

“Uncle Severus!” Draco greeted, then glanced at the man beside him. “Professor Lupin.”

Remus smiled. “Hello, Mr Malfoy. I’m glad you could make it.”

“Draco.” Snape reached out to touch his godson’s shoulder briefly. “It’s good to see you well.”

As they sat down to eat, Harry looked around the table, getting a strong urge to laugh. If someone had told him a year ago he’d be spending his birthday with Draco Malfoy and Professor Snape, and actually be *happy* about that, he would’ve sent them to St Mungo’s.

But he was. Happy, that was. It was the best birthday ever, and it was barely even halfway over.

“My son tells me you’re getting better acquainted with the other heirs at Hogwarts, Mr Potter,” Narcissa said, reaching for a plate of sandwiches. “It’s good to hear the Black family name will be properly represented in the Wizengamot once more.”

“I’m still new to it all, but I’m learning,” Harry replied. “Draco’s helping a lot. He knows far more about it than I do.”

“If I can be of assistance, don’t hesitate to ask. We are family, of a sort, after all,” Narcissa pointed out. “There was a time when we thought that Draco might be the Black heir. I didn’t realise Sirius had taken precautions. Lucius was... quite disappointed.” Her face hardened for a moment, and Sirius growled quietly under his breath.

“You understand why I had to, Cissa,” he said. “I knew you’d raise the boy well, but I couldn’t be sure how much influence Malfoy would have over him. The Black family name has been through enough without adding that to it.”

“Oh, I completely agree.”

Draco nudged Harry under the table. “Do you know what’s happening at Hogwarts this year?” he asked conspiratorially. Harry raised an eyebrow.

“Do *you* know what’s happening?” he returned quietly. How could Draco know?

“Father told me everything,” Draco bragged.

“I’m sure he also told you to keep quiet about it,” Snape cut in with a pointed look. Draco’s pale cheeks flushed.

“Yeah, but *you* told me,” Harry pointed out. Snape’s glare turned on him, but he just grinned.

“For your own safety.”

“And we all appreciate the forewarning,” Remus said, resting his hand on Severus’ forearm for the briefest moment.

“It’s a shame underage wizards can’t enter,” Draco drawled. “I’m sure I’d win if I could.”