have strayed to Draco's cock eventually anyway, but his eyes snapped immediately there and he looked back up at his husband's face. "Want to shag?" he asked with a hint of a grin, thinking that perhaps Draco might answer this question.

"I am going to fuck you," Draco said, flicking the wand in his hand and casting the spell to remove his husband's clothes.

Harry gasped quietly and his blood boiled hot at once. "Good," he said, putting his feet flat on the bed and then spreading his legs. He raised an eyebrow. "How do you want me?"

"On your knees, here," Draco said in a strained voice, pointing to the floor in front of him.

Harry held in a lustful groan and moved swiftly from the bed, dropping to his knees a few feet from where Draco had pointed. "You want to fuck me or you want me to suck your cock?" he asked, reaching a hand down to help his rapidly forming erection.

"Yess," Draco hissed, reaching to grab Harry's hair and pull him forward.

Harry couldn't help the moan that escaped him as Draco pulled his hair. Wasting no time, he trailed his lips along Draco's erection before grasping it and covering it with his mouth, looking up through his lashes and the fringe that never stayed out of his eyes.

Draco's posture was still rigid and he ground his teeth together as he sucked in a quick breath.

"Mmmm," Harry moaned, moving his mouth down as far on Draco as he could. "You want to fuck me with this cock?" he asked in a husky whisper as he drew back, tonguing the tip. "Hard and good with this thick fucking cock?" He descended upon it again, his eyes falling closed.

"Yes," Draco whispered, still barely able to talk, his breath speeding up as his lover sucked him.

Harry ran his free hand smoothly and slowly up Draco's leg and hip, resting it at the bone as he bobbed his head, torn between wanting Draco to come in his mouth or his arse.

Draco hissed and yanked Harry's head back by his hair. "Bend over the bed, feet on the floor," he ordered.

Harry was panting with his efforts and nodded quickly. "Yes, sir," he said, voice deep. He scrambled over to the bed and picked himself up, only to throw himself over the edge of it, spreading his legs wide as he looked over his shoulder at Draco.

Draco moved up behind his husband and looked down at him. He did the Lube Charm and slicked his cock quickly. "Prepare yourself while I watch," he said.

Harry had no idea what had put Draco in such a mood, but he liked it. A lot. Lubing his fingers with the usual quick, silent, wandless spell, he reached behind himself and pressed the fingers in, locking eyes with Draco as he did. He let out a moan of longing and licked his lips. "I can still taste you," he said, panting slightly already.

Draco stepped up, watching as Harry fingered himself. His cock twitched and he barely held himself in check, waiting.

Harry moaned again, pushing the fingers in deeper. "Fuck," he hissed, heart beating madly and his cock seemingly trying to match it with its throbbing. "Fuck, I can't wait for that cock to be in me." It was very true and he moved quickly with his slick fingers adding another but then pulling them all out a moment later. He gripped the covers, thinking that would be sign enough to tell Draco he was ready.

As soon as Harry removed his fingers, Draco pushed his cock against that slick hole. He grabbed Harry's hips and thrust in hard, groaning as he did.

Harry jerked forward with Draco's thrust. "Fuck, yeah!" he shouted, panting heavily now and gripping the covers even tighter. "Again."

Draco closed his eyes and lost himself in Harry. He began thrusting hard and deep. Harder than he had ever fucked before.

Harry cried out loudly as Draco fucked him, his voice growing hoarse. "Fuck!" he screamed, the only word besides Draco's name he seemed to be able to say.

Draco worked himself into a frenzy, sweat pouring down his body as he fucked Harry. His eyes were tightly closed, concentrating entirely on the feel of Harry's body and magic as he thrust. He was growling now, unaware of even the noises he made.

Harry felt like he could very nearly take no more, both his

throbbing, aching cock and quite literally, his arse. He squeezed his eyes shut and ground his teeth together as he came hard, spurting on the covers that hung over the side of the bed.

Harry's muscles clenched around him as Draco drove himself inside again and just as the other man's magic roared over him, brought the blond screaming over that edge. His fingers dug into Harry's hips and his body arched. He screamed wordlessly as he came.

Harry grunted as Draco released, his eyes still tightly shut.

Draco collapsed forward onto Harry's back, his heart pounding in his ears and his breathing hoarse and ragged.

Harry remained still beneath Draco, his arms thrown out on either side of himself as he panted.

Draco shuddered and moaned, his body releasing tension now in the aftermath of his orgasm. He pressed his face to Harry's back and curled his arms in close so that he had as much contact with Harry's skin as possible.

Harry slowly opened his eyes again and let out all of the air in his lungs quickly, pinned by Draco's weight. "Holy shit," he said quietly, feeling a little dazed.

Draco just focused on breathing, trying to slow it down and pull himself back together.

Harry didn't say anything after that. He remained still, knowing that he was going to be sore.

After several minutes of breathing and holding Harry, Draco felt more himself. He pushed up a bit from the bed, withdrawing from his lover's body and rolling over onto his back.

Harry groaned as Draco pulled out of him and still didn't move. He simply turned his head to look at him.

Draco lay staring up into the canopy, looking for perhaps the millionth time at the 'H' carved there.

After a few moments of staring at Draco, Harry weakly lifted himself and winced as he moved onto the bed and gingerly lowered himself against Draco's side, sighing.

Draco brought his arm around Harry, pulling him close and snug against him.

Harry smiled gently and kissed Draco's neck. "Merlin, you're

good at that," he said, giving Draco a crooked grin.

Draco looked down at him and raised an eyebrow. "Fucking you raw?" he asked.

Harry let out a happy-sounding hum and nodded.

Draco smiled. "You are crazy, you know," he said.

Harry's smile grew. "That's what they say," he replied.

"I am crazy about you," Draco whispered.

Harry's face simply retained his happy smile. "Very good," he said, kissing Draco again.

Draco kissed his husband gently and sighed.

Harry settled down against Draco a bit more and gently threw a leg over him. "So it is destroyed then?" he asked, staring at Draco's face.

"Yes," Draco said, running his fingers through Harry's thick locks.

Harry took a deep breath and held it for a second. "I feel ... so much closer," he said quietly. "I mean, I guess I am so much closer but ... it's felt like I would never get this close even, and now I'm nearly at the end. It's a bit ... disconcerting to say the least."

"To say the least," Draco replied, a shiver going down his spine.

Harry nodded slowly and was silent for a few moments, a small frown on his face. "Do you feel ... old?" he asked seriously.

"Old? I fuck you like that and you ask me if I am old?" Draco snorted.

Harry smiled gently. "Not old in that way," he said, shaking his head. "Just ... older, I guess."

Draco was quiet for a minute. "I know what you mean," he said. "Seventeen, already married with a baby, and fighting a war."

"Yeah," Harry said with a slightly amused breath. "I don't have any regrets at all. I wouldn't trade any of this for anything, but I don't feel seventeen - whatever seventeen's supposed to feel like."

There was a pop and Babb appeared beside the bed.

Harry groaned and simply covered his face. He wasn't as uncomfortable being naked around the elves anymore, but he still didn't like it at all.

"Yes?" Draco asked the house-elf, smirking at his blushing husband.

"Master Valen is needing food. That is what young Mrs Weasley be saying," she said, bowing.

Harry nodded from behind his hand. "Tell her she can bring him up," he mumbled.

"Yes, Master Harry," she said, and was gone.

Draco chuckled. "It's safe to come out now."

Harry rolled his eyes and dropped his hand. He found it a bit funny that he had been having a conversation about not feeling seventeen that was interrupted to feed his baby. He snorted at the thought. "One of us needs to get some trousers on to get Valen, and my arse hurts." He smiled sweetly at Draco.

"Lazy arse." Draco grinned, smacking said bottom lightly. "I'll get Valen," he added.

Harry grinned too and wriggled halfway under the covers before turning slightly to pile pillows to lean against.

Draco rolled out of bed and put his dressing gown on, padding barefoot to the sitting room to meet Fleur.

He only had to wait a few minutes before there was a knock on the sitting room door.

Draco answered the door, a small smile on his face.

Fleur stood there, looking stunning even with her hair thrown up carelessly. She beamed at Draco as she handed the slightly fussy Valen over to him. "'E iz a such a good little one," she said, staring at the baby fondly. "I even weesh I deed not 'ave to bring 'im back up 'ere." She let out her tinkling laugh.

"Merce', Madame," Draco said, taking the infant from her.

She nodded. "I weel take 'im whenever you like eef you ever need anyone to, although I suppose you do not need to do much to get a babysetter." She smiled at Valen and waved goodbye to him with one finger.

Valen was whimpering and reaching past Draco toward the bedroom. "I will get him to Harry," he said, smirking. When he had closed the door he looked down at this son. "You can feel him, can't you?" he asked as they walked to the other room.

Harry looked up and smiled when Draco entered. He held his arms out for Valen. "Come to Daddy Harry, you little piggy," he said fondly.

Draco frowned. "What did you just call my son?" he asked.

Harry let out a laugh. "Kid eats all the time," he said. "My bloody nipples hurt, even with Healing Charms."

"Be good and I will kiss them for you." Draco wagged his eyebrows and settled Valen against his chest.

Harry laughed again and winced a bit as Valen latched right on.

Draco got that sappy look again as he lay down on the bed and watched his little family. He didn't know what seventeen was supposed to feel like, but he never expected to be this happy ever.

"Ow," Harry exclaimed quietly in pretend indignance. "Merlin, son. Suck harder, why don't you?"

Draco sputtered and started laughing.

Harry chuckled at Draco. "He's like a Hoover," he said with raised eyebrows.

"Never had any complaints about me," Draco said, laughing harder.

"You don't latch on every few hours and suck for several minutes at a time," Harry countered, still looking at Draco amusedly.

"Is that a complaint now?" Draco continued chuckling.

"Absolutely not," Harry answered, smiling and kissing Valen on the forehead.

Draco took a big breath and let out a happy sigh, his chin in his hands as he looked at them. "I love you," he said.

Harry flashed a white smile. "I love you," he said. "And I love you too, Daddy," he said in a high-pitched voice, wiggling Valen's little hand at Draco. Valen stared up at him and it almost looked like the baby raised his eyebrows. Harry laughed happily.

Draco arched an eyebrow at his strange husband. "Harry," he asked, "what's a Hoover?"

About the Authors

Slashpervert has been reading and writing fan fiction long enough to remember why they call it “slash” – back when it was still published in “fanzines,” printed via mimeograph or copy machines, and sold at science fiction conventions. In “real life,” *Slashpervert* is a journalist and social scientist, who has written and published hundreds of articles and a handful of books. *Slashpervert* also writes original fiction under the name D.M. Atkins.

Sayingsorry_hh has been writing for nearly her entire life, but only recently began writing slash – though she has been reading it for years. Currently, ‘writer’ is most definitely the most definitive term for her. Apart from fan fiction, *Sayingsorry_hh* has one co-authored original novel in the works, and one original novel for teens she’s been working on for quite some time.

Slashpervert and *Sayingsorry_hh* began writing together in November 30, 2006. They adapted the RPG format to use as a style of co-writing in which each writes the perspective of one of the main characters. (For example, in fan fiction, *Slashpervert* writes Draco and *Sayingsorry_hh* writes Harry.) They have written a dozen novels together, including fan fiction and original fiction.

All the books in *The Bound Prince Series*

***Harry Potter and The Bound Prince* – Book One of The Bound Prince Series** – Draco kisses Harry in the bathroom at Hogwarts. They are unprepared for where that will take them. But willing to find out.

***Harry Potter and The Secret Keeper* - Book Two of The Bound Prince Series** – Harry and Draco must find a way to live together now, figure out where they will live, and how they will continue Harry's fight against Voldemort, including the search for the Horcruxes. As if that weren't enough for them to deal with, Lucius Malfoy (and his fellow Death Eater prisoners) escapes from prison and comes looking for his son.

***Harry Potter and The White Queen* - Book Three of The Bound Prince Series** – Harry and Draco continue to explore what their relationship means as they search for and destroy Horcruxes. The Order of the Phoenix continues to fight as the war escalates and lives are lost.

***Harry Potter and The Beloved Incubus* – Book Four of The Bound Prince Series** – Harry and Draco are married and expecting a baby – meanwhile the war has escalated. They have to find the remaining Horcruxes before too many more lives are lost.

***Harry Potter and The Serpent King* – Book Five of The Bound Prince Series** – Harry and Draco, with the help of Ron, Hermione, and their extended chosen family, have destroyed nearly all the Horcruxes. They are preparing for the final confrontation with Voldemort when a family member is kidnapped and the day is upon them to take the fight to the madman.

***Harry Potter and The Dragon's Treasure* – Book Six of The Bound Prince Series** – Harry and Draco survived the war and defeated Voldemort. Now, they are married, have a child and should be leading a happy life. Yet, issues from the past create unexpected pitfalls to building their new life in this time of peace.

Other Books

by *Slashpervert* and *Sayingsorry_hh*

A Love So Belated – Harry goes to the Manor to return Draco's wand to him and begins an unlikely friendship. But what happens when friendship changes to desire?

A Heart So Ravenous – Sequel to ***A Love So Belated***. Draco sets himself on a path to please both Harry Potter and his parents. Will he survive it?

For more fan fiction by *Slashpervert* see:
www.slashpervert.org

For original fiction see:
www.dmatkins.net