

“I’m glad to hear you’re not letting all those prejudices about Slytherins get in your way,” he said eventually. “More students could stand to do that. But Harry, you must be careful. He is still a Malfoy after all.”

“That doesn’t make him evil,” Harry retorted angrily. Remus held up a placating hand.

“I didn’t mean that. All I meant was, he’s still Lucius Malfoy’s son. You need to be careful for his sake as much as yours.”

Harry’s face fell, his green eyes darkening. “His father... his father is an awful man. I don’t know much about his mum, but his dad...” Harry trailed off, shaking his head, and Remus wondered what sort of horrors Lucius Malfoy had inflicted on his poor son.

“Narcissa was never as cruel as Lucius. She was a Slytherin, and certainly no Light witch, but she was never needlessly cruel. And she always thought very highly of family.” All the Blacks did, whatever the rest of their faults. Blood was important in the Noble and Most Ancient House of Black, in a number of ways.

“Draco really loves his mum,” Harry agreed. “But... I think he’s scared of his dad. I think she is, too.”

Harry was much too young to have those sorts of shadows in his eyes, Remus thought sadly. But so were many children at the school. A generation that only knew the aftermath of war — for the state they lived in couldn’t truly be called peace, not yet.

“I think your friendship with him is a good thing,” he encouraged gently. It was certainly too late for him to do anything about it; Harry seemed to be in far, far deeper than even he realised. “I’m not saying you shouldn’t be friends with him. Just have caution. There are any number of people out there who would be happy to hurt Mr Malfoy as a means to an end.” The headmaster was one of them, no doubt.

“I won’t let that happen,” Harry declared stubbornly. The set of his jaw was every inch Lily Evans. Remus smiled at him.

“Tell me about him,” he urged. “The Draco Malfoy that you know. Not the one that everyone else sees.”

If he was reading things right, Remus was going to be getting to know Draco Malfoy quite well in future.

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Later, when Harry was no doubt tucked up in Gryffindor Tower — hopefully not having late-night liaisons with Draco Malfoy — Remus flooded down to Severus’ quarters, pleased when the Potions Master gave him permission to enter. The man had shed his teaching robe, leaving him in just a white button-up and black trousers, his feet bare. Remus’ throat went a little dry. “Evening, Severus.”