

“I can see you panicking,” Draco declared with amusement, kissing Harry firmly. “I wouldn’t go into something as reckless and idiotic as dating the bloody Boy-Who-Lived if I wasn’t in it for the long haul. You’re stuck with me, Potter.” There was a soft expression on his face as he spoke, one that made Harry’s heart *ache* with words he hadn’t said, words he desperately hoped Draco thought too, words he wasn’t brave enough to voice between them yet.

“Then we can go as slow as we want,” he said instead. “It’ll be worth the journey, when we get there, and we know each other better.” Every time things got more heated between them, he discovered a new part of Draco that made the blond moan, a sensitive spot or a way to touch him *just* right. The longer they took with that, the better it would be when things... progressed.

Draco’s eyes darkened, and he tilted his head up, capturing Harry’s lips with a ferocity that put a firm end to the talking part of that conversation.

For the first time all summer, Harry felt like he could truly breathe. Sure, it had been great having Remus and Sirius to talk to about Cedric and Voldemort and his fears, and they had gone a long way to helping him work through his grief. But lying there with Draco, first kissing and then talking quietly, cuddled together on his bed, Harry could feel the ragged edges of that hole in his chest begin to knit themselves together again.

Eventually the conversation faded out — Harry losing the words to talk about his emotions regarding what had happened in the graveyard; Draco not wanting to taint a nice day with discussion of the Dark Lord invading his home. Neither of them was truly *okay*, but there was nothing they could do to change that. Not yet. Summer would be over in a month, and then they’d have a whole other set of problems to deal with. They could worry about them together then; this was the last time they’d see each other for a while.

“Do you think the Defence teacher will be any good this year?” Draco asked absently, shifting up to look Harry in the eye without getting a crick in his neck. Harry scoffed.

“With the current track record? Unlikely,” he muttered. “Merlin knows how half our year will pass their OWLs.”

“Don’t say that word,” Draco protested. “It’s all Father’s been able to talk about this summer. Exams this, OWLs that, I’d better do the Malfoy name proud with my results.” He grimaced. “I can’t wait until it’s all over. Exams, school, this bloody war. Then maybe I’ll be able to live my own damned life.”

Harry pursed his lips. He didn’t often dare think about all that. What came after.

“Maybe I’ll join you in professional quidditch,” Draco continued. “Just to piss off father. We’d have to play on the same team, though; I’ve heard the schedules are a nightmare.”

A warmth settled in Harry’s chest. There was no doubt in Draco’s voice about them staying together, after everything. No hint that Harry might not make it through.

“We can’t both be seekers on the same team, though,” he pointed out, deciding to go with Draco’s fantasy; they could pretend they were normal teenage wizards, with no war and no