

Severus returned to eat lunch with him, wishing him a happy birthday and barely letting their food settle before he was putting Draco through his paces, seeing what he could achieve now. Letting out the build up of new magic and feeling how fast the well refilled.

The strength felt *so good*. He understood, now, why so many of his friends and housemates started holding themselves differently after their coming of age. He had thought it was just them trying to project their maturity, looking down on their younger peers. But it was a bone-deep thing, an awareness of the body that could hardly be described.

“Harry’s going to blow up half the school when he comes of age, isn’t he?” he remarked wryly, watching his godfather’s lips curl.

“We are hoping to avoid that scenario,” Severus told him. “Harry insists the wards will have it in hand.”

That wasn’t a no.

Draco didn’t feel jealousy over it, not like he might have done once. He felt only pride, and satisfaction — with that kind of power, Voldemort didn’t stand a chance.

Severus had to leave for his afternoon classes, and so Draco went for a walk, trying to get used to the way his body felt now. There was still a strange discomfort in his chest; nothing to do with his magic, but a kind of sadness, one he barely even wanted to admit to.

Turning seventeen was nice. Getting the day off classes was nice. But... where was the *celebration*?

It was fine, he told himself. He had the evening to spend with Harry, the dormitory for just them. They could celebrate wonderfully by themselves, all night long.

But... he had hoped for just a *little* more fuss, he thought quietly to himself at dinner, which felt like any other dinner at Hogwarts. Some presents from his friends in other houses, perhaps. Certainly not the ridiculous cake hat that Hufflepuff house delighted in forcing upon newly adult students, but something more than a quick ‘happy birthday, Draco — pass the potatoes, would you?’

As dinner came to an end, Harry’s arm curled around his waist. “You feeling up for a walk?” the Gryffindor asked.

“I’m of-age, Potter, not an invalid,” Draco pointed out dryly. Harry made a face, kissing Draco’s nose.

“That a yes, then?”

A walk sounded nice. A stroll by the lake, perhaps; a quiet celebration, watching the sun set on his youth or some poetic bullshit like that. So he agreed.

Only Harry didn’t lead him outside. He turned instead towards a suit of armour nearby — or rather, the passage behind the suit of armour, which certainly had not existed before in