

going through a bit of teenage angst. The worst he'll do is make Ron and Hermione stick to me like glue once we're back at school."

"They'd better not," Draco muttered with a scowl. "I'm not going a whole year with only our public facade. Even the study group don't know the truth."

"We'll figure something out," Harry promised. "I won't let that happen." He wouldn't survive the school year if he couldn't meet with Draco in private. He'd go mad before Christmas. "Besides, you're the one who should be careful. You're the one with a bloody Dark Lord in your house."

Draco made a face. "Don't remind me."

"How bad is it?" Draco opened his mouth, and Harry gave him a pointed look. "Honestly."

The Slytherin sighed. "It's... bearable. Obviously, I hate it," he added. "But I'll survive. I'm more worried about Mother — she's expected to be an *active participant* in whatever that madman requires. I just have to keep to myself, and agree with every word he says at mealtimes."

Harry bit his lip. "It's only a few more weeks."

"For me," Draco replied. "Not for Mother."

Heart aching, Harry wished he could reach through the mirror and hold his boyfriend close, kiss away the pained expression in his eyes. "She knows she has options," he said instead. "She's making her own choices, and she won't tackle more than she can handle. Your mum is strong, Draco."

"She shouldn't have to be!" Draco burst out angrily. "Not in her own damn house!"

"I know." *God*, he hated that it was three weeks before he'd see Draco again. Hated there was nothing he could do to help.

"If anything happens to her, Harry..." Draco trailed off, fear on his face.

"We won't let it," Harry assured softly.

They both knew he couldn't control that. But if it helped Draco, Harry would happily pretend.

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The sight of Seren Du up ahead of him made Remus' shoulders relax, even as guilt wormed its way through him at the same time. He felt bad, being so happy to be home when Sirius and Harry were stuck at Grimmauld.

But in his defence, his happiness was less about the place and more about the person within.