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Harry only really had enough time to chat with Colin and drop off his trunk before it was dinner time. He found Neville in the dorms already, having arrived with an earlier portkey. He was glad to have his friend to walk down to the Great Hall with — it was just the two of them, as Ginny's portkey wouldn't be until later.

As they reached the Entrance Hall, Harry spotted a familiar head of blond hair approaching from the corridor down to the dungeons. "Oi, Malfoy!" he called, and several heads turned, including Draco's.

Despite the rumours that had been flying, half the people in the vicinity seemed to be expecting a fight. Draco's eyes glittered, and Harry didn't miss the long-suffering expression Theo shot Neville — which Neville no doubt returned. "What do you want, Potter?" Draco sneered. Harry couldn't hold his hard-eyed expression for long, breaking out into a grin.

"Sit with me?" he asked sweetly, batting his eyelashes. Draco snorted.

"If you insist," he agreed, rolling his eyes.

"Is this how the two of you are going to be, now?" Neville complained half-heartedly, walking with them into the Great Hall.

"Until Harry gets bored of shocking people, most likely," Draco agreed — he seemed entirely resigned to the prospect, but not all that upset by it. Harry knew better; he was getting just as much joy out of shocking people as Harry himself was. He was a Black, he *lived* for drama.

Not all of the students had returned yet, but most of them had. Harry was just glad he'd get to avoid Ron and Hermione for a while longer.

As he and Draco made themselves comfortable at the Gryffindor table, Harry chanced a look up at Dumbledore. The old man looked even more worn than he had before Christmas — Harry wondered how badly the curse on his arm was hitting him, now he didn't have the castle wards to bolster him. Maybe he wouldn't even last until the end of the year.

But the lack of twinkle in his eye was not due to his clear exhaustion; it had died the moment Harry and Draco had walked in, their hands linked between them.

Harry smirked to himself. Let Dumbledore think of that what he would. Harry was done hiding parts of himself for his own safety. He was stronger than that, now — stronger than Dumbledore.

It was like any other dinner at Hogwarts, chatting with his friends about how things had been in the castle while he was gone, except for the fact that he didn't have to constantly fret about how close he was sitting to Draco and whether his comments could be taken as too flirty — and that half the hall was staring at them like they were aliens.

Harry didn't know what all the fuss was about. It wasn't like he and Draco had gone from hating each other to boyfriends in the blink of an eye; they'd given the school a few months