

meetings with Draco, he barely had time to sleep. And after knowing Sirius Black could get all the way up to his dorm... well, even when he did have time to sleep, it was hard.

True to their word, he and Draco had resumed antagonising each other in public. It was actually sort of fun, now that Harry knew it was just a game. It certainly made Ron happier, having 'the old Harry' back. That made the guilt rise up again, but Harry shook it off.

They managed to meet about once a week, never in the same place twice, arranging meetings by dropping little notes in each other's pockets or school bags whenever they had one of their 'fights'. It was harder now Harry didn't have the map, but he was managing. Tonight, they were in one of the old Charms classrooms on the fourth floor, chairs pulled up to the desk as Draco taught Harry a wizarding card game called Warlock's Bluff. The rules were somewhat complicated, but Harry was starting to get the hang of it. He'd actually won the last round, much to Draco's surprise.

"It's better with four players," Draco told him, using a spell to shuffle the deck for the next round.

"By better you mean harder."

Draco smirked at him, eyes flashing in challenge. "Struggling to keep up, Harry?"

He dealt again, and Harry picked up his cards, keeping his face blank. Not a bad hand. He could win this one. "So what does being a good pureblood have to do with playing cards?"

"You can get a good measure a person by playing Bluff with them," Draco replied, making his move. "Often business meetings will include a game or two, to keep conversation flowing. It shows logic, strategy, how many risks a person is willing to take. A little like chess, but quicker."

Of course, even games had an ulterior motive with purebloods. Harry said as much, and Draco scoffed. "Not *every* game has an ulterior motive. Sometimes we play for fun. Just don't ever play against Daphne, especially not for money. She'll rob you blind with a smile on her face, the girl is a menace."

"When would I ever play cards with Daphne Greengrass?" Harry asked, bewildered.

"You never know." Draco shrugged. "The future holds many opportunities. There may come a time where we don't have to put on quite so many masks."

That was one thing Harry was learning, spending more time with Draco. Just about everyone in Slytherin — and many in other houses — was playing a part, to some degree. Draco wouldn't say why it was so important, but he'd made it pretty clear that nobody could be taken at face value. It sounded exhausting to Harry.

Outside in the hallway, they heard a door slam shut. Both boys froze.

"It's getting late," Draco said eventually, flicking his wand and sending all the cards neatly back into their box. "We should go."