

Blaise shook his head, like he couldn't quite believe it. "The wizarding world isn't ready for you, Potter."

Harry laughed, grinning. "Me? Scrap that — they're not ready for *Susan*."

Blaise nodded emphatically. "Too true. Hey, by the way, Draco wanted to talk to you when you got back. Said to meet in your usual fourth floor spot, once you're done talking to me." The Italian boy smirked. "You two have a usual spot?"

Harry hoped desperately he wasn't blushing. "Not like we can chat in class, is it?" He retorted. "And Draco can't even come to HA." Those defence sessions were becoming the only time people could actually relax and let down their guard a little, safe in the magic of the contract.

"Fair. I'll leave you to it, then."

Harry dropped his ward, and Blaise left first. Harry slipped on his invisibility cloak before he stepped out into the corridor, heading straight for the fourth floor classroom in which they had once broken a chair. A familiar head of blond hair was waiting for him — Harry beamed, dropping his cloak and hurrying over. "Hey. Blaise said you'd be here."

"Good." Draco tugged him down imperiously, until they were both sat on the floor. "You've got some nerve, you know. Telling me you love me and then leaving school in the middle of the night." But he was smiling, and Harry grinned back, leaning in.

"I still love you," he promised, watching Draco's cheeks flush with delight.

"You'd better."

Harry took his hand, threading their fingers together. "How was Christmas in the castle?"

"Much the same as it always is. Mother sends her best, by the way."

"Have you seen her?" Harry went wide-eyed, but Draco shook his head.

"No, but she managed to write without Father over her shoulder. A rare thing, these days." His smile dropped. Harry squeezed his hand sympathetically. "I spent most of Christmas Day in Uncle Sev's rooms. It was nice, though a bit strange not doing Yule rituals with Mother. Blissfully Umbridge-free, at least, unlike the rest of the bloody school." They both scowled, then Draco kissed Harry's temple. "Oh, that reminds me — Uncle Severus gave me the animagus potion for Christmas."

Harry sat bolt upright. "He never said!" He turned eager green eyes on his boyfriend. "Did you find your form? What is it?"

"I'm a snowy owl," Draco replied proudly. Harry beamed at him.

"Brilliant!" A powerful hunter, prideful to the point of being a little bit vain — and an animal Harry happened to have an enormous soft spot for. Perfect for Draco. "You and Hedwig can fly together."