

“To what do I owe the pleasure?” Severus retorted, aiming for exasperated and falling just a touch short. Remus stifled a smile, sinking into the comfortable black leather sofa. Severus was in the armchair, a glass of white wine at his elbow. He summoned the bottle and a second glass, directing it over to Remus before the man could even ask.

“Draco Malfoy is your godson, correct?” Remus asked once the wine was safely in his grasp. Severus raised a thin eyebrow.

“Yes. Why, what has the little whelp done now?” Again, he wasn’t quite reaching exasperated; the fondness was creeping through.

“Befriended Harry Potter, apparently.” Remus laughed when Severus almost spilled wine over himself at the proclamation.

“He *what*?”

Remus relayed what he’d heard from Harry — some, not all of it. He didn’t want to go spilling his cub’s secrets. “It seems they’re quite close now. I daresay Harry even has a bit of a crush.” Oh, it was definitely more than ‘a bit of a crush’, but he didn’t want to give Severus a heart attack.

The dark-haired man stared at him for several long seconds, before his eyes fell shut, his hand coming up to pinch the bridge of his nose. “Merlin help me,” he muttered. “The children of today have no sense, do they? Meeting in secret in Albus Dumbledore’s castle, sweet Salazar.”

“I don’t recall us having much more sense when we were thirteen, Severus,” Remus pointed out dryly, biting back a laugh when Severus’ ears reddened at the tips. “I told Harry to be careful. He understands Lucius is not to be reckoned with.” That brought Remus to the point he’d been considering ever since Harry had left his office. “You know them far better than I do, Severus. Do you think Narcissa could be turned?”

There was a pregnant silence. Remus waited patiently. “Narcissa will do whatever will keep her son the safest,” Severus said eventually. “She’d lay down her life for him in a heartbeat.” He pushed his long hair back from his eyes, propping his feet up on the coffee table. Butterflies erupted in Remus’ stomach, that the man was so comfortable around him, but he pushed them down with years of practice. “I have often wondered if there was a safe way to remove Narcissa and Draco from Lucius’ care, should the worst come to pass. She follows him out of fear, not love. Time and time again I have tried to convince her to have a contingency plan in place, but she won’t hear of it, just in case Lucius finds out and decides to punish her for it.”

“And if her son chose to fight at Harry Potter’s side?” Remus asked. Would Draco ever be so brave as to openly do so? People had done stupider things for love.

“Then she would be wherever she needed to be to protect him from the fallout,” Severus replied. “With any luck, the scenario is a long time coming, but... that Potter foolhardiness might be exactly what’s needed to push Narcissa’s hand. She will follow wherever Draco