



KING'S CROSS

By Mystwriter

Summary: Harry sees Draco at King's Cross while sending off his sons to Hogwarts. But what is it about Draco Malfoy that seems to intrigue Harry so late in life?

Warnings: Deathly Hallows spoilers, implied het, much angst (get out the hankies), NC-17, all the usual, the randy buggers. Novella length. Begins where the epilogue of Deathly Hallows leaves off.

This has been revised since the Dumbledore revelation. See it especially in chapter three and in the author's notes at the end.

Chapter One--Crossroads

Chapter Two—Rendezvous

Chapter Three—Breakdown

Chapter Four--Cascade Effect

Chapter Five--Empty Garden

Chapter Six--Breaking Down and Building Up

Chapter Seven--Mending

Chapter Eight--Decisions

Epilogue

Chapter One—Crossroads

He had made his polite nod to Draco Malfoy and Malfoy had hugged his son once and prodded him into the train. But Harry couldn't keep his eyes off him. Strange. Not that he'd seen Malfoy all that often. Just here and there and always in Wizarding places, never Muggle. The prat probably never fully learned his lesson.

Harry waved to his sons leaning out of their compartment window. He smiled at them. They were growing up so fast. It was such a good life. A good family. Finally, a family of his own. He glanced at Ginny, chatting away with Hermione and Ron. He couldn't have asked for a better companion in life. Funny how he never really noticed her until sixth year. She was always just part of Ron's family. Another Weasley. But a certain loneliness had permeated him that year and Ginny had seemed like the perfect object of affection, except that she seemed to have a new boyfriend each time he turned around.

Being part of the Weasley family for real was the shining moment of his life. And then when each precious child was born, that became his new Great Moment.

And yet. As time went by and they settled into married life and Harry had established himself into Auror training, finally becoming an Auror, and then heading the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, the spark had gone. He expected that this was normal in families. Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia—people he had scarce given a second thought to in twenty years—didn't seem lovey dovey, except where Dudley was concerned, and Harry could certainly see that. His children were his joy. Being a dad had been the best thing to come into his life since magic itself.

He cast a glance at his youngest, Lily, capering with the Weasley children, and sighed. He should be ecstatically happy. He should be loving every moment of his life. He loved his wife, his kids, his job. But each time he thought about that, he felt a hole in his heart and he wondered what it meant. Wasn't it

enough to have married the love of his life, to have his wonderful children whom he loved beyond measure?

His eyes were drawn across the platform again to where Draco Malfoy was standing with his wife. Those grey eyes were looking at him, too.

For a moment, the world seemed to slow down. Harry looked over at Ginny still chatting. Harry felt himself drifting, stepping away from the light of the Golden Trio, and strolling along the platform, going nowhere in particular. He could feel people staring at him. They always did. He was still Harry Potter, even though Voldemort was killed nineteen years ago and the children and some of the young adults on the platform weren't even born yet. His face was on Chocolate Frog cards and currently, he was still the favorite, though there was a famous rock star witch who was slowly overtaking him in popularity. It made him smile to think of it.

Harry walked along the platform, ducking into a shadowed alcove away from the throng of parents. He leaned against the wall, feeling the solid, hard bricks against his back. Nineteen years ago. It had been a long time but the whole thing was as fresh in his memory as if it had happened yesterday. He had never told anyone about his visit with Dumbledore at King's Cross or wherever that had been. That was for him alone. He doubted if he would ever tell anyone. There wasn't anyone that close to him. But he thought about it often; how eternity turned on a pin; how the choices one makes, not the lot one is dealt, is what makes the difference. He thought about Voldemort—Tom Riddle—as a wizened fetus-like creature, whimpering in that nonexistence for all time simply because he had no remorse in him. Well, after all, he had nothing left inside but one eighth of his soul. And sometimes, Harry thought he almost felt sorry for him. Almost. Though Harry had been the only one alive to have shared visions and emotions with Voldemort. It was truly hard to muster much sympathy after experiencing that.

It was dark in his little brick hidey-hole and he had no idea why he was there and how long he had even been there, when a shadow passed over the archway. A figure stood, silhouetted in light and train steam. For a moment, Harry wasn't sure if it was really real or his imagination. He realized he should be frightened to be cornered like that—a rookie's mistake—but he knew where his wand was and he was so well-trained, he barely needed it for rudimentary defense anyway.

He kept looking, and the figure kept standing there until it finally spoke.

“Hiding?”

Malfoy? The figure strolled closer, each step a smooth gesture of grace and eloquence. Nobody walked like that but Draco Malfoy—except for his father. But that was clearly Draco’s voice. What was he doing?

When the man had drawn close enough to be illuminated by the reflected light of the archway, Harry plainly saw that white-blond hair. It was parted in the middle, but a bit of fringe framed his wide forehead. The rest fell almost to his shoulders. One light brow arched over a grey eye, eyes the same as Harry remembered from his school days. That nose and that chin were unmistakable Malfoy, both pointed and sharp, skin pale as cream except for his lips which were a coral colour and slightly pursed with amusement.

“I’m not hiding,” said Harry with a hoarse voice. He cleared his throat.

Malfoy merely looked at him. “I see. So is this where you usually conduct Auror business?”

Harry smirked. “Nice to see you, too, Malfoy. I mean, we haven’t spoken three words to each other in...what? Nineteen years? And you still can’t stand to be pleasant to me.”

“Why would I have cause to be pleasant?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Because that is what is done? Because all that Hogwarts stuff was years and years ago? Because we’re adults?”

Draco’s mouth quirked. It was so familiar to Harry he almost laughed. “Water under the bridge and all that? Do you think that just because a few years have past that we should just shake hands and be mates?”

It was that same tone, too, and Harry sighed. “Why not? I don’t know why you hated me so much anyway. I never would have picked on you if you hadn’t been such a wanker all those years.”

“I see.” Draco smoothed out his coat and glanced toward the archway. He was the most elegant person Harry had ever seen. It was all that schoolboy arrogance that had grown into the smoothness of adulthood. It was Lucius Malfoy all over again.

He turned back toward Harry, and even though the lighting was dim, he could see Malfoy's grey eyes sparkle. That one glance was doing something to Harry. It made him catch his breath and he didn't know why.

Malfoy seemed to have heard it and his eyes were looking intently at Harry's face, studying it, and then his glance dropped to Harry's lips.

There was absolutely no accounting for it. For a moment, Harry thought it might have been a hex. But he would have known. His training would have clued him in.

They stared at one another. Harry felt fire between them, a hot cascade of emotion roiling over him, and it was sucking them closer. Suddenly, Harry's heart was pounding so hard it felt as if it would burst from his chest.

Malfoy's mouth was parted and he was panting.

Harry didn't know how it happened, but they must have stepped closer, because they were in each other's arms. Draco's lips mashed over his and they were opening. His mouth was so hot, so slippery. Their tongues lashed over the other, seeking each other out. Fingers were in Harry's hair and Harry found blond cornsilk suddenly in his hands. The pounding in his heart steadily headed south and his cock was harder than it had been in a long time.

Draco moaned, his lips working their own kind of magic in Harry's mouth. Harry hadn't kissed anyone like this for years. He imagined he must have kissed Ginny this way when they began dating again, but he couldn't remember. His mind wasn't working just then. His entire focus was on warm, soft lips and the scent of male sweat and expensive cologne. Harry began to grab at Malfoy, touching anything he could reach: arms, thighs, buttocks. Draco's moaning grew louder, intensifying right along with his kisses. Harry moved his hips and found another erection just as hard as his own. He rubbed his body against it and Draco began his own slow rhythm, cock rubbing cock. He didn't have time to think, to decide. He only reacted, and the sensation grew more intense. A knot of pleasure coiled in Harry's groin. Everything, his breathing, his heartbeat, all concentrated on that one spot. Even their kisses with intruding tongues became more intimate. They frothed faster and harder until his excitement peaked, his pleasure groaned upward, and Harry spilled his release into his trousers. Still rubbing the last of his orgasm free, he felt Draco come.

Their lips had never parted from one another, but the kiss became slower, more languid, tongues touching, lips sliding over lips. At last, after a very long time of mouth play, they gasped and parted,

taking a step back. Panting, Harry gazed up at Draco—at that pointy face he had known so long—and saw it seemingly for the first time.

Draco looked back at him. His face was flushed and his hair was slightly mussed from Harry's fingers.

As they came back to themselves, the enormity of what they had done blossomed on Malfoy's blushing features. Harry felt the same hot flush on his own face.

"Shit," whispered Malfoy. He suddenly seemed fifteen again.

Harry finally had the presence of mind to get his wand and Scourgify the both of them.

Neither of them moved. Neither spoke. Harry didn't have the least idea what to say. What the hell had just happened? Harry was a perfectly happily married man with three children. A happily heterosexual man...who had just experienced the most intense turn-on of his life.

"We're thirty-six years old," rasped Harry, as if that were explanation enough to dismiss the whole episode.

"Yeah," said Malfoy, the puzzlement on his face certainly a match for Harry's.

"Well...er...I have to get back...."

"Yeah. The wife." Malfoy stood uncertainly for a moment, face flushing again, before he turned, not looking back at Harry.

When Harry composed himself and found Ginny again, he turned once to see if Malfoy was there, but if he was, he was lost amongst the steam and the crowd.

\* \* \*

Back home at Godric's Hollow, Harry sat and watched Lily sit at the kitchen table and colour in her wizard's colouring book. If she finished the pictures properly and neatly, they would come to life. She had many such books, all with fairy tale themes.

But he wasn't really watching her. His mind was on him and Malfoy. That had been the maddest thing! He'd never done anything of the kind before, never felt any inclination before for men. Or...had he? He thought long and hard and did remember something in his fourth year. He'd just met Charlie Weasley with that dragon tooth hanging from his ear and he thought he was the coolest bloke he had ever met. There was quite a sparkle in Charlie's eye when he smiled at Harry and it had made Harry feel funny inside; special and excited and...and...well. There was no other word for it: lusted after. Charlie had looked at Harry in that way more than once, and Harry had felt a thrill he had never known before. He chalked it up to meeting someone with a really cool job who bothered to give him the time of day; to his raging hormones that were going haywire for Cho and Cedric and...what? Cedric? Oh god. Cedric. He was so handsome and he had a habit of leaning in toward Harry when he spoke to him. There was that twinkle in his eye, too, as if he had the world by the tail and had merely to reel it in. Cedric was sexy. Harry thought he had been jealous of him, being with Cho and all, and that he wanted to be like him instead of awkward, short Harry Potter. But that wasn't it. Cedric was sexy but acted as if it was just part of him like his hair colour or something.

What was going on? Was his whole past a lie?

"Harry!"

Harry jerked back and stared up at Ginny, his heart pounding.

"Harry. Where were you? I've been asking you for the last five minutes what you wanted for dinner."

"I...I...sorry, dear. I was just thinking of something. Something...about work."

"Problems?" she asked, a worried tinge to her voice. She had always tried to keep the fear out about his Auror work. After all, she was the most fearless woman, besides Hermione, he had ever met, but it was something she worried over. As if anything could top Voldemort. Harry never had a problem dealing with dark wizards. Just showing up was almost enough to defeat them. Here they were, facing down the Harry Potter. They were scared shitless and usually gave up without a fight. Usually.

“No, no. Nothing like that. Just paperwork piling up.”

She sighed. “Oh, Harry. You really do have to keep up with that. You’re head of the department. It isn’t all glamour, you know.”

“Yes, I know.”

“So what do you want for dinner?”

“Oh, anything sweetheart. Anything you like.”

“Good. Then I’ll take down that ham, shall I?” She waved her wand toward the pantry and a ham nudged its way out the door and floated toward the counter.

Harry rose, ruffled the auburn hair of his daughter, and shuffled out the back door into his garden. He often went there when he was feeling off. He Accioed a hoe from the tool shed and began weeding the Muggle way, trying to get his mind wrapped around what happened at King’s Cross.

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Draco Malfoy brooded in his west wing library. The parents lived in the east wing, but they hadn’t been home for a while, still taking their leisure on the continent, so he was free to brood in peace. The wife would not disturb him. She knew better than to do that while he was in the library. And anyway, she was happily ensconced in her own suite, no doubt. They may not even see each other for dinner.

He stared into the flames, his fingers pinching his lower lip. If he concentrated, he could still feel the touch of Potter’s lips on his.

With an exasperated sound, he flung himself from his chair and paced across the antique Persian carpet. What the hell had happened? Had they been cursed? But Draco had done a check of his person the minute they arrived home. No hexes, no spells. Nothing. Whatever had happened had been spontaneous. But why? Draco wasn’t gay. Neither was Potter. At least he didn’t think the Hero was. No, no. He was married. Had been for ages. Three kids.



Draco glanced up to the mantle to a picture of Scorpius. Blond like him, his same features. Thank god he got nothing from his mother. He loved his son. He never believed he was capable of loving anyone more than his parents, but here was that little bundle put into his arms eleven years ago and he had been gobsmacked by his emotions. Such a tiny creature. His. He had been overwhelmed with an unshakable feeling of protectiveness that had never left him. Scorpius had the best of everything. The best toys, the best playmates, the best clothes, the best room. All for his little boy. And when it was time, he had his choice whether to go to Hogwarts or Durmstrang, and when he chose Hogwarts because that's where his friends were going, Draco never batted an eye, though he had wanted to scream "Anywhere but there!"

He had little doubt he would be sorted into Slytherin, though he had told him, as was the fashion these days, it didn't matter what house he was sorted into. He would excel. Even if it were Gryffindor. Though Draco silently prayed to whatever deity would listen, that he was sorted anywhere but Gryffindor.

His long fingers stroked the picture frame of his smiling boy, waving enthusiastically at his father. A lump formed in Draco's throat. He missed him already. It was a long time till Christmas.

His hand fell away and he found himself staring into the fire again. It seemed he couldn't think of Hogwarts without thinking of Potter and now he couldn't stop thinking of what happened at King's Cross. Why had it happened if there was no hex or spell? Why? Draco wasn't gay. But he remembered the feelings. They had been so strong, so intense. He had wanted to devour Potter. He had never kissed anyone like that before. Certainly never a boy. And it had been...it had been...so...unbelievably marvelous. So...so... hot. His hand clutched at a stomach whirling with tension, but slowly pushed down his body until the heel of his hand pressed against his growing erection. He couldn't even think about it without getting a hard-on. Potter's lips, Potter's arms, his hands, his body, strong and toned from Auror training. And his cock. Potter seemed to have an enormous cock. And it had pressed hard against Draco's. He never imagined such a thing would be such a big turn-on. Never. But it was, and the thought of it was turning him on again. Potter's cock rubbing against his had been the hottest damned thing he had ever experienced—bar none. He wondered—even under an embarrassed blush—what it would look like; what it would be like to touch in the flesh.

No, no. He pressed his palms into his eyes. He had to stop thinking about it. He'd go mad if he didn't. Potter was still famous with his perfect little wife and his perfect little house and his perfect little children all sure to be sorted into Gryffindor (Gods! More Gryffindors in the world!) and all of it would be just so perfect he could scream.

He leaned his hands hard against the mantle. He had to forget Harry Potter. He had been perfectly content to forget Potter for the last nineteen years. The next fifty would be just peachy for him.

But even looking at his green leather sofa reminded him of Potter's eyes. His damnable eyes, that looked at him with such lust that in remembering it, he almost came in his trousers again.

He was so fucked.

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A fortnight had gone by since Harry had sent his boys to Hogwarts. Albus had owled the following day to tell his family he had been sorted into Gryffindor. Harry smiled at the scrawl that was his son's handwriting on the little parchment. He had handed it to Ginny, who had smiled from ear to ear, and tucked it away into a scrapbook she kept of all the children's firsts.

Harry was very pleased. Another Potter in Gryffindor. He looked at his youngest, at how sly she was and manipulative and wondered vaguely if she wouldn't be sorted into Slytherin when her time came. After all, he had almost... But that was Voldemort's fault. That was Harry's being his bloody Horcrux. The thought never failed to make Harry shiver. To have been a vessel of something evil all that time. To have had that secret in him all those years. And Dumbledore knowing it, or at least suspecting it. No wonder he had been so odd to Harry for so long. How do you tell someone who is like a grandson to you that he must die to save the world?

It was never far from his thoughts. Even in his happiest times, he always considered that this would never have happened if he hadn't made the choices he had made nineteen years ago.

But inevitably, thoughts of that time brought other images. He thought of King's Cross and of Draco Malfoy. What was Draco thinking of right now? Was he thinking of Harry? Was it with disgust or something else?

Because Harry never thought of it with disgust. He thought of it often and never with anything other than embarrassed lust. He had even—god help him—thought of it when he wanked and when he made love to Ginny just the other night. He couldn't help it. It rose up in his mind like some great looming shadow and overtook any tender feelings he had for his wife, and he had many of them. But the mad

frotting assailed him, sending him to an early and intense climax, so intense that Ginny even remarked on it.

At first he thought he simply wouldn't think of it anymore, but that had only made it worse. And then he decided to face it, but now he could think of little else.

An insane thought had taken hold of him in the last few hours even though he tried talking himself out of it. What would happen if he sent Draco an owl? Would he reply to it? And if he did, what then? A myriad of ideas came to Harry. Maybe they could meet. Just to talk it out, get it out in the open so they could put it aside and get past it. Yeah. That's what Harry wanted most of all. To get it behind him so he could move on. And it didn't seem likely that they could do that unless he confronted Malfoy again.

He spent hours darting glances at his writing desk until he finally got up the courage to sit there and pen a note.

Dear Malfoy--

But that was wrong from the start.

Dear Malfoy,

It was pleasant seeing you at King's Cross—

Bloody hell! Why was this so hard?

Dear Malfoy,

It was pleasant seeing you at King's Cross I really think we need to talk. Would you meet me at—

But where could they meet that wouldn't arouse suspicion? No, that was mental. No one suspected anything. And anyway they weren't doing anything. They were just two blokes going to meet to talk. That was all.

Dear Malfoy,

It was pleasant seeing you at King's Cross I really think we need to talk. Would you meet me at the Leaky Cauldron at 10:30 this Friday morning? A reply would be appreciated.

Harry Potter

Harry sat back exhausted. That was the hardest letter he had ever written. He didn't think it had even been that hard getting up the courage to ask Cho Chang to the Yule Ball.

He blotted the parchment and rolled it up before calling for Fortescue, his brown barn owl.

"Hey, 'Cue. Take this and...er...hurry, would you? You can wait for a reply. If he wants you to. Okay, off with you now."

He watched the owl sail into the drizzly air, never failing to think of Hedwig when he did.

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Draco had been standing on his terrace, sipping tea, when he saw the owl approach. Immediately he ran through the different owls in his head that he knew, and decided that he did not know the sender of this owl.

The owl swooped in smoothly and landed on the railing. Hooting, he lifted his leg toward Draco and the man warily took the rolled parchment from the bird. He unfurled it and nearly dropped his tea cup when he saw the signature.

With shaking hands, he set the saucer down on the table and read the terse note again. Meet? Meet? Was he mental? Of course they shouldn't meet! That was a monumental mistake. He grabbed the parchment to tear it up when he stopped himself. Slowly he lowered his hand and looked at the note again. There was Potter's scrawl. It looked no better than when he was in school. Who taught that man how to write script? His owl?

Draco frowned, staring at the writing done in Potter's own hand. What should he do? Meeting was clearly out of the question. Should he even bother replying? No, it would be rude not to reply, and Malfoys may be many things, but outright rude was not one of them.

He went inside and the owl followed. Clearly it had been given instructions to await a reply. Draco went to his writing desk and sat down. He took a sheaf of parchment with the Malfoy crest and set it in front of him. He smoothed out the bleached parchment with his hand and stared at its blankness. This was ridiculous. He could certainly reply to a simple note. He could just pretend it came from someone he loathed inviting him to lunch. That was easy to do. He did loathe Potter, after all.

Draco wriggled in his seat a bit. Well, he used to loathe Potter. He could certainly remember how that was.

Dear Mr. Potter,

As touched as I am by your kind invitation—

Bugger it. That was all wrong.

Dear Mr. Potter,

As touched as I am by your kind invitation Having received your missive, I regret to say—

Fuck all and damnation!

Dear Mr. Potter,

As touched as I am by your kind invitation Having received your missive, I regret to say— Are you mental? I can't meet you at the Leaky Cauldron or anywhere else. Just forget it, all right!

DM

His hands were shaking so much that he sloppily rolled the parchment and barely got it tied to the bird's leg before it flew off. Draco flopped back in his chair, completely drained.

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Harry had been tapping his fingers on the window sill absently when he saw the speck in the sky. He sat up, heart pounding and nearly grabbed the owl before he had a chance to light. He snatched the note and read it quickly, shoulders slumping in disappointment.

Damn him! Slytherin to the last. Couldn't scrape up the least amount of courage to face Harry, eh?

Harry stomped over to the desk, adjusted his chair three times, and grabbed the quill so hard it cracked in his hand.

Malfoy,

Don't be such a wanker. Strap on a pair and meet me. We have to TALK.

Harry Potter

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Malfoy was biting a manicured nail when he noticed the owl soaring toward the terrace again. Dammit! Potter just couldn't leave well enough alone, could he?

Sure enough, the owl lighted on the railing again lifting its leg toward Draco. Draco was staring at it from the safety of a French door between them, but he couldn't very well put the owl off too long. It would begin pecking at the door and then finding another way in.

Draco pushed the door so hard, the window cracked against the wall when it slammed opened. He snatched the parchment off the bird's leg and nearly upended it. When he read the note he fumed. How

dare he order Draco Malfoy around like he was one of his Ministry cronies! This wasn't Hogwarts anymore! There was no Dark Lord to cower behind and take Potter's crap... Draco slumped, crackling the parchment in his hand. It could still take his breath away, thinking of Potter back then, thinking of That Day, when they were all trapped in the Room of Requirement and Crabbe, of all people, set the FiendFyre. Draco knew he was doomed. But when he saw Potter swerve and arc back, he knew, he just knew he was going to save Draco. Why would he do that? Why on earth would he do that? There was only once explanation. He was a Hero. He just was. He didn't parade it around. He hated it, in fact. But just as Draco was simply devious, Harry was a Hero.

Funny how Draco always thought of him as Hero with a capital H.

He remembered Potter soaring back toward him, heard Weasley yell something at him but Potter ignoring it. And when Draco reached up his hand as high as he could, flames and heat so unbearable all around them, it was inevitable that Potter would clasp it. He held onto Harry Potter tighter than he had ever held anything. Just having his arms around the boy was a stunning revelation. That was the first time he ever felt anything for anyone. It was relief and giddiness at the sudden rescue, he knew that. But looking back, he was certain it was more.

Staring at the parchment, Draco heaved a sigh. He dragged himself back to his writing desk and took a quill.

Okay, Potter. Have it your way. I'll meet you there.

Malfoy

Chapter Two—Rendezvous

Draco changed his shirt and his mind twenty times that morning. He had not seen his wife—which was not unusual—but he told a house-elf to let her know he would be gone—which was. Why had he done that? He supposed there was a certain amount of guilt about his leaving, but why? He was only going to speak to Potter, or let the git speak. He really had no idea why he was going at all. Perhaps to tell him what happened at King's Cross was never going to happen again. There! Absolutely. No question. He'd tell him. Unless that was what Potter wanted to tell him. As if he had to.

Draco paced across the lane from the Leaky Cauldron. Was Potter already there? It was a few minutes past ten. Fashionably late, he told himself. He took a deep breath and as Potter so eloquently put it, he strapped on a pair and pushed open the door.

Smoky, warm, and normal Leaky Cauldron—a place he seldom visited (he preferred to Apparate to Twilfit and Tattings to get into Diagon Alley. There was no more Borgin and Burkes. Potter and his Auror gang had seen to that. No great loss.), Draco entered and looked around. And there he was, sitting in a dim corner: messy, black hair, glasses (why didn't the prat ever get his eyes spelled?), and a strangely determined look on his face. He was clutching a pint of something but not drinking it. Wasn't ten a bit early in the morning to start all that?

Draco stepped forward and made a direct line to Potter's table, sliding into the seat before the man realized he was there. He made a point to eye the pint clutched in Potter's hand and smirked. "Liquid breakfast?"

Potter looked at the beer as if noticing it for the first time. He pushed it aside. It looked untouched. "Hi."

"Hullo," drawled Draco. He had been fine standing outside. A little anxious, but fine. But now, looking at Potter and his steady green gaze and his plump lips and the slight tinge of pink darkening his cheeks, Draco's mouth suddenly parched. Maybe beer wasn't such a bad idea.

"So. Thanks for coming." His eyes widened a bit and the pink of his cheeks flushed his entire face as he realized what he said. "I-I mean, you're here and that's good. I...I didn't think you'd be here."

"I said I would," said Draco sullenly. He crossed his arms over his chest and sat back against the settle. "So why am I here?" He was damned if he was going to say it first.

"Look, I've got a private room so we can talk undisturbed and...you know. So we're not overheard." He whispered the last, eyes darting about, suspecting Daily Prophet reporters to jump out of the woodwork—which they might.

But then Draco caught up to his words. "A private room?" he squeaked.

"Yeah. Come on." Potter rose and motioned hastily.



Draco sat frozen to the spot. Potter looked back at him with annoyance. "Malfoy! Get a move on."

"I am not going to a private room with you!" he hissed.

"Why not?"

"What do you mean 'why not?' You bloody well know 'why not'."

Potter glared at him for a full minute it seemed until his face opened into an expression of mortification. He began to stammer. "I...I w-wasn't suggesting anything—I mean, I j-just...we're...it doesn't mean...Oh hell, Malfoy. I just want to talk. We're adults. I won't try anything." He seemed most embarrassed about that last bit. It made Draco feel better.

But Draco harrumphed as if put out to the nth degree. "All right!" he said at last and rose from his seat to follow.

For some reason, everything had a new portent to it. Watching Potter's backside as he followed him up the stairs was something new. Ordinarily, he might glance at a bloke in Muggle trousers but only incidentally. It never meant anything. Not that it meant anything now. It was just there. In his face. No! He didn't mean that.

He was sweating by the time he joined Potter in front of a door. Potter looked both ways down the narrow and crooked corridor. No one was about and he unlocked the door. Draco followed reluctantly...and ran into Potter.

Potter was stammering again. "Th-this was supposed to be a conference room." It clearly was not. It was a regular room in the Leaky Cauldron; a four-poster bed, a table, and two chairs. He turned wide eyes toward Draco. "I didn't know. Let's get another room."

Draco quickly spun and shut the door. "No! Let's just get this over with. Say what you're going to say and we can leave."

Potter fidgeted. On a seventeen-year-old, it was normal. On a thirty-six-year-old, it just seemed sad.  
“Well...all right. Do you want to sit?”

Draco didn't, but if it would get the ball rolling... He moved to one of the chairs and hastily took it. Potter eased down into the other one.

Draco stared at him. He wasn't about to help Potter one bit. Potter got the hint and shuffled a bit.  
“Well...obviously we're here to talk about...about...K-king's C-cross.”

Draco said nothing. He clenched his jaw and curled his hands into fists under the table.

“So. Is there anything you'd like to say...about...it?” asked Potter.

Draco cleared his throat. “No,” he said softly.

“Because I just wondered if you're...you know.”

Eyes fixed on the raven-haired man, Draco suddenly blanched. “If I'm what?”

“You know. I mean...it's all right. I don't care. People are what they are.”

“Are you calling me a woofter? I'm not!”

“Oh. Oh, I thought—”

“You thought wrong! What about you? Feeling a little poncy, Potter?”

“No! I'm not gay!”

“Well I'm not either!”

“Well...then...what the hell happened back there?”

Draco had been pondering that very thing for weeks. He placed his hands meticulously on the table and clasped them together, looking for all the world like a barrister consulting with a client. “I think,” he said carefully, “that it was just balled up emotions. Anger we suppressed for years.”

Potter scooted closer to the table, leaning in. “Yeah. Yeah, that sounds reasonable.”

Draco was grasping at straws. “And...and stress from sending our children away to Hogwarts. They are a big part of our lives.”

“Oh yes. That’s certainly true.”

“So...so it didn’t mean anything because we were stressed and dredging up past emotions and inferiorities and everything else.” Draco closed his eyes. Was Potter buying this? Was Draco?

Potter didn’t say anything for a long time and Draco finally opened his eyes. The dark-haired man was looking off to the side. His bottom lip was twisted in his teeth, making it redder and wet. Draco could smell the sweat permeating off of him. The tang of it reminded him of his own scent when he was aroused—and then that thought suddenly started a stirring in his trousers. Oh god!

Draco rose and headed for the door. “So there isn’t anything more to say, right?”

Potter followed. He stood right behind him. Draco’s cock was straining against his trousers. Good thing he had a robe on over it. His fingers touched the door knob, but Potter dropped a hand gently on his shoulder. It stopped him cold.

“It’s just that—” Potter began, but faltered. Draco knew it was a mistake. He was almost out the door. Almost free. But he turned, and Potter let go of his shoulder.

Potter was mere inches from him. Draco could feel his body heat, and this time, he did smell arousal wafting off of the other man. Potter was breathing unevenly and so was Draco. They were looking at

each other, eyes tracking eyes and occasionally dropping to parted lips, panting uncertainly. It was a little thing to lean forward. Draco never knew why he did it. He hadn't known at King's Cross who had done it first, but this time, it was definitely him. He leaned in and his lips touched Potter's and fire erupted between them. Potter slammed Draco up against the door and took over the kiss, demanding more from Draco than he had wanted to give had his mind been working at all. Potter's mouth opened hungrily over Draco's, tongue thrusting forward like copulation, filling Draco's mouth with its warm wetness. Draco groaned at the intrusion, sucking on that twitching muscle, tasting Potter and reveling in the secret passion they were sharing, not really knowing why.

He felt Potter's hands clutching both sides of his head, turning it to kiss at a better angle, deepening it. Draco opened his mouth wide, giddy with the feel of a kiss more intimate than sex, a kiss like none other he'd ever experienced. His nose inhaled Potter's scent, that manly aroma of sweet sweat, the tang of testosterone, and perhaps soap that said "Harry Potter" in its simplicity. His own arms slid forward and wrapped around that body, a body he had wrapped around so many years ago when Potter was his Hero as well as the Wizarding World's, and it was the same. Only now that body was bigger, stronger, more filled out with time and training. Draco pulled it in tightly against him, absorbing the man's strength. He wanted the rest of the world to fall away, and in Harry's arms it was doing just that. He didn't have to think of anything; not of his wife in her other suite, not of work at the Ministry, not of his aging parents—not anything. Just those lips and that tongue and that groan eliciting from the other man as he kissed and kissed him.

But Harry's hands didn't stay clutching Draco's head. One was moving down his body, touching his chest. Draco arched into it, wanting to feel those large, square hands touch him, especially that wand hand, the one that wielded such power. But that hand did not stay, smoothing over his pectorals over his clothing. It traveled downward until it grasped his hip. He pushed Draco back slightly, and Draco whimpered into his mouth as they continued to kiss. But then Draco discovered he had only pushed him back enough to push his robe out of the way and unbuckle his belt.

He'll never do it with one hand, he thought, and lowered his own hands to help. They broke their kiss and looked down as Draco fumbled getting his trousers open. Harry did the same to his own. His chest was heaving as he glanced up every now and then at Draco's face. Soon they had their trousers opened and Draco saw that Potter was just as aroused as he was. They pushed their underpants aside and pulled out their dicks. Twin erections but neither cock looked remotely like the other. Draco's was slim, long, and pink and his bollocks normally hung lower. Now they were a tight, flushed package nudging his cock to its upright position.

Harry's cock was thick and meaty with a reddened sac that seemed painfully enlarged. Its tangle of black pubic hair curled around it as if giving it a safe nest to huddle in.

After studying each other's cocks, Harry wasted no time and reached forward to close his hand over Draco's. Draco gasped and pressed his lips together to suppress the moan that wanted desperately to spill out. Harry touched and explored the feel of the foreign erection, thumb pushing firmly down the shaft before rubbing up again and teasing the ridge of Draco's cockhead.

This was not to be borne! Draco reached with slender fingers and closed them around that monstrous cock of Potter's. It was very warm to the touch and soft at the same time and he pulled on it. Harry threw his head back and gasped an unintelligible sound. And then they began to slowly pull and squeeze each other's cocks. Draco dropped his other hand so he could hold that large sac and roll those testicles gently in his palm. He was rewarded with a gasped, "God! Draco!"

He had never heard his given name on Harry Potter's tongue before. Hmm. Tongue. He leaned in again and took possession of Harry's mouth. The kiss was sloppier this time since their hands were occupied elsewhere and they were so incredibly close to coming that their mouths became desperate, sucking and nipping, twirling tongues into crevices that served as something else in their minds.

Draco felt it. That knot of extreme pleasure spiraled outward from his groin like a sun exploding. He felt his balls contract, felt his penis surge in Harry's hand, and he unloaded more than he had ever released before. It simply pumped and pumped from him. He cried out a choking gasp, tears welling in his eyes. He pulled hard and fast on Harry's dick in his excitement, bringing the other man to completion. Harry came with a staccato shout, shooting hard onto Draco's belly in one long, sticky stream. They let each other go at the same time and pressed their gloppy bodies together, soaring in the updraft of a warm afterglow, sensitive cocks plastered together.

But as Draco slowly returned to his senses, the moment was no longer golden. A creeping embarrassment overtook him and he pushed Potter back. He couldn't meet his eye and fumbled for his wand trapped in his crumpled robes. He grabbed it, encanted Scourgify, and dropped his wand hand to his side.

Potter stepped back, a stunned look on his face. His wet dick was still hanging limply from his pushed down underpants. Draco was tucking himself back in and straightening his clothes when Potter finally awoke enough to do the same, bright red spots growing on each cheek.

"I'm...I'm sorry," said Potter, a perplexed look on face competing with the glow of his blush.

"Why are you apologizing?" Draco felt mortified. What, in Merlin's name, were they doing!

“I dunno. I just thought I should.”

“Always the gentleman,” he muttered.

“Draco—”

“Look, we’ve got to forget this. Forget this ever happened.”

“Yeah.” He pushed his fingers messily through his hair.

Draco never looked up at Harry, but instead down at the man’s shoes. Harry still wore trainers like a kid. But Draco couldn’t find it in him to be disgusted by it. It was rather endearing, really.

He grabbed the door knob and twisted it. “I’m going.” He said nothing more. He was on the stair when he decided to just Apparate home.

When he snapped into existence in his bedroom suite at Malfoy Manor he stood swaying for a moment, trying to absorb what had just happened. It didn’t make any sense. He couldn’t do it again. No.

But it had been—without a doubt—the best sex he had ever had.

\* \* \*

Harry couldn’t go back to work. He was too distracted. Besides, since he ran the department he could take all the time he wanted. Minister Shacklebolt had decreed that anyway. He certainly didn’t feel like going home, and so he walked aimlessly through London, passing all manner of Muggle monuments, cathedrals, and buildings without giving them a passing thought.

Why had they done it? Again! It couldn't be stress this time, could it? Their kids were safely at school and there was really no reason to be angry with the other anymore. Besides, he hadn't been angry with Malfoy for ages. His truce with the Malfoys had started the moment Draco had refused to identify Harry to the Death Eaters. Even with a face bloated and disfigured from Hermione's hex, Draco bloody well knew it was Harry. But he had refused to indict him. It was the first time Harry realized—really understood—that Draco regretted what he was doing. He had known it in the back of his mind from what he had witnessed on the Astronomy Tower when Draco had lowered his wand. But in that moment in the Death Eater's clutches, it became crystal clear to him. And then when he was playing dead in front of Voldemort, Narcissa had kept his secret. The Malfoys weren't evil after all. He knew it from that day. They were misguided gits who thirsted for power, to be sure, but there was love. It was Harry who had spoken for them at the end of it all, and Lucius Malfoy had not had to go back to Azkaban. Harry remembered the look on his face once the trial was over. He had stared at Harry completely stunned. He had said nothing. No word of thanks, naturally, but many days later, he had sent a note full of the kind of circuitous wording that government agencies were good at, and Harry supposed that somewhere in that tangled prose was a thank you.

He had kept the note.

But Draco had continued to be an enigma. He had married a witch Harry had never heard of—some fifth cousin of Draco's from France, was the rumor—and settled into life at Malfoy Manor with the parents in one wing and he and his wife in another. Draco had gotten some minor Ministry position that kept the Malfoy name in politics but he never did much in it. Harry imagined that this was Lucius' forte and not Draco's. Lucius, of course, wasn't allowed to work at the Ministry anymore. That had been Harry's decree.

It was late afternoon before Harry decided to go home. He Apparated into the garden, and then walked into the house, first wiping his feet on the mat.

"Harry!" Ginny came up to him and kissed him on the lips. "What are you doing home so early?"

"Oh, I just decided to leave work early."

She slipped her arm in his and walked with him through the kitchen into the lounge. "Well, good. It's nice to have my husband home."

"It's good to be home," he said and meant it. He sat next to Ginny, his wife of sixteen years, and took a deep breath, taking in the scent of flowers that was Ginny through and through. "It's really good to be

home,” he sighed, laying his head on her shoulder. He didn’t see the small, worried frown that played at her lips.

\* \* \*

Harry resolved the next morning to never contact Draco again. It was just madness. Whatever it was between them, they obviously couldn’t control and it was best to leave it alone.

It was Saturday, and Harry, Ginny, and Lily decided to have a picnic. They packed a generous lunch, shrunk it, and started walking down the lane into the nearby woods. The trail would lead over a rise and down into a valley. Soon they would follow a stream that would meander and lead them through more copses and meadows of fern.

Harry liked to think that his own parents used to take this path. Maybe they even took him when he was a baby once or twice. But with a twinge, he knew there was no one left alive to ask. He sometimes thought of the Resurrection Stone he had left moldering in the Dark Forest outside of Hogwarts. But he was never tempted to retrieve it. Dumbledore had been right about him. He harbored no secret ambitions for power. The only thing he had ever wanted was happiness and a family. He assumed they would be one and the same. But as thoughts of Draco crept into his day even as he swung Lily’s hand in his, he began to wonder about that assumption.

They had walked a long time, Lily pointing out various animals they encountered. She was sad that there were no more butterflies, but Ginny pointed out that it was autumn and the caterpillars were busy in their cocoons, waiting to come out in the spring. “Sometimes you have to wait a long time for something special to happen,” she said, smiling up at Harry. And Harry wondered.

They ate in the afternoon, but the breeze was getting colder. Harry cast a warming charm on them as they made their trek home. Sometimes he held Ginny’s hand, and sometimes not. He glanced at her from time to time, trying to remember those first heady days in sixth year when he couldn’t stop thinking of her. That moment after the Quidditch match when he had stridden up to her and kissed her was truly one of the Great Moments in his life. He had been filled with overwhelming love. And he thought for the first time ever that things felt right. Even when he broke it off with her, it had never really stopped. He ached in his heart for her, and when she kissed him at Bill and Fleur’s wedding, he knew he wanted her.



And after it was all over, and the funerals were behind them, and good memories of Fred could replace the stinging loss they all felt, he and Ginny began to date in earnest. Harry took her to restaurants and concerts and it hadn't been at all like that disastrous date with Cho Chang. They were truly friends and confidants, they never were at a loss for conversation, and she had always made him laugh. He had been unaccountably nervous the day he asked her to marry him, even though he knew the answer would be "yes". He was happy beyond measure. He was going to truly be a Weasley. That was the most wonderful thing of all. He was already deep into Auror training and living at Grimauld Place, which he sorely hated because of its dark past and reminders of Sirius' prison, but there was hope and happiness ahead. He started looking for a place in Godric's Hollow. He felt he belonged there. He left his parents old house alone, thinking it a violation of their peace to rebuild on it. But he found another ramshackle cottage not too far, and the townsfolk were overjoyed that Harry Potter was returning. Each time he returned to check on the progress of his refurbished house, someone from the town had done their own magic to it, adding a window box here, and a footpath there. He was uncommonly grateful.

They married, and, with both of them being virgins, their wedding night was one of mutual exploration and tenderness. He brought her home to Godric's Hollow, and they truly began their lives. A few years later, James was born and Harry thought his life was at its absolute peak. A son. A family. Life was good. He didn't worry over those niggling feelings in the back of his head. He never considered that sex with Ginny, even though it became something rote, was anything but what it was supposed to be. He loved her. He loved his son. And when Albus was born, he was overjoyed again. They were going to wait another two years to try for a third and Lily was brought to them. Ginny felt that three was a good number, and Harry agreed. Ginny began taking a contraceptive potion though it didn't seem to matter too much as they didn't have sex all that often anymore. Ginny was tired from raising the kids and Harry was tired from work and he didn't seem to have much of a sex drive. A few wank sessions in the shower did well enough for him. And when Ginny nuzzled him and hinted that she wanted it, Harry performed perfectly fine.

But there was not the passion that there had been. Of course not. After sixteen years of marriage with three kids and the Hero of the Wizarding World out chasing dark wizards, who had time for passion?

So when he encountered Draco at King's Cross, he hadn't been prepared for the exploding excitement between them. He had been shocked by its intensity and further shocked when it happened again at the Leaky Cauldron. He would have expected that it should at least be with another woman. But it had been with a man. And Draco Malfoy too boot!

Was Harry gay? Could he be? He had always been attracted to girls. Except for that one time with Charlie. Bisexual? It was possible, he guessed. How was he to find out? He could go to a Muggle library, he supposed. Monday would be a good day for that. He could take the day off again and do some research... But wait a minute. What difference did it make whether he was or not? He was married. To a woman. It didn't matter if he was bisexual. He certainly couldn't act on it. Ginny was his wife and he

didn't intend to cheat on her. But had he already? Were those trysts with Draco—no. They were not trysts. They were...mmm...aberrations. Yes. Aberrations. Those aberrations with Malfoy. Did those count as cheating? They had both gotten off, the last time getting the other off. Harry slumped into his chair when they got home. He could dance around it with all the slickest prose worthy of Lucius Malfoy, but there was no denying that what he had done with Draco constituted cheating on his wife. And he felt terrible.

He could never tell her, of course. What would it serve? Relieve his guilt, yes, but it would make her feel miserable and inadequate. No point in doing that to her and she didn't deserve it. She was the innocent party here. Harry was the guilty one.

But even weeks afterward with Harry feeling just as badly now as he had then, he couldn't get thoughts of Draco Malfoy out of his mind. Ginny was sitting beside him one night. She was knitting while Harry was staring at the fire. She broke the silence by asking softly, "Harry, is there something wrong?"

Harry snapped his head up. "Wrong? No!"

"Are you sure, love? Because you seem so far away these last few weeks. Is there something bothering you?"

Bothering him? Like the fact that he might be gay? Like the very idea of Draco Malfoy sent him into waves of arousal? Like the thought of kissing him wasn't on his mind day and night?

"No. There's nothing bothering me."

"You just seem so quiet lately. Your brow is furrowed. You come to bed late and get up early. It's almost like...." She put her knitting down. "Is it something I've done?"

Guilt washed over him like a tide. "Oh, no Ginny! You've done absolutely nothing. You've always been an incredible wife. You're my girl." And he took her in his arms. She sighed against his cheek, shuddering a bit. Was she crying? Oh, God. What had he done?

"I just feel outside somehow," she said in a small voice. "Like I'm not part of something."

“No, no, sweetheart. It’s nothing at all. I’m just overworked, I think. Maybe we just need a holiday. Just the two of us.”

She pulled back and there were tears in her eyes. Harry felt like the biggest heel. “Yes!” she said, brightening. “A holiday sounds perfect! We could leave Lily with Ron and Hermione. It will be like a second honeymoon. Oh, Harry! Could we go right away?”

“Yes, why not? We’ve just got to decide where we want to go.”

“I can’t wait!” She jumped up from the sofa and grabbed floo powder to firecall the Weasleys.

Harry smiled as he watched her. He really did love her. All he wanted to do was make her happy.

But as he watched her kneel before the fire excitedly talking with Hermione, his smile faded. He wondered if this trip would make him happy. He wondered if it was someone with blond hair and a sexy smirk that could make him happy.

\* \* \*

Draco had debated for a fortnight about sending an owl. Once, he almost had, and then an owl arrived from Scorpius full of an outpouring of excitement of all the things he was learning and all the friends he was making. He had even taken his father’s advice and made friends outside his house. Draco read with growing dread how Scorpius had made friends with that Potter boy, Albus. Did you know, wrote Scorpius innocently, that Albus Potter’s middle name was Severus, for Severus Snape? He was all right for a Gryffindor. His father was famous, and didn’t you always tell me to align myself with the powerful and well known?

Draco dropped the idea of owling Potter after that, but that had been weeks ago. He felt jittery all the time and couldn’t stand to be in the same room with his wife, not that he ever really could. Arranged marriages were so tedious. He had gotten it up once and it was a good thing she had conceived because he hadn’t relished doing it again. But he would have for the Malfoy heir. And Scorpius had been so much more than just an heir. He loved his son. Sometimes he thought he would be the only one he would ever love.

He glanced at the writing desk again. He had received no letters from Potter. It was the smart thing. He had half-expected to get an owl from him, though. And in the back of his mind, he had been disappointed. But it really was the brave thing to ignore what had happened. Draco knew he wasn't a particularly brave man and had been proud of himself for leaving it be. But now...

He couldn't deny the fact that he was terribly lonely. Scorpius had kept him going. He had practically raised him himself with the help of house-elves. His wife wasn't much help and wasn't very maternal. And he didn't want her help. Scorpius was his. But now that he was at Hogwarts the huge house felt unbearably empty. The hours he filled teaching his son spells and hexes were suddenly blank. Even the scant work he did at the Ministry couldn't fill the time. He half-hoped he'd run into Potter, but it wasn't likely. The Auror department was on an entirely different floor. He never saw Aurors at work. Never.

He hadn't known he could crave something so much. He didn't like to think about the fact that it was a man and Potter at that. But it had been so invigorating. He had felt so alive, like he had been missing something all these years. He almost considered going to one of those gay places, a pub or dance club, but he was positive he wasn't gay and the whole idea of having anonymous sex with a stranger was a distinct turn off. No, the only thing that got him going was thinking of Potter.

He stared at the writing desk for the umpteenth time. "Bugger it all!" He yanked the chair out and sat down hard. He snatched a piece of Malfoy parchment and grabbed a quill.

Potter,

I think we should meet again. To talk. The Leaky Cauldron? Say two o'clock on Wednesday?

Malfoy

Chapter Three—Breakdown

Harry's heart started pounding when he read the note. Ginny walked in the room and Harry slapped the note behind his back, smiling guiltily at her. She frowned at him for a moment but then shrugged and continued on, carrying a laundry basket up the stairs.

Harry wiped the sweat from his forehead. Wednesday was tomorrow! He'd go in early to work and then leave early—no, no! What was he thinking! He wasn't going to go to the Leaky Cauldron. This was madness! There wasn't a damned thing for them to talk about.

He tossed the parchment into the fire and immediately regretted it. Was he getting soft on Malfoy? This was utterly ridiculous. He needed to talk to someone about this, but who on this whole planet could he trust—? Wait. Could he?

He peered up the staircase and heard Ginny busily folding laundry and humming to herself.

“Ginny! I’ve got to go out for a bit. See you in a few.”

“Okay, Harry. I’ll have dinner on when you get back.”

He rushed to the fireplace and tossed in Floo powder. “Headmistress McGonagall!”

\* \* \*

Harry stepped from the Floo into the Headmistress’ office. McGonagall stood to greet him. He noticed her gait was not as swift as it used to be.

“My dear Harry!” she said with a wide smile and pulled him into a hug. “Now what is it that was so important? Auror business?”

He could lie but he didn’t want to. “No, Professor. I would just like to talk to Professor Dumbledore’s portrait, if I may. Um...in private.”

She cocked her head just like she used to, and frowned a little, though with the wrinkles on her face, the frown looked considerably more pronounced these days. “I see. Very well. I will leave you two alone then, shall I?”

But as she departed, Harry realized with all the portraits of previous headmasters now staring at him, he was far from alone. “Er....” His eyes scanned the many faces and fell, as it always did, on Snape’s portrait. Severus Snape sneered down at him from the dark surface of his canvas. He never seemed grateful at all that Harry had fought tooth and nail to get his portrait ensconced with the others. The man had left his post, the governing board had told him, and any headmaster or headmistress who left

their post to leave the students to the mercy of any opposing force was no headmaster in their eyes, even if it turned out later that he was a hero. But as usual, when it came to things Voldemort, Harry had prevailed.<sup>[1]</sup> Though Snape never deigned to talk to him.

Dumbledore's portrait turned to him and smiled over his half-moon spectacles. His blue eyes twinkled. "Harry, my boy. It is good to see you."

"Professor Dumbledore." Harry approached and looked into those painted blue eyes. A lump formed in his throat but he swallowed and, dry-eyed, faced his former headmaster. "It's good to see you, too, sir."

"I understand you wish to talk to me."

Harry sighed and sat on the edge of the desk. "I didn't really have anyone else to talk to."

"Oh? Mr. Weasley or Miss Granger? Forgive me. Mr. and Mrs. Weasley. I do keep forgetting, even after all this time."

"Ordinarily, with an ordinary problem, I could go to Ron and Hermione. But this is no ordinary problem."

"Indeed. Does it concern dark wizards?"

In a way. "No, sir. Nothing like that. It's a...personal...problem. I just didn't know who to go to."

"And your own wife—?"

"Can't. It concerns her, though."

"Well then." The portrait, though already seated, appeared to get comfortable. "I think it meets before you say anything, that I demand of the others to keep whatever information you are about to divulge a secret." He cocked an eye toward the other portraits.

Phineas Nigellus snorted. "As if we would say anything to anyone."

"It's always special privileges with Potter, isn't it?" said Snape to Nigellus.

"I need not remind you of the geas you are under then," Dumbledore interrupted. He turned back to Harry and gazed out placidly.

"Well...okay." Looking at Dumbledore's kind face, Harry didn't know if he could tell him what a cad he was. But he had come here for guidance.

"It's just that...I ran into...um...Draco Malfoy on the platform when we were sending our kids off to Hogwarts." He waited for Dumbledore to interrupt, to tell him he shouldn't continue those old schoolboy rivalries, but the man said nothing. "So I didn't think anything of it, you know, and I wandered away from my group and just...hung around. Alone. But Malfoy had followed me and we only said a few words to each other when, all of a sudden, we just...we...." Harry was breathing hard and wringing his hands.

"Take your time, Harry," said the former headmaster.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the other headmasters lean forward.

More quietly, he said, "We started...kissing."

The only indication of expression on Dumbledore's face was a raise in his brows.

Harry edged closer, eyeing the other portraits frowning at him. "I've never done anything like that before," he whispered. "Never. Never wanted to. And I checked. We weren't hexed or anything. We just lost control. We kissed and then we...we...rubbed against each other and then...Oh God." He pressed his hand to his burning face. He was so embarrassed.

"And Mr. Malfoy. How did he react?"

“Just like me. We were both mortified. We left and that was it. Except...I couldn't let it go. I had to talk with him about it. We agreed to meet in a private meeting room at the Leaky Cauldron.”

“And did he go?”

“Yes. And then the same thing happened again. Only this time it was worse.”

“Worse?”

“We...touched each other. Headmaster, what does it mean? I'm not gay. I'm a perfectly happily married man with children.”

Dumbledore considered for a moment. “Ah Harry,” he said after a time. “Perhaps I had best tell you a little about myself. No doubt, you recall the book Rita Skitter wrote some years ago.”

“That rag? Hermione read some of it to us, but...”

“Yes, it was read to me as well,” he said with a frown. “But how interesting that she left out quite an interesting aspect of my personality, something that would not have helped you at the time but might be of benefit now.”

He paused, and Harry, now curious, waited. Dumbledore heaved a sigh. “I understand you got the real story from Aberforth.”

“Yes.”

“But not all of it. Certainly you understood that Gellert Grindlewald and I were fast friends.”

“Yes, sir.”



“But what you didn’t know, and perhaps what my brother never realized, is that...Gellert and I...were also lovers.”

Harry stared at the man open-mouthed. He guessed he never considered that any of the former headmasters might have been gay. But of course, that was stupid not to have assumed it.

But...Dumbledore?

“I see I have surprised you, Harry.” The old wizard glanced toward the other portraits. “And a few of you lot as well.”

Harry’s mind kicked back into gear from its frozen state. Dumbledore gay? He never knew, never suspected. The man never seemed gay...but perhaps that was the point. And then another thought turned over itself, at the tragedy of it.

“You were enemies,” Harry said quietly.

Dumbledore’s eyes, usually sparkling, dimmed a bit. “Only later. When his true feelings about wizardkind pierced through the armor of my love for him. It was one of the two most difficult things I have ever had to do. The other was not telling you the true nature of your own fate.”

Harry felt his eyes grow hot and he blinked it away. “But...did you always know you were gay?”

“No. Not until I met Gellert. And there was never anyone else after him.”

“But...isn’t that awfully lonely?”

“Yes. It was. I do not recommend it.”

That didn’t make Harry feel better at all. “Oh.”

“You seem disappointed,” said Albus. “Not the answer you were looking for?”

“Well...it’s just not what I imagined for myself. There’s so much more to consider. My wife. My children. I love my wife!”

“I’ve no doubt of that,” said the former headmaster. “I don’t think you are required to fall out of love with her. I suppose it is up to each man or woman to decide what their lives will be. You have chosen to be a married man with children. But now you may have to define yourself differently. Are you prepared to stay the course, Harry...or strike out in another direction?”

“Leave my wife? My kids? I couldn’t do that to them.”

“Remember, Harry, it is our choices not our lot that defines us. If you have made yours, I hope it will be a happy one. Love is a funny thing. It can take so many forms. It’s neither black nor white, but all the colours.”

Harry lowered his head. He certainly had wanted more encouraging counsel. But the truth could not be bargained with.

“Did you get your answer, Harry?” asked Dumbledore after a moment.

“Um...yes. I suppose. Thank you, sir,” he said. He glanced quickly at Snape, but he wasn’t gloating as Harry suspected he might. Harry reckoned there were a few on that wall who had made bad decisions concerning love.

“Come to see me again, Harry,” said Dumbledore. “I am most interested in how you fare.”

“Okay, professor,” he said before turning and shuffling toward the door.

Harry arrived home in time for dinner. He did not owl Draco. And the next morning, he went to work at the normal time.

\* \* \*

Draco waited at the Leaky Cauldron, fortifying himself with Firewhiskey. He drank another snootful and looked at his pocket watch. It was half past two. He clicked his tongue against his teeth. Potter wasn't coming. He hadn't replied to his owl and he wasn't coming now.

A great sadness welled in Draco's chest. Getting ready today, he had felt like a teenager again. He was bubbling with an excitement he hadn't felt in ages. Yet he knew in the back of his mind the possibility of failure just waiting to spring on him. And here it was. Potter had done the brave thing and had ended it, whatever "it" was. He was right, of course. There was disaster written all over this. Potter had the perfect marriage and three children. Draco had Scorpius who had now befriended Albus bloody Potter. Complete disaster written all over it.

Draco rose. He tossed a few Sickles on the table and straightened his robe. Well. That was that. He headed for the exit and was nearly upended—by Harry Potter.

Harry was panting hard as if he had run a long way in a short time. "I'm sorry I'm late," he breathed.

Draco was struck dumb. Facing Harry suddenly was a shock to the system, especially since he had prepared himself for rejection. "Oh," was all he was able to say once speech returned to him.

Harry glanced about warily. "Do you...have a place...?"

"Uh...yes! Yes, I do. This way." His heart was thrumming in his chest as he led the way. He felt Harry's presence behind him and an inexplicable feeling of joy quickened his step. At almost the same time, Draco felt a bit stupid. He had never experienced these feelings before. And he certainly couldn't ever remember a time when he was happy to see Harry Potter.

He took out the key that he had been rubbing like a worry stone in his pocket and opened the door, grateful he hadn't dropped the key in his nervousness.

The room was another ordinary Leaky Cauldron room. Harry closed the door and Draco pivoted on his heel, a feeling of expectancy keeping him on edge.

Harry was staring at his feet. He leaned against the door and didn't look as if he would venture further than the threshold. "I wasn't even sure I was going to come. I actually planned on not coming." He rubbed his face with his hand. "It's all so complicated."

Draco took a breath. "Then why are you here?"

Harry raised his eyes at that. His gorgeous green eyes took in Draco. Draco had never really paid much attention to those eyes before, but he had unwillingly heard from giggling girls for the six years he attended Hogwarts about how beautiful those eyes were. But they really were. Even through the lenses of those ridiculous glasses.

"Why am I here?" Harry repeated. He looked on the verge of tears. The hand that had so recently rubbed his face raked a path through his wild, black hair. "I...I couldn't not come."

Draco waited. What was going to happen now? Would it be the same? Or would Harry leave? And just as he thought that, Harry said, almost too softly to hear, "This is a mistake." He turned to go when Draco called out, "Harry!"

Harry froze. He looked over his shoulder at Draco. "You called me 'Harry'. I don't think I ever remember hearing you say that."

Draco approached, his feet feeling like lead. "Harry," he said again, quietly, like a prayer. When he reached him he lifted his hands to Harry's face. He cupped it and gazed at him. Harry's eyes were filling with tears. "Why are you crying?"

One glossy eye released a tear and it tracked slowly down his cheek, collecting in Draco's palm. "I don't know," croaked Harry.

"Shhh," whispered Draco. He inched closer and pressed his lips very gently to Harry's. A sob muffled by Draco's kiss escaped Harry's throat, but in the next moment, he opened his mouth and took in Draco's probing tongue. The kiss began softly and gradually deepened. They clasped one another tightly, kissing as if they could only live through this tender contact.

A gasp tore Draco away for a moment, but only so he could whisper to Harry's lips, "I want you. Oh, I want you so badly."

Harry whimpered and ran his hands up and down Draco's quivering torso. Harry kissed him quickly, touching just the edge of Draco's mouth. "I don't understand this. But I want to be inside you, Draco. I...I want to...fuck you." His green gaze was steady and fierce but suddenly those eyes that probed Draco so sternly softened. "No. I don't mean that."

Draco swallowed his disappointment. He tried to regain his dignity when Harry spoke again.

"I didn't mean that. I meant...I want...to make love to you."

Draco clutched Harry's arms. Speechless with desire, he could only nod. Harry took his hand and led him to the bed. They toed off their shoes and lay down, facing each other. Harry reached forward and began unbuttoning Draco's shirt. Watching for a few moments, Draco tentatively stretched forward and began clumsily unbuttoning Harry's. Sitting up, they peeled off the shirts from the other's shoulders.

Naked from the waist up, Harry's skin seemed golden, as if he often worked out in the sun. At least it was golden as compared to Draco's paleness. Harry's chest was broad and a thatch of dark hair sprouted from between well-defined pectorals. His nipples were small, dark ovals begging to be touched. Draco stared at them, never before imagining that this sight of a man could be so enticing. Lifting a hand without his thinking twice about it, his fingertips brushed across one, making it crinkle to a hard rivet. More than anything he wanted to taste it and he leaned over and touched his tongue to the hard flesh, rolling it between his lips. Harry made a sound that stiffened Draco's cock even more than it already was. He felt Harry's hands on his face, in his hair. "Draco," Harry whispered passionately. Draco kissed his way across Harry's chest, nosing through the silky chest hair, and reached the other nipple, doing the same, twisting it slightly with delicate teeth. Harry cried out and pulled on Draco's face, bringing it up to his and planting a possessive kiss to his mouth. Draco sunk into the sublime sensation, letting Harry's arms encircle him and hold tightly. It was almost more than his dick could take.

Harry drew back and his eyes glittered behind his askew glasses. One finger pushed them up his nose in an absentminded gesture. Draco sat up and they began again jointly working on the other's trousers.

It wasn't as easy doing this in their sitting positions but with a few clumsy moves and a bit of rolling hips, they managed and soon two pairs of trousers were left crumpled on the floor. Draco looked down at Harry's white underpants and at the remarkable bulge beneath it. He remembered holding that dick in

his hand and couldn't wait to reveal it again. But before he could reach for it, Harry's fingers were running up his own pronounced bulge in his tight, green briefs.

He looked down at the remarkable sight of Harry Potter's hand on his groin and the man's concentrated stare at his bits as if studying a complicated spell book back in class. When Harry spoke, his voice was roughened by lust. "I liked very much how your cock looked."

"I liked yours," Draco answered, more breathlessly than his ego would have liked.

Those eyes snapped up, looking at Draco. "Shall we?"

Draco almost giggled at Harry's politeness. One lump or two, came the giddy thought out of nowhere.

By mutual consent, they peeled the other's briefs away, slipping them down white legs, pulling off socks while they went—and Draco treated himself to the sight of Harry's fuzzy bollocks jiggling as he lifted up his leg to rid himself of his last sock.

And then they were both lying on the bed, bare-bollocks naked, raking each other with their eyes and breathing raggedly.

Harry didn't hesitate. He took Draco into his arms and kissed him. Draco felt the heat of Harry's flesh, the feel of it, against his own skin, and groaned at how absolutely brilliant it was. He wanted more and snaked a leg over Harry's thigh which brought his erection up against the other man's. Raising his hips, Draco frothed against him. Harry tore away from their kiss and pushed Draco back. Affronted at first, he understood when Harry rasped, "No. I'll come if you continue that. And I want to come inside you."

Draco licked his kiss-moistened lips. "I want that, too."

Draco dived for Harry's neck and kissed it, inhaling the tangy male scent of him. But it wasn't just a man's aroma. It was that unique Harry Potter scent. He had smelled it over the years when they had gotten into fights at school, and on that last flight on Potter's broom out of the burning Room of Requirement. He hadn't smelled it in nineteen years, but it was the same. No. Not quite the same. That had been the scent of a boy fresh in his pubescence. This was now the completion of what was started,

the smell of a full-grown and powerful man. Draco inhaled again, licking his way up the beard-stubbed neck.

“God!” Harry sighed. Draco nipped at the skin at the hollow of his throat. Harry’s hands traveled around Draco’s torso and dropped lower until they grasped his bum. He squeezed and Draco made a purring noise in his throat.

Harry’s hands didn’t stop. They seemed to want to explore every inch of Draco’s skin. “Your skin is so soft,” whispered Harry. “It’s smooth, like marble. I’ve never seen anything like it.” He leaned over and kissed Draco’s shoulder with tender reverence. Draco gushed. “All of you,” said Harry in a voice that had Draco thinking that the man wasn’t aware of saying any of this out loud. “It’s remarkable. And beautiful.” He looked Draco in the eye. “You are beautiful.”

Ordinarily, Draco wouldn’t have put up with something like that, but from Harry it was like a royal mantle. He blushed, even though Malfoys never blush.

Harry smiled at Draco’s reddening skin. “That’s beautiful, too.” He kissed Draco’s cheek. Not satisfied with one kiss, he leaned in and kissed his jaw, then his neck, and then a spot behind his ear, all the while gently pushing Draco back onto the bed. Draco lay supine as Harry kissed his neck, licking his earlobe, and kissing downward. His hand caressed lower, fluttering at Draco’s stomach as his kisses traveled to his chest. His lips toyed with a tiny pink nipple and Draco arched up, sensitive to the touch. Harry chuckled a deep sound in his chest. His hand, still traveling on its own, found the beginnings of Draco’s pubic hair. Draco’s spine fell back to the bed but his hips rose.

That hand delicately stroked the underside of his rigid and straining cock. The organ quivered under Harry’s touch, but the man didn’t wrap his hand around it as Draco wanted him to. Draco pushed his hips up, trying to entice Harry to more, but Harry seemed determined not to grab it just yet. His fingers merely explored, lowering to Draco’s sac and playing with the testicles within.

Draco couldn’t stand it. “Harry!” he gasped.

Harry stopped kissing his neck and looked down at his flushed skin. “I think you need to turn over,” came his unsteady voice.

Draco whimpered. He complied and shifted on the mattress, his bum now on display.

As predicted, Harry's hands quickly covered each cheek, stroking and grabbing, kneading. Harry's breath was coming harsher now. "S-spread your legs a little, okay?"

Draco rested his cheek on his arms and shifted to open his legs. He was suddenly a bit embarrassed and was grateful to be able to hide his face behind his hair.

He felt Harry's thumbs dip delicately into his crack and then he was being spread open. The thought that Harry Potter was looking at his hole, something no one had ever looked at before, made it seem so naughty and clandestine, but so very, very arousing.

The bed dipped between Draco's legs as Harry positioned himself. A finger gently stroked over his arsehole and Draco jumped nearly off the bed.

Harry's hesitant voice came from above him. "...I'm not sure what to do."

"You've never done this before?"

"No. Have you?"

"No! I just...be gentle. And go slowly, okay?"

"Of course. I don't want to hurt you."

The Hero. He's my Hero, Draco chanted in his head.

Harry's finger traced the tight furl of Draco's hole. Draco tried to relax, tried to open it, but it was unfamiliar and hard to concentrate on.

"It's...sort of dry," Harry commented. "It will hurt."



“Use spit.”

“Lubricating charm.” Harry said it in a way that seemed to beg for the suffix “Idiot!” “Accio wand!”

Harry could summon his wand? He was good.

Once Harry had his wand and incanted a spell Draco couldn't quite hear, he felt a coolness inside his bum, dripping out of him.

“Sorry,” said Harry. “I might have overdone it. But I don't want it to hurt.”

“That's fine.” Draco couldn't think of anything else to say in his heightened state of arousal.

“Okay. I'm going to go slow.”

Draco waited. It seemed to take forever but finally...it was there! Harry's cock. He felt it just press to the opening of his bum. He willed himself to relax...and then Harry pushed. The dome of his cock felt enormous. Even slickened up as he was, the pressure hurt. He gritted his teeth and opened his legs wider, hoping that would help. He felt Harry turning his hips, literally screwing forward. It seemed to do the job because Draco felt his body succumbing to Harry's assault. He split open and when just the cockhead sunk in, Harry stopped.

“Are you all right?”

Draco took a deep, shaky breath. “Yes. Go on.”

Harry pushed further in, his hands gripping Draco's hips painfully.

“Your hands,” Draco squeaked.

Harry loosened his grip. "Sorry. Ah! You're so tight. Gonna come—" Harry stopped and lowered his head to Draco's shoulder blades. He breathed hot breath onto Draco's sweaty skin for a few moments. The stretching in Draco's arse was uncomfortable and burned. But he waited patiently for Harry to continue.

Harry dropped a kiss on Draco's back before he marshaled his control and began pushing in again. "So incredibly tight...." he said, sighing it.

It felt better the deeper Harry went. Draco could feel his insides relax and he could finally appreciate the thickness and length of Harry's cock.

At last, he felt the soft brush of balls against his arse. "I'm in," said Harry, voice full of pride. "All the way. Are you okay?"

"I'm brilliant. Oh, Harry."

Harry took a few breaths. "Okay. I'm going to move now."

"Go slowly," said Draco.

Harry eased his cock out and then eased it back in. "That's wonderful!" Harry gasped.

"Yes." Draco was trying to wrap his head around the fact that Harry Potter's cock was up Draco's arse and they were both loving it. It felt right and sexy and perfect, even though it still hurt a little.

Harry slowly thrust in and out, but after a while, it didn't seem like enough. "Faster," Draco breathed.

"You sure?"

"Yes. Please."

Harry readjusted himself and thrust faster. When his cock slid in, it stroked over something inside Draco that made him give an uncontrollable shout.

Harry halted. "Draco? Are you okay?"

"Oh my god! What was that?"

"Are you all right? Should I pull out?"

"No! No, don't you dare! It was incredible! The most intense pleasure I ever felt. Do it again."

"I don't know what I did. I just thrust in, is all."

"Well do it again!"

Harry did but he didn't hit the spot. "Lower," Draco said.

Harry tried to aim...and found it.

"Oooohhh!"

"Holy shit, Draco."

"Holy shit, is right! It feels so good. Faster! Harder!"

Harry fell silent as his thrusts rammed in deeper and decidedly harder. Draco shifted up the bed with each ram in, but he aimed his arse up into Harry, trying to take more. It felt so amazing, like little orgasms over and over. It also had the effect of sliding his dick tightly between the mattress and his body.

“So...so good!” he heard above him. Harry kissed the back of his neck sloppily, aggressively. He felt Harry's hips jam him with each hard thrust, the thrusts becoming more erratic. He was surely going to come, and the thought sent Draco into his own pleasure spiral.

Harry came with a shout, his hips juttering and pumping hard against Draco's bum. It sent Draco over the edge and even trapped as his cock was, he spurting into the sheets and up his belly.

Harry's come didn't stay in his backside long. Draco felt the trickle as it dribbled from him and around Harry's dick, still deeply imbedded in him. It felt marvelous. He didn't want the feelings to ever end.

Harry stopped moving at last, panting heavily. His forehead sank between Draco's shoulder blades again. He moved his head to kiss Draco's sweaty back with many kisses.

He wanted Harry inside him forever, but it was becoming more painful the longer his shrinking cock stayed. Harry's cock finally slipped out and he fell to the bed beside him. Draco turned to face Harry and Harry was looking at Draco with wonder in his eyes. Draco imagined he had a similar expression on his own face. “You all right?” asked Harry.

Draco was a bit sore but he managed a smile. “Yes. I'm fine.”

Harry stroked his face. “That was amazing. You were amazing.”

“So were you.” Draco wanted to touch Harry's unruly hair and he pushed the wayward fringe off his forehead.

Harry scooted closer and kissed him and Draco wrapped his arms around Harry's neck and deepened the kiss. When they drew back, Harry looked down with surprise. “You came too?”

Draco smiled. “Yes. It was wonderful.”

Harry smiled briefly and rolled onto his back. Draco couldn't tear his gaze from the man.

Harry sighed. "You know we've crossed a line just now."

Draco felt a twinge and a burning sensation in his arse. "No kidding."

Harry gazed at him thoughtfully. "The thing of it is... I think I may be in love with you."

A great warm glow bathed Draco's heart but almost at the same moment something stabbed at it, cutting it to the quick. "You can't be. We're not gay."

Harry laughed mirthlessly. "God, Draco! Yes. We are."

Not-so-vague suspicions seemed to trump any of Draco's doubts. "Shit."

"But we can't do this anymore," Harry went on. "We have to stop."

"I don't want to stop!" Draco heard the desperation in his voice but was powerless to do anything about it. "This is the happiest I've ever been in my life—"

He choked on the last. He hadn't been willing to reveal so much, and yet there it was: out in the open.

Harry looked at him with a tender expression. "Really?"

Squirming a bit, Draco reluctantly nodded.

"But what about your wife? What's-her-name?"

"I don't love her! That was a marriage of convenience."

Harry looked surprised. "Really?"

“Yes. It was arranged. All I had to do was show up and produce an heir. Which I did.”

Harry snorted. “Listen to you. ‘Produce an heir.’ Crikey, Draco. I thought only the Royals had to worry over that one.”

“Royals? What on earth are you talking about?”

Harry ignored his last remark. “Well it’s a little different for me and Ginny. We chose each other. I love her. And I don’t want to hurt her. Or my children.”

Something hot and unpleasant clutched his heart. “Oh God. Scorpius.” He bit his lip. “Did you know that my son is now best mates with yours?”

“What?” Harry jerked upright.

“Yes. Apparently my son took to heart some of the things I’ve been telling him about making friends outside his own house and he—”

“You told him that?”

Draco decided that the endearing look on Harry’s face was one he wanted to see looking back at him for a very long time. “Yes,” he said softly.

“When did you decide that?”

He wanted very badly to kiss Harry and he gave in to temptation, touching his lips gently to the other man’s. Harry offered a soft smile. “Sometime after you rescued me from the FiendFyre. Um...I never thanked you for that. I’m thanking you now.”

Harry touched Draco’s chin with a knuckle, drawing a soft line along his jaw. “You’re welcome,” he whispered.

“So...so Scorpius made friends with Albus.”

Harry’s tender expression faded. “Shit. Draco. We have to stop. For the children.”

“But Harry. Why? Why should we live a lie? Wouldn’t our family want us to be happy?”

Harry’s eyes seemed to glimmer with moisture. “I can’t hurt them, Draco. But I don’t want to hurt you either. I really think I love you.”

Draco’s breath caught that time. He bolstered his courage. “I...I...think...I might...love you, too. I can’t believe it.”

“Neither can I. I’ve never really been attracted to other men. Not much, anyway. And then suddenly at King’s Cross, it was as if my eyes were opened for the first time.”

“I know. That’s how I feel. And I don’t want it to stop. I mean, I had a pretty good life growing up—except when the Dark Lord started messing with us. But I’ve never been in love before. I thought that maybe I wasn’t capable of it, you know? And then here you are: Harry bloody Potter.”

“How do you think I feel about being in love with Draco bloody Malfoy?”

They grinned stupidly at each other until their complicated lives intruded into their thoughts and their smiles faded. “What are we going to do, Harry?”

“Well...maybe we could still see each other.”

“I’m listening.”

“You know. On the side.”

“I have a house in London,” he blurted.

Harry stared at him. Draco shrugged. “Sometimes you need to get away but still be close to things. No one uses it. We could go there.”

Harry crossed his arms over his chest, folding inward. “It feels so wrong.”

“I know. It’s not ideal. But unless you want to come out to your wife—”

“And I don’t!”

“Then... we can. Harry. Please. I don’t want to stop this. I love this. I love loving you. I can’t believe it, but I do. You’re so...so...cute, really.”

Harry laughed. “Draco Malfoy is calling me cute. Okay. This is definitely an alternate reality.”

Emboldened, Draco leaned toward him. “But you are. And powerful. I don’t just mean the magic either. I mean...the way you...took me. The way you...did things.” Draco’s cock was rising again. The cum had dried on his dick and stomach and it itched a little, but his renewed erection didn’t seem to mind.

Harry’s eyes suddenly smoldered. A flick of his eyes, and Draco noticed Harry’s cock rising, too. Draco reached over and caressed that hefty sac with a delicate touch. “Do you want to fuck me again? I wouldn’t say no.”

Harry suddenly rolled on top of Draco, both hands planted on either side of his head. His groin was pressed against Draco’s. “Yes, I do,” he rasped and gave his hips a thrust.

It wasn’t until early evening that Harry and Draco finally left the Leaky Cauldron.

[1] J.K. Rowling in an interview maintained that Snape’s portrait was not put in the headmaster’s office because he left his post. But then, in a more recent appearance at Carnegie Hall 2007, when she reveal



Dumbledore's sexual orientation, she said that Harry had gotten Snape's portrait hung in the office. Make up your mind, Jo!

#### Chapter Four—Cascade Effect

Every time Harry decided to go meet Draco at the London house, he felt a stomach-churning mix of excitement and self-loathing. Sleeping beside Ginny seemed so uncomfortable, not only because of the guilt gnawing away at him, but because—and he hated to admit it—he just didn't want it anymore. They never made love these days. Ginny didn't demand it and Harry never suggested it. He loved her and all—he really did—but he didn't feel in love with her as he had done all those years ago. She felt more like a sister to him; a confident and friend. He would sometimes watch her sleeping beside him, her nightgown clinging to her curves. He recalled how the mere touch of her rounded breasts used to thrill him, but for the life of him he couldn't conjure the feelings any longer.

But today was a Draco Day. At least his Auror training came in handy. He always made a circuitous route to the London house, and never in the same way. There was no chance of anyone following him, not that any suspected anything. Sometimes he'd Apparate quite close to it and other times he would Apparate blocks away.

This time he Apparated in the alley of a nearby Chinese takeaway place. He turned the corner, and when his eyes beheld the Victorian monstrosity, Harry's excitement would mount. When had this begun to feel more like home than Godric's Hollow? They had been meeting for almost two months and Christmas was fast approaching. Harry had gotten wonderful gifts for his children, but he found himself trying to imagine what to buy for Draco.

He breezed past the wards and entered into the tiled foyer, whisking his cloak off and tossing it toward the antler coat rack—which leaned down to catch when he missed. Some wonderful aromas were wafting from the direction of the kitchen and Harry smiled. "Dra-co! I'm—" He caught himself. On more than one occasion, he almost said "home." "I'm here!" he amended.

Draco poked his head out of the kitchen doorway and smiled. He greeted Harry with a kiss that started as a peck but turned to something lingering. "Hi. How was your day?"

“What? All two hours of it? What’s for lunch?” He slipped his arm around Draco and walked with him to the stove.

“Come look. You’ll be proud of me. No house-elves this time.” He crouched down and opened the oven door where a roast sat sizzling in its own juices.

“Draco! You didn’t! The Muggle way?”

Draco drew back. “Don’t be mental. Of course not.” He whipped out his wand and spun it in his fingers. “I did it with this little stick of wood. You should try it sometimes. It’s very handy.”

“I’ve heard that.” He took the man in his arms and kissed him again. “And I’ve been practicing with it. There’s a very good lubricating charm I’ve gotten awfully good at.”

Draco smiled that devilish smile of his. “You certainly have.” He kissed Harry back and pinched his bum.

“Ow!” But it didn’t really hurt. He sat down at the table and Draco poured him some wine. Harry noticed the crystal and flowers in a vase for the first time. “What’s the occasion?”

“Well,” said Draco, pouring himself a glass and sitting opposite. “It’s been exactly ninety days since our first kiss.”

“Oh. The ninety day anniversary. How could I have forgotten?”

Draco swatted his shoulder and drank his wine. “Well. It was something like that. I just wanted to celebrate is all.”

What they didn’t want to say, was that soon their children would be home for Christmas and they wouldn’t have time to see each other. Harry was happy to be seeing his children again, but not so happy that he wouldn’t be with Draco.

“Maybe we should decorate a tree here early,” said Harry, breaking the taboo of speaking it aloud.

Draco stared at him over his wine glass. “That would be very nice.” His smile belied the sorrow evident in his eyes. Harry rose and came around the table. He crouched and put his arms around him, kissing his head. “I love you,” he whispered to that blond scalp.

Draco’s hand covered Harry’s. “I love you, too.”

They said it often. It was their Big Defiance to the world. A world that didn’t have the least idea what they got up to.

But of course, that was about to change.

\* \* \*

Harry noticed Ginny looking at him oddly. Ever since their holiday away—only three days after Harry and Draco had made love for the first time—things seemed to have gone down hill. Ginny was short with him and he tried to endure it, thinking that it might alleviate some of his guilt. But it only made things more tense between them. They tried to be civil in front of Lily and it was easier because they doted on their daughter.

But one evening an owl arrived from Hogwarts. Ginny retrieved it and she grinned. “It’s from Al.” She unrolled it and read, laughing.

“What?”

“I’ll read it to you: Hullo Mum and Dad. Hogwarts is great, just like you said. Today we had Magical Creatures, and Professor Hagrid was showing us Red Caps. They were in little cages, but when Professor Hagrid brought them out to show us, he tripped and the cages exploded and they all attacked his leg. He was bleeding A LOT but he said not to worry and then Lisa Finnegan fainted. But I was the hero because I sent my Patronus to get Headmistress McGonagall and she gave me FIFTY POINTS to Gryffindor for creating a fully corporeal Patronus in my first year. I told her you taught me and she said she’d send an owl about it. You might be in trouble, Dad, but I guess she can’t put you in detention anymore—”

Harry laughed. "I wouldn't be so sure."

Ginny smiled at that and continued reading. "It looks like I made a good friend, as well. Scorpius Malfoy. He said his dad used to know Dad pretty well..." Ginny lowered the page. "That's dreadful! I didn't know Al was friends with Malfoy."

Harry felt his gut tighten. "I wish you wouldn't say it like that. Things are different now. Isn't that what we all wanted?"

"But a Malfoy, Harry? Maybe he's up to something. Maybe he'll just get Al in trouble. I'd hate to see his heart broken."

"Or maybe," he said, trying to control his anger, "they really are friends. So maybe you should just keep your opinions to yourself."

Ginny stared at Harry aghast. "What has gotten into you? Since when are you best mates with the Malfoys?"

"I never said I was mates with them, but I did testify for Lucius and Narcissa and we really need to stop all these old hatreds. That's what let Voldemort get so powerful."

"Don't lecture me about all that, Harry Potter. I was there. I know. I was the one possessed by Tom bloody Riddle!"

Why does she have to keep bringing that up, he sighed. "I know that, but isn't that the point of all we went through, so that the houses wouldn't be divided so much anymore?"

"What's the matter with you lately? I would have thought you'd hate the idea of our son friends with a Malfoy."

"Well...times have changed." He leapt from his chair and stomped out of the room. Outside in his garden, he was able to calm down. He cast a warming charm on himself and a Lumos so he could look at

the wilting leaves. The garden was pretty much done for the year. All the fruit and vegetables had been picked. There was nothing left but dead leaves and empty stems.

Harry stared at it and felt a deep sense of loss creeping in on him. His marriage was falling apart and he couldn't stand it. It wasn't as if he could be counted among the perfect husbands of the world anymore, but he had made a go of it. But ever since admitting to himself that he was gay, the rest of it all seemed so exhausting. Ginny was no comfort anymore and he certainly was no comfort to her. Things were going from bad to worse. At least there was Draco to look forward to.

But wasn't that the problem to begin with?

\* \* \*

Draco opened his lips over the crown of Harry's penis and covered it down to the ridge. As he gently sucked, he recalled the very first time they had given each other head.

It had only been days after making love for the first time at the Leaky Cauldron. But for their next liaison, Draco had given Harry directions to his London house, with instructions on how to get past the wards.

Draco seemed to be vibrating, waiting for Harry's arrival. There was always some question of whether he would come at all, but when Draco heard the alarms that signaled someone was passing through the wards, he rushed to the foyer, bobbing on his heels. The door opened and Harry stood in the threshold. He stopped when he spied Draco and gave him a wide grin. "Hi."

"Hullo." Draco wanted to rush to him, but he was trying for something more dignified. It didn't always work, but he wanted to make a good impression on Harry.

Harry closed the door and stepped forward. He seemed awkward, too, and leaned in to give Draco a shy kiss on the cheek. It was then that Draco saw what Harry had behind his back: a small nosegay of flowers.

With a sheepish smile, Harry offered them. "I...didn't want to come empty-handed and I didn't know what else to bring."

Draco stared. "Wine is always appropriate," he heard himself say, but just as quickly wished he had never said it. The sight of those flowers made his heart melt with frustrating girlishness.

"I don't know anything about wine. But flowers are...nice."

Draco accepted them as if they were precious gems. He held the small bouquet and simply stared at it. "Thank you," he whispered.

Harry sidled close to him and kissed his cheek again. "You're welcome...love."

That was it. Draco let the flowers drop and threw his arms around Harry, kissing him madly. Harry almost toppled over, but wound his arms around Draco and returned the kiss wholeheartedly.

"That was—" Draco breathed. "Unbelievably—" he kissed Harry's cheek. "Romantic."

"And girly," said Harry with a giggle.

"No it wasn't. Well. Maybe." He picked up the flowers and clutched them to his chest. "Are you hungry? Do you want food?"

"I'm hungry. But I don't want food."

Draco soon recognized the smoldering in Harry's eyes. He took his hand. "Then come upstairs, Mr. Potter." He led Harry to his opulent bedroom. The drapes on the windows were already closed, but the curtains on the four-poster were opened. Draco dropped the flowers on the bedside table. "I think we need to get out of these clothes," he said, disrobing Harry.

When they were both naked, they slid together onto the bed. Sitting sideways and looking at one another, Draco suddenly laughed. "We never do much talking, do we?"

Harry laughed, too, only not as much. Draco could tell he was quivering with lust. "We can talk after."

“Mr. Potter is very practical,” he muttered under his breath, succumbing to Harry’s arms again.

Harry pressed him down to the mattress and Draco willingly let the other man roll atop him. Harry’s erection bored into the juncture of his thigh and hip and his own hard cock jutted into Harry’s thigh. “Harry?” he murmured as Harry nibbled on his throat.

“Mmmm?” he inquired.

“This is very nice. I couldn’t stop thinking of the last time we were together.”

“Mmmm.”

“With you...you know. Putting your cock inside me. Fucking me.”

“Mm....mm!”

“But lately I’ve been thinking about...about...sucking your cock.”

Harry froze. He lifted his head. “Oh, yeah?”

“Yes. Do you think...Will you let me?”

Harry laughed weakly. “Well, gosh, Malfoy. Turn down a blow job? I’m not mental.”

Draco put on his best devilish grin as he slid down the bed. “Get many of these, do you, Potter?”

“Well, actually, truth be told...no.”

“The Weaselette not accommodating?”

"Please don't call her that." Harry's erection began to flag. Damn. Must remember not to bring up the wife. "She...did it a few times but never seemed to like it. But, of course, I liked it just fine."

"Mmmm." Draco ran his hand down Harry's muscled thigh. It was covered in coarse, dark hair and Draco found he liked it. As his hand drew closer to Harry's groin, that erection rose again and the scent of arousal rose as well, dark and heady. He stared at Harry's rather remarkable organ and licked his lips. "I can't imagine not liking it."

"She said it was too big."

"Bint. How can a cock be too big?" He nestled down between Harry's legs, fitting his own erection into the folds of the rumpled duvet. But now that Draco was looking at it from only inches away, he was wondering if Ginny Potter didn't have a point. How was he to get that thing into his mouth? It amazed him that he had gotten it into his arse, but that had considerably more give than his jaw. He licked his lips again and curled his fingers around the base. He could cheat a bit that way, considering he didn't think he wanted to asphyxiate from Potter's cock.

Looking at it quite close, it really was a nice-looking dick. It was thick and sort of bulged in the middle. And the head was domed and flared to an appealing ridge circumnavigating the shaft. His cock was red and the crown even darker. It seemed to bob with Harry's quickened pulse. With shaft firmly in hand, Draco gazed down further to Harry's sac. It, too, was blushed a deep red and was covered in fuzz and gooseflesh.

"Everything all right down there?" Harry squeaked.

"I'm just taking my time to appreciate the view. You really are well turned out, Potter."

"Oh. Um...thanks."

"Don't mention it." Draco drew closer, knowing his hot breath touched Harry's bits and the bollocks drew up even more. Draco reached out with his tongue and gave that furry package a hard lick.

Harry's body quivered and he gasped.



“Mmm,” said Draco. “Did you like that?”

“God yes!”

“No need to call me that,” he said with a nervous chuckle. He’d already been fucked up the arse several times by Harry the last time they met, but Draco had never sucked a cock before. He didn’t want to look stupid doing it. He cursed himself for not thinking ahead. He should have practiced on something first before suggesting it.

Since he and Harry were now officially lovers, he decided to try honesty. “Look...um...I may not be very good at this....”

“Draco,” said Harry, looking at him tenderly. “Any little thing you try, that you offer to me, is so special. I cherish it all.”

Draco swallowed a lump in his throat. Holy shit. No wonder people followed him. Power, looks, nobility. What didn’t this bloke have? Oh, that’s right. A really spectacular blow job. Perhaps Draco could be the superb giver of same. He was certainly inspired to try.

Once more he licked his lips. He was going to conquer that cock if it was the last thing he did!

He took the base of Harry’s cock in a firm grip and aimed the cock toward his mouth. But instead of licking or sucking it right away, he teased it on his mouth, just running it slowly over his moistened, parted lips. He looked up at Harry who was watching Draco with a lustful expression.

Even with his cock crushed beneath him, Draco’s dick gave a twitch.

He kissed the head of Harry’s prick and then licked it. He gave it a few more licks. And then he was licking it all over like a melting ice cream cone. He experimented. The flat of his tongue did the long licks from root to tip, while his flicking tongue teased around the ridge of the crown.

Harry arched his back, hips propelling off the bed. He tossed his head back and forth, eyes pressed closed. "Draco, Draco...."

How he loved hearing his name on Harry Potter's lips. How he loved the taste of the man; his cock! He slurped all over that cock and finally took it into his mouth, laving the underside with his tongue as he closed his lips over it, sucking.

"Teeth!" Harry squeaked, and Draco understood to cover his teeth with his lips. There was definitely an art to this.

He remembered his other hand, and sought Harry's bollocks, teasing them with his fingertips. Harry was soon writhing uncontrollably.

"Gonna come!" he warned, hips jutting.

Draco had already decided he wanted to swallow. He wanted everything he could get from Harry. He wanted to give him so much pleasure.

Draco sealed his lips to the quivering organ. The bitter, salty taste of his pre-cum was already in his mouth, especially when he sucked on the head, but then Harry released and Draco was overwhelmed with a sudden flow of that bitter liquid. He did his best to swallow. He choked a bit, trying not to cough with Harry's dick still in his mouth, but he drank down the last, finally releasing Harry with a pop.

He wiped at his chin and cleared his burning throat.

"You all right, Malfoy?" Harry's voice was none too steady. Draco smiled at that.

"Perfect. You?"

Harry grinned from ear to ear and lay back. "Brilliant!"

Draco crawled back up to lie beside Harry, stroking his chest. His nipples were still taut from his orgasm. "That was my first time, you know."

"I know," said Harry, still smiling.

"It wasn't great, but I'll get better—"

"No, no! It was spectacular. Really."

"You think so?" Draco kissed his shoulder. But then a twinge in his own hard cock made him drop his hand down and push the heel of his palm into it.

Harry looked down. "You still have a problem."

"Somewhat."

"Shall I...take care of it?"

Draco rubbed against Harry's thigh. "And just how did you plan on doing that?"

"Well, if you can such cock, I certainly can."

"It's not a competition, Potter."

"The hell it isn't."

The bed bounced as Harry got up and scooted down to Draco's hip. He planted a kiss there and then smiled up at Draco. "It's like Quidditch all over again." He stared deliberately at Draco's pronounced erection. "And it even has broomsticks."

Draco laughed. But his laughter soon died with the remarkable sight of Harry Potter kissing the hollow of his groin. Harry's fingers slowly stroked his thigh. "I haven't done this before either," he said, kissing Draco's leg. Draco trembled at the touch. "But I'll give it a whirl. Have you...have you gotten many blow jobs, Draco?"

He was embarrassed to admit it, but that honesty thing kept creeping up on him. "Um...I've...never had a blow job."

Harry stared. "What? Seriously?"

"Yes, Potter! Evil Draco Malfoy never coerced anyone to do it. I didn't get to date much. The Malfoys weren't exactly top ten on everyone's list to date one's daughter. I never actually had a date. I just married my cousin. We've had sex about three times and that has been it."

Harry's jaw dropped. "In nineteen years?"

Draco's excitement was fleeing rapidly. "Yes. Didn't you hear me? Malfoys are persona non grata. And I have no taste for hiring sex."

"What about Pansy?"

"What about her?"

"I thought she was your girlfriend."

"Yeah. She thought so, too. She wasn't, though. I tolerated her. Let her hang about, stroke the ego."

"But nothing else?"

"Have you seen her face?"

“So...what? You became your own best friend all this time?” Harry made a wanking gesture with his hand.

Draco felt his face burn. He rolled away from Harry and sat on the edge of the bed. “We all can’t have perfect marriages.”

The bed bounced and Harry climbed over the side, sitting next to Draco. He put his arm around him. “I wasn’t making fun of you. I had no idea. Isn’t it awfully lonely?”

“I had Scorpius,” he said quietly. “But now he’s off at school.”

“And you’re alone. Well. Not anymore, of course. There’s me, now.”

He sat, just feeling the warmth of Harry beside him. He rested his head on the other man’s shoulder. “You really weren’t making fun of me?”

“Of course not! Draco, this is all so new to me, too. And marvelous. I won’t let you be lonely anymore. Not when you give me so much happiness.”

“I do?”

“Yes! Oh, God yes! Draco, just knowing who I am now, with you, has been the most amazing thing of my life. I never knew I could feel this way, this complete. I didn’t know what I’d been missing. I only wished we could have known while we were in school. Things would have been so very different, wouldn’t they?”

“An understatement.” He looked shyly at Harry from under his overhanging fringe. “I wish we had.”

“I would have taken you to the Yule Ball.”

Draco smiled. “You would not have.”

“Would to. Course I couldn’t dance.”

“I know. I remember.”

“And we would have gone to Hogsmeade together and had picnics...and snogged on the Astronomy Tower—” Harry bit his lip. That was a subject they hadn’t wanted to broach. But Draco tried to reassure him.

“I would have snuck anywhere to snog with you.”

Harry recovered from his faux pas and smiled softly. “And I would have protected you.”

The unspoken now spoken, Draco’s heart warmed. Yes. He believed that was certainly true. He kissed Harry’s cheek. “My Hero.”

“You know, I ordinarily don’t like hearing that particular title when referring to me, but in your case, I’ll make an exception.”

Harry began caressing Draco’s back with one hand and his leg with the other. His lips sought Draco’s neck and the sensations were easily making Draco’s dick rise again.

“That’s better,” said Harry in a husky voice. The hand on Draco’s leg slid down inside his thigh and brushed across the burgeoning erection. Harry rested his chin on Draco’s shoulder and whispered to his ear. “I love the look of your cock, Draco. And I’m going to do my very best to suck it to your satisfaction. And after you’ve come, I am going to fuck you into the mattress because you are so turning me on.”

Draco snatched a peek at Harry’s lap and indeed, his flaccid member was moving to rise again. The sight of it made Draco fully hard once more.

Harry slid to the floor and kneeled in front of Draco, placing his hands on his thighs. With gentle pressure, he parted Draco’s legs so he could fit comfortably between. Looking down at that face looking back up, Draco was filled with overwhelming love for the man. Harry was grinning. “Quidditch,” he said, wiggling his brows at the joke, and then he dipped his head down.

A wet, warm tongue licked the head of Draco's cock and he gasped from the thrill roiling in his belly. Harry's lips sunk over it, taking it in. It was warm and wet and intensely pleasurable. Harry bobbed his head, swallowing Draco's dick. Draco clutched the sheets, groaning. This was so wonderful, so exquisite. Never had he felt anything like this. And it was Harry doing it to him. Oh, he loved him! Loved him so much!

He didn't realize when he grasped Harry's head and then rocked his hips into his face. Harry's eyes were closed, his glasses going askew. Draco tried not to force his dick down Harry's throat and backed off, but it was difficult when such extreme sensations were bringing him so close to orgasm. In fact, he felt the coiling begin in his balls.

"Harry. I'm close. So close."

Harry doubled his efforts, sucking hard now as he bobbed his head faster. Draco didn't have time to say anything. His balls clenched, he spread his legs wider, and shot his load into Harry's mouth. He stared, watching Harry's lips tighten over his cock, his cheeks hollow from sucking. He looked as if he was enjoying every minute of it.

Draco kept spurting, having no idea where it was all coming from. At last he was done, and Harry released him just as it was growing too sensitive. He fell backwards and stared up at the canopy, the afterglow spreading over him, robbing his limbs of the ability to move.

Harry appeared above him, smiling like a fool. "How was that?"

Draco was beyond words. He grabbed Harry's neck and dragged him down, planting a languid kiss to his lips. He could taste himself on Harry's tongue, and if he weren't so spent, that would have turned him on, too.

Harry lay atop him and Draco felt Harry's hard cock slide up over his spent and sensitive dick. "You're hard again," he panted.

"Oh, yes. You didn't honestly think I could suck that marvelous dick into my mouth and not get excited about it, did you? As I said, Malfoy, I'm going to fuck you into the mattress. Ready?"

He couldn't believe—at his age—that his cock actually twitched at that. “So ready,” he purred.

And Harry had pounded him into the mattress. And later, once they had both recovered, he sucked Harry's cock again. The man had come three times that night and Draco twice. But who was counting? It was more sex than Draco had had in nineteen fucking years and he certainly wasn't complaining.

And even right now, with Potter's cock in his mouth—a far more experienced mouth, he mused with delight—Harry was writhing quite nicely. Draco had come to recognize all of Harry's cues; when his back arched and his hips rose, how his face grimaced. They all indicated that he was close to coming. Draco would reach up and tweak his nipples with his fingernails, or begin pushing hard on his perineum, or even shove a slickened finger into Harry's arsehole. Yes, Draco had learned quite a few things in the intervening weeks since that first blow job.

Harry reared up and came hard, moaning loudly and shuddering. Draco followed all his movements, making sure Harry didn't choke him, and swallowed the spurting load of cum, rolling his throat to take it all.

Harry calmed down and Draco released him, resting his chin on Harry's hipbone and smiling at him.

Harry's fingers soon found Draco's hair and petted him. “Oh love, that was spectacular. Come up here.” Harry waved a feeble hand at him and Draco slid upward, allowing his lover to enclose him in his arms. He rested his cheek against Harry's chest, listening to his erratic heartbeat slow down.

“You'll kill me,” Harry panted, “but it will be a good death.”

“There is no talk of death in this room. Only of good things.”

“Well,” said Harry sleepily. “Death isn't so bad. I've been dead before, after all.”

“What?”



Harry lazily opened an eye. "Oops. Never intended to mention that. You've pulled down all my defenses. You're worse than Veritaserum. Just forget I said anything."

"Never mind that! What the hell do you mean you've been dead?"

"Didn't your mother ever tell you?"

"Told me what? Why would my mother have known anything?" Draco sat upright.

Harry sighed and propped up the pillows, sitting back against them. "Okay. Since the cat's out of the bag, I might as well tell you. But mind, no one else knows this. So don't mention it, all right?"

"Oh, yes. The scads of friends I have will just be dying to know."

Harry rolled his eyes at Draco but settled himself comfortably to tell him. "You know about the Horcruxes, then?"

"The whole bloody Wizarding World knows about them, Harry."

"Okay. But what they didn't know—because nobody is alive to tell them—is that there were really seven, not six Horcruxes."

Draco blinked at him, almost afraid of the answer. "What was the seventh?" he asked feebly.

Harry gave him a sad smile and shrugged. "Me." He reached up and ran a finger down his lightning bolt scar.

Draco felt his mouth drop open. "Bloody hell!"

"Yeah. That's how I survived when I was a baby. A piece of his evil old soul imbedded in me. That's how I was able to be a Parselmouth."

“C-can you still—?”

“No. Gone with Voldemort. [\[2\]](#) I sort of miss it. It was kind of fun to speak to snakes. Course, there was only one I ever really liked. I’ll tell you about it sometime. Anyway, it turns out I had to let him kill me in order to kill him. So...I did.”

“Was that some mad idea of Dumbledore’s?”

“Yeah. I mean, it wasn’t his idea. It was just fact.”

“And you did. You just walked to your death. Why?”

Harry looked uneasy. “It had to stop. Nothing else would have stopped him. There was so much death. So many I called my friends. I couldn’t stand for it to go on.”

Draco stared at his lover, now more amazed than ever. “And you actually did this willingly?”

“Well I didn’t want to die. Thought it was pretty unfair, all in all. I had a pretty crap life up till then. I thought I was owed a decent job of it. But...fate and all. So yeah. I just...well.” And then Harry Potter shrugged. Shrugged about giving up his life for the lives of everyone else, because it was the right and noble thing to do, as if one did it everyday.

“But...but...didn’t you...weren’t you scared?”

“Hell yes! But...how could I live with myself knowing the truth and doing nothing?”

Only Harry Potter. Draco felt his heart burn for the man. “And so....”

“And so I went to the bastard in the Dark Forest and let him kill me.”

“Forgive if I state the obvious, but you’re not dead... Are you?”

He quirked a smile at Draco. “Uh...no. But I did die. It’s just that, circumstances being what they were, with my mother’s protection and all, and the whole Horcrux issue, I sort of went to a limbo kind of place. And it looked remarkably like...King’s Cross station.”

Draco grabbed his legs and hugged them close to his chest. This was the strangest tale he had ever heard. But having known Voldemort up close and personal, he would have believed anything.

“And I met Dumbledore there,” Harry went on dreamily. “He told me I wasn’t dead but if I wanted to be, I could be. I had only to stay. But the job wasn’t done, you see. So...I had to go back. And I did. And when I did come back, it was your Mum who checked to see if I was dead or not, and in that moment, she asked if you were all right.”

The love in his heart speared outward and encompassed thoughts of his mother. “She did?”

“Her only thoughts were of you. I whispered very quietly that you were alive in the castle. And she kept my secret, pretending I was dead.”

“Is that why you testified for my family before the Wizengamot?”

“One of many, I guess.”

Draco remembered that time with a shudder. “No one else could have saved us. We would all have been thrown in Azkaban forever. Only Harry Potter’s testimony saved us.”

He shrugged again. “There was no way I would have let them do that.”

Draco believed him. “My father...often spoke of you after that. He was always bringing up how brave you were. Whenever you showed up in the Prophet, no matter what crap they were saying, he spoke highly of you.”

It was Harry's turn to be shocked. "You're joking."

"No. It was very strange."

"As strange as my being your lover?"

Draco finally relaxed. Harry was looking at him questioningly. "There's nothing stranger or more outlandish than that."

"Outlandish?"

"You have to admit—"

Harry crossed his arms over his chest. "I suppose you're right."

Draco scooted up to nestle next to Harry. "So you've even defied death. Twice!"

"Yeah. But don't tell anyone, okay. Not even Ron and Hermione know."

"Or Ginny?"

Harry shook his head.

"But you've told me."

Harry took Draco's hand and intertwined his fingers with Draco's. "Yes. No secrets from you."

Draco couldn't speak after that. Harry had entrusted him with one of the greatest truths of his life. And Draco would never, ever betray that.

“I love you,” he managed to croak.

Harry kissed his temple. “I love you, too.”

\* \* \*

The day before Christmas, before the children would arrive home from Hogwarts, Harry slipped into the Londonhouse.

They had put up a tree in the sitting room and it glowed with fairy lights as Harry entered. The room was the only part of the house decorated, with garlands of greenery and mistletoe in every archway. Not that they needed that.

He found Draco in the kitchen putting the finishing touches on the holiday punch. He looked up and smiled. “Happy Christmas, Harry.”

“Happy Christmas, Draco.”

“Let’s go into the lounge.” He grabbed the jug and levitated two mugs to follow him. They settled by the fire with their punch in mugs and Harry presented Draco with his gift. “You have to open it now because I won’t get to see you on Christmas.” It was a stupid thing to say as it made the sparkle in Draco’s eyes dim. No need to remind either of them that they couldn’t see each other on Christmas.

Draco silently took the small package and began to tear the paper. Harry watched anxiously. It had taken him forever to find the right gift.

Draco opened the box and took out the silver quill. Goblin made, the feather part was rendered in perfect detail. And the stem fit nicely in the hand. Harry even had it engraved. It said, “To Draco, with love, Harry.”

Draco looked it over, holding it delicately.

“You can’t hurt it. And no one can see the inscription but you, by the way. I spelled it myself.”

“Harry, this is amazing. Thank you. I’ll use it everyday.”

“You’re welcome. Where’s mine?” Presents still enticed Harry. He was making up for all that lost time.

Draco smirked. Harry liked his smirks now. “Anxious bugger, aren’t you.” He waved his wand and a small present drifted up from under the tree and landed in his palm. He handed it over to Harry.

Harry took off the small bow and then unwrapped it. Inside the box was a very small, key fob-sized Sneakoscope. Harry took it out. It was beautiful. He’d never seen one like it.

“And this one works. I ought to know. I made it.”

“You made this?”

“Of course. Can’t have evil wizards sneaking up on you. I want to protect you, too.”

Harry’s heart melted. “Thank you.” He leaned over and kissed him. “What’s for dinner?”

Draco pouted. “I wish we could go out. We’re always hiding here. It’s not as if anyone would know what we do.”

“But still. Wouldn’t it become suspicious our hanging out together all the time?”

“You could make up some story.”

Harry frowned. “I have to lie enough as it is. Come on, Draco. Don’t spoil this evening. You know how hard it is for me to get away. And we won’t be able to see each other for a fortnight.”

Draco hadn't stopped pouting. Honestly. The man was such a child sometimes. Even after they had retired to their room and made love, Draco was still sullen. "I wish you could spend the night."

Harry pulled up the zip in his trousers and was slipping his foot into his shoe when he glanced at the man still naked in the bed. "You know I can't. And besides, we've got to pick up our kids from the station in a few hours."

"I know."

He said nothing more as Harry finished dressing. Harry went to the bed and sat down next to him. He pushed a wisp of blond hair out of the man's eyes. "I know it's not perfect, love. But it's the best we can do. I don't know what I'd do without our time together. It makes the rest of it bearable."

Draco's grey eyes lifted, looking at Harry. There was sadness there. Probably as much as there was in Harry's eyes. "See you in a fortnight," said Harry.

"Yeah."

He solemnly kissed Draco's forehead and then his lips.

When he trotted down the front steps the sky was streaked with red. He hadn't realized how late he was and ducked into a hedge to Apparate home.

When he arrived, Ginny was hanging more garlands in the sitting room. She turned to look at him with a strange expression.

"Er...sorry I'm late. Lots of catching up at work these days."

She tucked the last garland over the archway and then climbed down the ladder. She carefully patted her hair, smoothed down her jumper, and faced Harry.

“Where were you?” she said calmly.

“I...I was at work—”

“No, you weren’t. All those times you said you were working late, you weren’t. I checked. You haven’t been at work quite a lot. Nobody thought to lie to me. I guess you didn’t tell them to. I think you’d better tell me who you’ve been seeing. I think I have a right to know.”

[\[2\]](#) Another interview with Rowling. She admitted that Harry lost the ability to speak with snakes once he was no longer Voldemort’s Horcrux.

Chapter Five—Empty Garden

Harry stared at her, his heart suddenly jarring in his chest. She presented a calm exterior but he had known her long enough to realize that she was on the brink of...something. Anger, hurt. Perhaps all of it.

He took in the sight of her. So small. So defenseless, really. His wife. The mother of his children. And somewhere upstairs, Lily was playing, waiting for the time they would all pile into the Floo and head to King’s Cross. It all crashed in on Harry and he suddenly felt his eyes burning. A great lump choked his throat and the only thing that could escape it was a sob.

Tears gushed from his eyes and he sunk to a chair. “I’m sorry. God, I’m so sorry.”

Ginny stood rigidly above him. Her hand fidgeted as she clutched her elbow. She waited for Harry to continue, chin trembling.



"I'm so sorry, Ginny. I never meant for it to go so far. But..." He wiped his nose with his sleeve. The tears wouldn't stop and he tried to speak between the sobs. "I never knew. I just never knew..."

"Never knew what?" she said impatiently. Her own voice fretted at the edges. "Who is she, Harry? I mean...can we salvage this? We need to talk about it—"

"It isn't a 'she'," he managed.

Ginny stared at him, perplexed, tears glistening on her lashes. "What do you mean? It's not a woman? Is it a mermaid? A centaur? What?"

"No. It isn't anyone...female at all. It's...a man."

"What?"

He wiped a hand over his eyes. "It's a man. I'm having an affair with a man."

Ginny breathed hard for a few moments before she threw her hand over her mouth and ran to the toilet. Harry heard her retching and almost went to her, but thought it best to stay where he was.

After a few minutes she returned. Her face and hair were wet. She was shaking now and slowly sat opposite him. She wasn't looking at him anymore. "Tell me," she croaked. "You're gay?"

He nodded.

"Why did you marry me if you were gay?"

"I didn't know then. Oh, Ginny. I never would have married you if I had known." But that didn't come out the way he planned. "Ginny, I love you. I have always loved you. But...when I realized that I was...gay...and I started seeing...this person...it all made so much more sense to me. I still love you, but not the way I did before. I can't help how I feel. Please believe me. I never wanted to hurt you."

“And yet you did. Why can’t we just—” She pushed a soggy strand of ginger hair off her face. Her shoulders slumped. Ginny was not a stupid person. She was always remarkably brave and straightforward. He waited for her to speak, to give him the right answers.

“There’s no going back, is there?”

Harry made himself look at her, at the great tears rolling slowly from her eyes. He shook his head.

“We have to split up, don’t we?”

Harry shrugged. He had never wanted that.

“The children—” She put a trembling hand to her mouth and stared at the tree, winking its lights at them. “We don’t say anything till after Christmas. You’ll...move out, I guess. We’ll...make arrangements and such. You still want to see the children?”

“Of course!” he sobbed. “I love them! That will never change.”

She nodded. “I won’t deny them to you. You’ve always been a good father.” She stared at her lap, shaking her head. “I don’t understand. You just discovered this one day? Out of the blue?”

“Um...yes. It was as much of a surprise to me as it was to—him.”

She gazed at Harry a long time. “Do you love him?”

Harry clutched the seat cushion. “Yes,” he said quietly.

“Does he make you happy?”

“You’ve made me happy for years—”

“But I clearly don’t now. Does he make you happy?”

Harry swallowed another sob. “Yes. He does.”

“Who is it?”

The question he had been dreading. “I don’t think—”

“Who is it?” Her voice was becoming shrill.

“It won’t help you to know.”

“It’s someone I know, isn’t it?”

“Ginny—”

“Who, Harry? I have a right to know who is destroying my marriage!”

“It’s not his fault. It’s mine. What difference does it make to know?”

“WHO!”

“Draco Malfoy!”

She froze. “You’re lying.”

He took a deep breath. “I told you it wouldn’t help you to know.”

“But you’ve always hated him.” Her voice had an hysterical lilt to it.

Harry stood. “We have to go to the station. Can you pull yourself together?”

She looked at him as if he were a stranger. He supposed he was. But she composed herself, wiping the leftover tears off her face. “Yes. Yes I can. We will have a lovely Christmas, we will visit my family, we will send the boys back to Hogwarts, and then you will move out. There’s no need to tell anyone why.”

Harry swallowed. His emotions warred. On the one hand, he felt immense relief that the lying would come to an end. But on the other was fear: of loneliness, of worrying over how his children would react, coming from a broken home. He’d never wanted that for them. But what could he do?

He merely nodded, finding it best to simply agree with her for the time being.

They both cleaned their faces and called for Lily. They said nothing to her, smiling brightly when she confessed how much she had missed her brothers. They held hands, with Lily between them, and when they arrived in the Floo near King’s Cross, they walked the same way down to the station and through to Platform 9 ¾ and waited with the other parents for the train to arrive. Harry spotted Draco standing alone, but Draco didn’t acknowledge them.

But Harry heard Ginny all but growl under her breath, “Malfoy.”

It seemed to Harry to take forever for the train to arrive, but when it did with all the smoke and steam, Lily was jumping up and down. By then Ron, Hermione and Hugo had arrived and families were all cheering the arrival of the scarlet engine.

Harry saw Scorpius leave the train walking right next to Albus. They both looked somewhat taller and they waved their goodbyes with smiles. Draco snatched a look at Harry then, arching a brow and it was then that Ginny couldn’t seem to stand it anymore.

“Will you excuse me for a moment,” she said to Ron and Hermione.

Harry clutched Lily’s hand and stared helplessly as his wife marched up to his lover.

Draco turned at her call. His eyes widened and he bent to tell Scorpius to go get his trunk, or so Harry assumed since the boy ran to the luggage carriage. Draco stood stock still as Ginny berated him. Harry couldn't hear her words, but Draco's eyes darted towards Harry once or twice. Yet he said nothing as she stiffly confronted him. When it was over, she pivoted and returned, plastering a smile on her face and picking up the conversation where she left off.

Draco stood shaking, alone. Harry desperately wanted to go to him, but all he could offer was his comforting gaze. Then Scorpius appeared again, and Draco quickly ushered him away.

When the bustle of family and friends made it across the street to the Floo, Harry sidled up to Ginny. "What did you say to him?"

"Just what I thought of him. Don't worry. No one heard us."

"I told you it's not his fault!" he hissed.

Ron eyed them worriedly and Harry lowered his gaze. He didn't know how he was to endure the next two weeks.

\* \* \*

The kids were settling in and Lily was helping Ginny in the kitchen when the owl arrived. Harry tore away from his children long enough to take the note and sheltered himself in a quiet corner to read it. All it said was:

You TOLD her?

Harry surreptitiously scribbled back a note:

She found out I was seeing someone and it all came out. She's told me to leave. Can I stay at the Londonhouse after Christmas?

Harry

He sent for 'Cue and told him to quietly fly off. He was certain that Ginny noticed, especially when she said later out of the corner of her mouth, "Couldn't wait to contact him, eh?"

Harry did not reply to her. She was angry, hurt, and betrayed. She was certainly entitled to her feelings. He would surely feel the same way. They were both worried how their children would react.

The next day they all packed up for the Weasleys in Ottery St. Catchpole. Ron and Hermione would be there, along with their children Hugo and Rose and Harry's godson, Teddy Lupin. So many people. They would all know eventually. Would they hate Harry for it? Would he be able to call any of them his family anymore?

Dazed, Harry went through the motions. He accepted gifts and gave his. He greeted all the Weasleys and their families and at dinner, he ate as much as he dared with a stomach roiling about, and later found a corner in which to sit, exhausted. Ron finally caught up to him.

"How about some Firewhiskey outside," he said quietly, out of earshot of Hermione.

"Good idea," said Harry, and followed him out to the outhouse where the brooms were stored.

He poured Harry a snort and took a glass for himself. "Slunge," he said, and they both knocked it back. Ron didn't wait and poured Harry another. "Harry, old mate, I have something to ask you."

"Yeah?" Harry drank again, feeling better. At least his stomach was settling down.

"Hermione just told me something interesting that she said she got from Ginny...who was crying on her shoulder."

Harry froze. Oh well. It had to happen. "I suppose you want to hit me," said Harry, resigned.

Ron drank down his second glass and poured another. "I thought about it at first. And then I reckoned I'd better get it from the horse's mouth, so to speak. Being that you're my best mate and all. As well as my brother-in-law."

Harry rolled the empty glass in his hand, declining a third drink. "...don't know exactly what to say to you, Ron. Only that—" He couldn't help it. The tears came again. "Only that I'm sorry I won't be your brother-in-law much longer."

"Hey, Harry." He put the bottle and glass on a shelf and took his shoulders. Harry felt limp in his grasp. "What the bloody hell is going on? She said something about an affair?"

"Ron. I should have said something sooner but I couldn't. I didn't know what to say to you or Hermione. I didn't understand what was happening to me. But it all makes some sort of sense now."

"But who is she? I mean, what is it? Why'd you do it? Is it married life? Is it Ginny?"

"Oh." Harry was taken aback. "She didn't tell you...everything."

"What more is there to tell? Okay. I didn't expect it from solid old Harry Potter. But I guess everyone's allowed an indiscretion. Just tell the bint to move on and make up with Ginny and everything will be all right again."

"Ron. It's far more complicated than that. She didn't tell you who the other person was?"

"No. Does it matter?"

"It matters the most." Harry wiped his face and tried to get his breath even. "Ron," he said quietly. "It's a man."

"What's a man?"

"The person I've been seeing."

“Well, why the hell didn’t you tell her that? She’s going around thinking it was some passionate affair—”

“Ron! It is.”

Ron stared at him, blue eyes roving over Harry’s features. Harry thought of throwing a Protego on himself, but reckoned he’d get what he deserved.

But Ron didn’t wince or throw a punch or a tantrum. He looked at Harry very thoughtfully and finally said, “You know, I sort of always thought so, but I never thought it was a good idea asking you.”

“WHAT?”

“Yeah. I mean. You know, other blokes were always talking about this bird or that one. And you never got into it. At all. Ever. Cho Chang, yeah, but she was basically unattainable. And Ginny—”

“I loved Ginny! I still do!”

“Yeah, but Ginny was like a mate, you know. She was always rather a tomboy. She was like a smarter me. And then there was your obsession over Draco Malfoy.”

“I did not obsess over Draco Malfoy!”

“Course not. So. Who’s the bloke? Anyone we know?”

Harry reddened. Er.... “Well...first of all. You have to know that...that I never expected this. I didn’t know I was gay. Maybe you should have said something back then, though I did have a bit on my plate already. So I didn’t marry Ginny knowing any of this. It just happened recently. And if you must know, I’m in love with him and he loves me.”

Ron nodded gravely. “I hope so. I hope it will be worth it.”



“Ron, how would you feel if you had to live a lie? That you couldn’t openly love the one person in all this world that made you happy?”

“I guess I’d feel pretty rotten. I guess all of it would make me crazy, wondering about my kids and my friends and my family.”

Harry choked back another sob and wiped his face. Ron put his arm around him. “Just so you know, I’m here for you. And so is Hermione...when I tell her the whole thing. She didn’t believe Ginny, but she didn’t know what to think.”

“Did she send you?”

“Yeah. But it’s us, mate. If Moldy Voldy couldn’t break us apart, what makes you think this could?”

Harry sobbed again, this time in relief and hugged Ron.

“Whoa now. Don’t get all excited about me. I’m still chasing for the same team as before.”

Harry drew back and smiled a little. “Thanks, Ron. You don’t know what this means to me. I’ve felt so alone. And I’m so worried about my kids.”

“They’ll be okay. They come from good stock. I hope this bloke really is all you say he is.”

“He is, Ron.”

“Well all right, then. It’s a mess all right, but it will all work out. Eventually. As long as he isn’t Draco Malfoy.” And he slapped Harry on the back, laughing at his joke—until he looked at Harry’s face. “Harry?” He shook his head. “Harry. No. Say it isn’t so. Please?”

“Ron.” Harry swallowed.

“Oh bloody hell! Draco Malfoy! Harry!”

“Shhh! Keep it down!”

“You’re kidding, right? Not Malfoy.”

“Yes. It is Draco, okay. It’s not a joke. He makes me happy, Ron. He does. He’s sweet. He loves me and I love him. Please, Ron. You’ve been understanding so far.”

“Yeah, yeah.” But Ron looked like he was wavering. Until he shook his head, and snatched the bottle and glass from the shelf, pouring himself another and downing it in one. “Okay,” he choked. “You and the Ferret. No wonder Ginny was so upset. That’s a big dungbomb to drop.”

“I know. I never meant to say anything. Actually, I never knew what I was going to do. Just go on as I had done, I suppose. But I wasn’t very clever. Ginny sussed me out. Maybe I secretly wanted to be caught.”

“Wow. That’s a hell of a Christmas present.”

“I never meant for this to happen, Ron. You must believe me.”

“I do, mate. It’s just a lot to take all at once. Mum will be torn apart.”

“I’m not doing too well either,” said Harry, wiping his eyes yet again.

“I’m sorry, mate. I really am. Have you pulled yourself together? We’re going to have to go back to the party.”

“Yeah. I’m all right.”

“Will you need a place to live? ‘Mione said she expected you to move out after the hols.”

“I’m moving in to his place.”

“Malfoy Manor?”

“Don’t be mental. I’d never live there. He has a house in London. We’ve been...going there regularly.”

“Crikey. I didn’t need to know that. Hell, I didn’t need to know any of it. Oh well. I guess life has been too simple up to this point. Time for the Golden Trio to step in and do what they do best.”

“Cause trouble?”

“I guess so.” He put his arm around Harry, and led him back to the house.

\* \* \*

Draco stared at the note. He knew Harry must be extremely upset, but Draco couldn’t help but feel he’d been handed an early Christmas present. Harry moving into the London house? It was too good to be true. They had never spent all night together and now they would be together all the time. As soon as Scorpius headed back to school, he’d sit down with his lawyer and hammer out a settlement for his wife and get a quiet little divorce. No need to alert the parents until the deed was done. He’d tell Scorpius about it when he came home for the summer. They’d naturally all live in the London house—

And that was when his musings pulled up short. How the hell was he to tell his eleven-year-old son that he was divorcing his mother to live with a man, the father of his new best friend? Oh yes. That would go over well.

He glanced at the boy dressed in his finest dress robes chatting with his grandfather. Draco’s wife was sitting in a far wing chair. Draco didn’t even know if Scorpius had noticed her yet. She certainly hadn’t greeted him. No. He couldn’t send his son back to school and then bring him home with all this. He had to tell him before he returned. Which meant telling his wife. How would she take it?

He glanced at her again. She looked bored, as usual. She hated that no one spoke French, but Lucius wouldn't allow it in the house. He was proud of his English heritage. Along with his bloodline.

How would Lucius take all this? Now that was an interesting question.

\* \* \*

It was almost time for James and Albus to go back to Hogwarts and Harry was coming to the inescapable conclusion that he could not let them return without telling them. It would be cruel to come home and not find Dad there. And someone was sure to find out and take the mickey out of them. He had to find a moment to tell them. But Ginny was always about. He decided to call in the Golden Trio for help. He contacted Hermione to take Ginny shopping, for a "girl's day out" with all the trimmings. He even offered to pay for the whole thing.

"Don't be absurd, Harry," Hermione had told him. Good old Hermione. She had taken the news well and sat Harry down to discuss it all very clinically. Did he use protection? Was he aware of the potential medical hazards of anal penetration? Harry had been shocked at her candor, but he reassured her on every point through a furious blush.

But she took Ginny out of the house so he would have the kids all day. He decided to take them to the zoo, since that was one of their favorite haunts. James tried to intone that he was too old for the zoo, but the others—including Harry—shouted him down.

They were wrapped in Muggle coats as they strolled down the wind-swept paths. Many of the animals were in hiding from the brutal English weather, but some poked their snouts out. James and Albus regaled Lily about their Magical Creatures class and Lily looked at them wide-eyed. She hated that she couldn't go to Hogwarts yet, even though Dad allowed them to do magic at home. Minister Shacklebolt had tried year after year to get that law changed about underaged wizards, but he could never get the votes, even with Harry Potter speaking to the Wizengamot. Ah well. Some things never changed.

Later in the afternoon, they ducked into a teashop for fortification. Harry noticed that they were relatively alone and though he hated to do it, saw his chance at last.

"Kids, I have something to tell you all that...well. It will make all of us a bit sad, I'm afraid."

They looked up at him anxiously. Lily licked the sugar from a biscuit off her lips.

Harry bolstered his courage. He did not want to cry in front of them. "Sometimes, Mums and Dads stay together for the rest of their lives. And sometimes they...they don't. And it never has anything to do with their children, because they always love their children just the same. It's just Mums and Dads are just two people. And they sometimes grow apart. And things happen...."

"Dad," said James, a catch in his voice. "What are you trying to say?"

It wasn't working. He couldn't keep the tears from his eyes. He wiped at an eye with his finger. "Mum and I have to go our separate ways."

Silence. His children stared at him with wide, frightened eyes.

"It just happens that way sometimes. But I'll still see you. It's just that I can't live at home anymore. It wouldn't be right."

"What's happened?" asked James, trying to be the man about it. Harry saw him touch his brother and sister in a comforting manner.

"I...don't know how much to tell you—"

"Maybe the truth would be good." The boy licked his lips, trying to keep them from trembling. Lily had tears in her eyes. "You always told us that truth is best."

Why did I ever tell you a fool thing like that? Harry nodded. "Yes. Well. It's complicated. You see, men like women. And women like men. But sometimes, there are men who...like...men. And women who like women. Do you see? It's just that I didn't know I was the kind of man that...likes...men—"

"I don't understand, Daddy," said Lily tearfully. "Why do you have to go?"

"I'd never go very far. I'm at work most of the day anyway. And soon you lot will all be at Hogwarts all year and you wouldn't see me much then either. But I'd write just as much as I do now. And we could see each other on weekends. And do the kind of stuff we're doing today. You see? It won't be much different."

"Except you'll be with some man," said James in a voice Harry had never heard before.

He squared with James. He was the oldest. He would be the hardest, he being on the cusp of manhood himself. "Yes. I will be. There is a special man that finds me special. I feel complete, do you see? Before, I felt...wrong."

"You don't think this is wrong? Going off to live some poncy life and leave your children?"

James was getting louder and the other patrons were looking their way. Harry touched his wand in his pocket and nonverbally encanted Muffliato.

"I know you're hurt, James. I know you all are. So am I and so is Mum. This isn't going to be easy to accept—"

James stood, nearly knocking over his chair. "I'm not going to accept it! The Great Harry Potter: the Nancy Boy Who Lived? No freaking way!"

"James!" James was heading out the door fast, and Harry jumped up after him. "Albus, watch your sister!"

He ran after him and when he grabbed him, James wrestled with him. "NO! I don't care what you say. You can't leave Mum. It's wrong!"

"I know. It's all wrong. I never wanted this to happen."

"Then don't do it, Dad! Stay. Forget all this."

James was crying and so was Harry. He hugged his son to him, his face in his wild auburn hair. "I wish it could go back to the way it was. I really do, James. But I am what I am. Nothing—not even a

TimeTurner—could change that. I know it's cruel, but I didn't do it on purpose. I never would have hurt you. God, I'd rather die than do that."

"No, Dad!" He hugged Harry hard, crying great sobs into his chest.

"I'm sorry, son. I'm so sorry." He rocked him as he hadn't done since he was a baby. James. Always his little man. Growing up so fast and now required to grow up even faster.

They stood like that for a while. Until James pulled away, wiping at his face. "I love you, Dad."

"I love you, too. How can we make this better for the others?"

James shook his head. "You're supposed to be the father. Or do we call you 'mother' now?" He smiled feebly. A joke. That was something.

Harry smiled back. "No. I'm still Dad."

"So...who is the bloke?"

"Damn. It's Scorpius' father."

"DAD! Albus will kill you!"

"I know. I never meant—"

"I know." James bit his fingernail. "Bloody hell. I mean—"

"No. I think this occasion calls for all manner of swearing." He looked back at the tea shop. "Should I tell Albus?"

“You don’t want him to find out from someone else at school, do you?”

“No. I guess it should come from me.” They trudged back in and Lily looked relieved to see them.

They sat and Harry turned to Albus. “You’ve been quiet.”

“I guess I don’t get how you can like men. You mean like like men, right? Like a boyfriend?”

“Yes, just like that.”

“Will I be gay?”

“Well, as I understand it, you really realize it quite early. Much younger than even you three.”

“But you didn’t.”

“Well, I think I really did, I just didn’t focus on it.” He settled on his seat and leaned in to Albus. “I think I should tell you who the man is that I’ll be seeing a lot of. It’s going to get into the papers, you know. Something like this always will. So I wanted you all to know before you went back to Hogwarts. You see, Albus, it’s Scorpius’ dad. Draco Malfoy. I’m actually going to be living with him.”

Albus glared at Harry. “You’re lying.”

So like his mother. “No, son. I just wanted you to know the truth from me.”

“Then I won’t be friends with him anymore.”

“Albus, don’t do that. If you really are good friends, you might really be able to help each other in this. And you’ll all need your friends and your cousins.”



“But what about Mum?” asked Lily. “She’ll be alone.”

“Teddy is always over. She won’t be alone. And she sees Aunt Hermione almost all the time. She won’t be alone.”

“Is this really going to happen, Dad?” asked Lily.

“Yes, sweetheart. It is. I’m so very sorry.”

She patted his arm. “That’s all right, Daddy. I want you to be happy.”

A sob escaped. He tried to master it but it wouldn’t go away. And in that instant, all three of his children rose up and hugged him. He never felt so miserable or so proud of them in his life.

\* \* \*

“Yes, Father?” said Scorpius, entering Draco’s study. “You wanted to see me?”

“Yes, Scorpius. Please have a seat.”

His son slid onto his favorite leather chair and looked up pensively.

“First of all, let me say that I have been very pleased with your marks so far.” Scorpius breathed a sigh. “You like Hogwarts?”

“Oh, yes, Father. It’s been great. And I have a best mate, too.”

“Albus Potter. Yes, you wrote me.”

“I...I know you haven’t liked the Potters,” he began tentatively.

“Historically, no. But they are a very honorable family. Being friends with Albus Potter is perfectly all right. I’m proud of you for choosing substance over looks.”

“Thank you, Father. I really do like him. He’s got a wicked sense of humour and he knows quite a few spells already. He showed me some. Want to see?” He reached for his wand, but Draco waved it away.

“Not today, son. Today, I have something important to talk to you about. It’s about your mother and I. You know that you are the most important person in the world to me, don’t you Scorp?”

“Yes, Father.” He smiled a sheepish grin.

“There is nothing I wouldn’t do for you. You and I, son, are Malfoys. There is little we cannot accomplish.”

“Yes, Father.”

“So when I tell you that your mother and I will no longer be married, you must certainly realize it has no bearing on my love for you—”

“M-mother won’t be married to you anymore?”

“Yes. We’re getting a divorce.”

Scorpius pondered this with hooded eyes. “Will I be living with her...or with you?”

“With me, of course.”

Scorpius sighed. Draco smirked. “Good,” the boy said under his breath. “When will this happen?”

"Immediately. I have already informed your mother and she has agreed to move back to France. She will want for nothing."

"I'm sure she won't," he said quietly.

"There's one thing more. We won't be living at the manor anymore."

"We won't? Why not? Where will we live?"

"We have a house in London. It will be big enough...for the three of us."

"Three? I thought mother—"

"Actually, I will be living with someone who has grown to mean quite a lot to me. This may come as a shock to you. I wanted you to know before you returned to school. I don't want anyone from Slytherin taking advantage of you. You must hear it from me. The fact of the matter is...I'm gay. Do you understand what that means?"

Scorpius was wide-eyed. "It means you bugger boys."

Draco choked a bit and cleared his throat. "Er...it means I prefer men. Grown men. And I have a sort of...gentleman friend. And he's going to live at the house. With us. How do you feel about that?"

Scorpius ran his hand in his white-blond hair. "Blimey."

Indeed.

"I mean...it's...." He chewed his lip.

"It's all right, son. I know this was sudden. It was sudden to me, too. I just discovered this for myself a few months ago. I know this will hurt you and you must know I never intended to do so. I love you."

"I love you, too, Father. And we're Malfoys. We can do whatever we want." Draco straightened and puffed out his chest at that. "And if a Malfoy wants to live with a man, I guess he can." Scorpius stared into the fire silently for a time. He shifted in his chair and looked up at Draco. "Do you...love him?"

"Yes. And it's Harry Potter. So it's a good alliance."

"You mean...Albus' dad? That Harry Potter?"

"There is no other Harry Potter. Of course it's the same one."

Scorpius bit his fingernail and stared into the fire again. "Albus won't like that. I hope he still wants to be friends."

"He'd be a fool not to want to be your friend. But just so you know, not many people understand the Malfoys. They're jealous of us. We have so much; family, name, Pureblood. Oh, I know talking about being a Pureblood isn't all that popular anymore. But that's only because most people wished they were. He should be proud to be your friend, and if he isn't—" He caught the saddened face of his son and changed what he was going to say. "H-he'd...well...I...I guess I'd talk to his father about it."

Scorpius smiled weakly. "You would?"

"Of course! I'd do anything for you. You know that."

He looked cheered again. "Thank you, Father. Would we move in right away?"

"Well, you'll still be in school, young man. In the summer, we'll live there."

"Will I have my own room?"

"Of course. It won't be a suite, you understand, but it will be yours. And you can still have your house-elves."

He brightened at that. "And I'll be living with you and Harry Potter. That's not too bad, is it?"

Draco beamed. No. It wasn't bad at all.

\* \* \*

Ginny had been extremely angry with Harry for telling the children, but after listening to his explanation, she grudgingly agreed with his reasons. They tried to steer clear of one another and Harry slept in the guestroom.

Though one night, right before the boys were to return to Hogwarts, Ginny came into his room after all had retired. She stood in the doorway, the light from the hallway revealing her form through her nightgown. "May I come in?" she asked.

He sat up in bed. "Yes. Of course."

She came in almost shyly, and sat at the foot of the bed. "Harry. I don't want us to part on bad terms."

"Neither do I."

She toyed with the strings on her gown. "Did you ever really love me?" she asked softly.

He moved to sit beside her and touched her shoulder. "Oh, Gin. You know I did. You're my best girl. You'll always be."

She began to cry softly. Harry gathered her in his arms. "Can I sleep with you, Harry? Only sleep."

"Course." He pulled her to the top of the bed and let her under the covers with him. She snuggled against him and sighed.

"I've known something was wrong for the last few years," she confessed. This was something Harry hadn't even known. "I knew something was missing in our lives. I just didn't know what." He squeezed her tighter, relishing the scent of flowers wafting off of her. After all, that scent had come to mean "home" to him.

"I don't want you to hate me, Harry."

"I don't. I wouldn't. You've a right to be angry with me."

"I'm not, though. I'm angry at a world that had you so worked up for so many years that you never had time to know who you were. Things would have been so much better for you all around if you and Malfoy had hooked up then."

He chuckled. "You know, Draco said the same thing."

"Hmmm. I don't know if I like that. Agreeing with him." They were silent for a time, Harry staring at the guestroom in the dark. "Can I ask you something?"

"Sure."

"Whose the bottom? You or him?"

"Er...Ginny...."

"It's just that I cannot imagine you as a bottom."

"Promise you'll never tell him I told you?"

"I promise."

Harry bit his lip. "He's the bottom."

"I knew it! Poncey Malfoy." She giggled. "So Harry. Maybe we can be...girlfriends."

He laughed. "I still don't like shopping."

"Oh yeah. And you're pants at decorating. Are you sure you're gay?"

"Positive."

"Oh well. And the children are all right?"

"I'm so proud of them, Gin. They won't be all right with it for quite a while, I guess, but I think they've got a good start. And lots of people who love them, both here and Hogwarts."

"Yeah." She sighed. "Dammit, Harry. You were a really good husband. What's going to happen now?"

"Well, I'll take care of all the paperwork, if you'd like. The house is yours, of course. Half of everything I have is yours. And anything the kids need or want, you just Firecall me."

"I think you should take 'Cue. He likes you best anyway."

"Okay. Thanks."

"I know you loved the garden."

"There's room at the London house for one. I'll start again."

She turned to him and touched his cheek like she used to do. "I really hope you find happiness this time, Harry. Merlin knows you deserve it."

“Thanks, Ginny. That’s so generous of you to say that.”

“It’s like sixth year again. Only this time you aren’t coming back.”

He squeezed her. “I’ll always come back. The moment you need me.”

“I’ll always need you,” she whispered.

\* \* \*

Scorpius hugged Draco on the platform. He’d never done that before, not in public, and Draco took it as a good sign.

Draco was excited. Harry would be moving in today. He glanced around the platform, looking for him.

“I don’t see him yet,” said Scorpius.

Draco drew back, surprised. “Whom do you mean?”

He elbowed his father, something else he never did. “Whom do you think?”

Draco felt his face blush. And just as he prepared a sneer and a stinging comeback, he spotted Harry.

“There he is, Father.”

“Yes, I see him,” he said impatiently.

“May I meet him?”



Draco stared at his son in shock. He certainly was a Malfoy after all, though he seemed to take after his grandfather more than Draco. "Certainly," he squeaked.

He walked along side Scorpius and headed for Harry and his family. Harry had said he was going to tell them, and Draco wondered if he had gone through with it. But as soon as they spied Draco, Draco knew immediately he had.

James, the oldest, was the most defensive. He stood insolently in front of his father. Albus looked at Scorpius, a bewildered look on his face, as if he didn't know whether to be loyal to his mother or fall into his friend's embrace.

Draco broke the ice. "Harry Potter." Harry stared at Draco as if he'd seen a ghost. "My son, Scorpius, expressed an interest in meeting you. I hope you don't mind."

Harry looked down at Scorpius, who wore a rather serious expression. He was the miniature of Draco in his buttoned-up black coat and offered his hand out to Harry. "Mr. Potter," he said.

A sudden memory stabbed at Draco, of a boy that looked very much like his son when he was that age, putting his hand out to this same man. But this time, it turned out quite differently.

Harry reached down and solemnly took Scorpius' hand, shaking it a few times before letting it go. "I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Malfoy."

Scorpius could barely control his smile. "And I you, Mr. Potter. I must say, I've never seen this side of Father before. It makes him very human." Draco felt his cheeks warm. "Your son and I have been friends," Scorpius went on. He looked pointedly at Albus Potter. "I hope we still are."

Albus looked at his mother and then his father. He drew on his Gryffindor courage, no doubt, and faced Draco's son. "You bet, Scorp. Shall we find an empty compartment? I think we've got a lot to talk about."

"You aren't kidding!" He turned to Draco. "Bye, Father. See you soon. Write to me."

“Always,” answered Draco, relieved that Potter’s boy had the balls.

He turned back to the Potter brood and thought that he’d better make a hasty exit.

“Wait, Draco,” said Ginny.

Shit. He still remembered her bat bogie hex. She was a powerful witch, and a woman scorned...

He took a deep breath and pivoted to face her. “Mrs. Potter.”

“That will shortly be Ms. Potter. But I just wanted to tell you...Well. This isn’t easy and I don’t know that this is going to make me like you any more than I ever have, but after all this mess, you had better make Harry happy. Because if you don’t, I will curse you. And you know I can.”

He couldn’t have been more surprised. Harry was grinning like a fool.

Draco cleared his throat. His eyes were blurry from moisture. “Erm...thank you, Ms. Potter. I fully intend to do that.”

“Is this the man, Dad?” asked Lily Potter.

Harry was holding her hand. “Yes, Lil, it is. This is Draco Malfoy.”

“He’s pretty,” she said. Harry stifled a guffaw. Draco sneered at him.

Draco stooped to look at her and bowed. “Thank you very much, madam. I think you’re very pretty, too.”

She giggled.

Draco turned to James and by the look on his face, didn't think he'd better offer his hand. He thought more likely it would be hexed off.

James answered his inquiring look. "I'm not your mate," he said. "I think this is disgusting. I love my dad. And I have to go along with it because I do love him. But I'll never be your mate. And I don't like you."

"Fair enough," said Draco. He slowly put his hands behind his back. "I'd expect nothing less of a Potter. Of all his children, you remind me the most of him. Stubborn. Reckless. Strong."

James straightened. "See you around, Malfoy." He kissed his Mum, smiled briefly at Harry, and walked toward the train. Even sounded like Potter, he mused.

They stood looking at one another on the platform for a while until Ginny took Lily's hand from Harry. "I expect the two of you have a lot to do," she said.

"Can I come to dad's London house?"

Harry crouched in front of her and smiled. "Of course, sweetie. Anytime you'd like."

"Today?"

"Not today," said Ginny. "Dad's got to move his things out and he's going to be busy."

"Come any time," said Draco. He knew he looked a bit intimidating standing stiffly in his black coat but Lily Potter was as fearless as her mother.

"Yes, I will. For tea, I expect."

Draco smiled. "Tea it is."

Draco watched Harry watching Ginny and Lily walk away along the platform. He knew it must be terrible for him, and he took a chance and reached out to touch his hand. Harry clasped it, right there on the platform. That will be in the Prophet tomorrow, Draco thought with dread, but he supposed it had to happen sometime.

Harry faced him, eyes wet. "You were fantastic," he said, and leaned over to kiss his cheek.

Several observers gasped. But Draco didn't care. This was an amazing moment and he planned on cherishing it.

Of course, the next day when it was splashed across the Prophet in five-inch-high letters, it didn't seem like that wonderful a thing anymore.

"Holy shit," muttered Harry.

Last night was the first time they were able to spend all night together. But it wasn't exactly the romantic evening Draco anticipated. For one, they hadn't made love. Harry was too depressed for that. He had cried a little, and Draco comforted him, holding him all night. At least that part had been nice. Poor Harry.

But waking up to him had been especially nice. Harry was feeling better, and he rolled over and gave Draco a sweet kiss that lingered. They had touched each other, stroking the other off. Mmmm. That had been very nice. Draco had kissed Harry after, whispering to him that he belonged to Draco now, that Draco would take care of him. And Harry had appreciated it. He appreciated coming down to breakfast and finding hot coffee and cinnamon buns. He thought Draco had made it and Draco hadn't had the heart to tell him the house-elves had.

He'd tell him later.

But now the damned Prophet splashed their business all over the front page and continued stories on page four, ten, and eighteen.

"I'll hex them," said Harry in a deadly voice. "They put pictures of my children in here. I'll make them sorry they were ever born."

“Believe me, I appreciate the sentiment,” said Draco, sneering at a particularly bad photo of him that made him look as if he was losing his hair. “But that sounds a bit too dark-wizardish for my current tastes.”

“I don’t care what it sounds like. What good is having all this power if you can’t use it?”

“I do remember someone else saying that, or words to that effect. And a strapping young lad with messy, dark hair and ridiculous glasses took him out one day. With my wand, I might add.” He raised a brow and looked at Harry, who finally got the message and glared back at him.

“It isn’t fair.”

“That’s the sucky part about being a Light Wizard, Potter. All that ickle goodness.”

Harry stared at him a moment more before he burst out laughing. “Oh, Draco. Thank you! I love you.” He kissed him and sat back, drinking his coffee and taking a generous bite of his cinnamon bun.

The doorbell chimed. Harry looked up at Draco, and Draco frowned. Who in hell would have the nerve to ring their doorbell? If it was reporters, Draco would hex them himself.

He tied his dressing gown tighter, and marched to the front door. Harry was right behind him, his wand in his hand.

Draco threw open the door, ready to give them what for when he stopped in his tracks. “Mother! Father!”

Chapter Six—Breaking Down and Building Up

It was the most uncomfortable moment in Harry’s life. If one didn’t count battling Voldemort, he supposed.

Lucius pushed his way in, taking his wife's hand in a delicate gesture and leading her in. They glared at Harry and he quickly grabbed the neck of his robe, holding it tightly closed. *Crap!* This was embarrassing.

"So I must learn not only of my son's new proclivities from the pages of the Daily Prophet, but also that he is divorcing his wife and moving in to these—" he looked about with a sneer—"disreputable lodgings." He stared down his nose at Draco. Same old Lucius Malfoy. Except his hair was no longer blond. Instead, it was an ivory colour. On anyone else it would be grey. Perhaps Malfoy spelled it that way, but Harry rather thought it was from his stint in Azkaban and the subsequent stress.

With his grey eyes turned toward Harry, Harry felt like he was twelve-years-old again freeing Dobby. And then thoughts of Dobby made him feel sad, even as long ago as it was.

Draco mustered his dignity. In fact, Harry had never seen anyone look as dignified in a dressing gown with nothing on underneath it. His white legs protruded from the bottom hem. "All right. Father, Mother. Let's at least get out of the foyer and discuss this in a civilized setting." He led them to the sitting room and Harry scrambled after them.

"Discuss?" said his father, entering the room and looking around, a sneer of distaste still on his face. Narcissa wore the same expression. "It seems there is very little to 'discuss'. Matters seem to have already been decided." He turned his glare on Harry, who was trying to wrap his too-short dressing gown tightly around his legs as he sat.

Lucius and Narcissa sat together on the sofa, while Draco and Harry sat on the two chairs. Harry recognized the pecking order of the seating arrangement. He and Draco were in the power positions while their visitors were in the subordinate. Draco had maneuvered that well. "I wanted everything in place first before I broke the news to you," said Draco. "I had no idea the Prophet would get a hold of it so soon. I apologize for any embarrassment this may have caused you."

"Yes, well. I see your wife has already left the premises of Malfoy Manor."

That was quick, thought Harry.

"I made a very generous offer and she was only too happy to leave."

"No doubt. And you and my grandson. You have already moved from the manor as well?"

"In the summer, Scorpius will be living here...with...us." He blinked. Red spots were blooming on his cheeks.

"I see." He turned his icy gaze on Harry again. "I never realized your homosexual tendencies, Draco. You never let on about this orientation before."

"To be fair, I didn't know about it myself until recently. Neither did Harry."

"Yes," said Malfoy, still eyeing Harry. "All is not lost, of course. In any other circumstances this would have resulted in an irreparable scandal. I need not remind you that the house of Malfoy has endured quite a bit of that over the years."

"I am well aware, Father."

"Indeed. But because of the person whom you have chosen, we shall prevail. Choosing Mr. Potter was a stroke of genius."

Draco cleared his throat. "As much as I would like to take credit for cleverness, it really had nothing to do with it. We simply...fell in love."

Narcissa shifted uncomfortably. "I never knew you were unhappy with your wife, Draco."

"Never knew?" Harry could tell he was on the verge of an explosion but he was fighting it as he had never seen the blond do before. Life must be quite different with the parents. "You've got to be joking? How often did you see her? How often were we ever together? How often did I smile!"

She seemed taken aback and touched his arm. "Draco. Why didn't you say? You agreed to marry her."

"To please you two." He seemed ashamed of a sudden and ducked his face. "It seemed all right at first. We had Scorpius right away. But then...it got terribly lonely. We've only slept together three times, you know."

Narcissa's eyes widened. Her fairy hair framed her face and though she was still beautiful in a haughty way that Harry had never liked or appreciated given who she was, he could see the lines now at her eyes, forehead, and mouth. She suddenly looked like a mother again, the one who had kept Harry's secret and saved them all.

"If I had known—"

"What, Mother? If you had known, what would you have done? Found me someone else? Well, I've found someone. And I love him. And I'm not alone anymore."

She looked at Harry with new eyes and for the first time, he felt it was without bitterness or reluctant gratitude.

Lucius waved his hand. "It doesn't matter, of course. That's done with. Mr. Potter," he said, fixing his gaze on Harry again. "Do you intend to marry my son?"

"Uh...." Harry didn't know he was going to be spoken to. He felt like an idiot suddenly flapping his jaw. He closed his mouth and tried to get his brain in gear. "...I never thought about it. I've got to file my own divorce papers, you know. I can't think about all that right now—"

"Well do think about it. I would, of course, have no objections. To join with such a dignified house as the Potters could only mean more prestige for the Malfoys. You have my blessing."

"Thanks, but I wasn't looking for it."

Lucius focused on him again and smiled. "Of course not." He looked at his wife. "Clearly we are not going to be invited to breakfast."

Draco said nothing. Clearly they weren't.

Lucius rose and reached his hand out for Narcissa, who took it. Harry thought they moved together like royalty in some fairy tale. It was lovely to look at and he could see the love of long-time companionship between them. It saddened him to think of Ginny and how they would never have that, but then he



glanced at Draco and his heart warmed. There was still a chance of that kind of happiness, just with someone else. He hadn't actually considered marriage again, but it was an option, both in England's Muggle world as well as in the Wizarding one.

They walked their guests to the door. "I hope we shall be invited back," said Lucius, as if fully expecting to be.

"Of course, Father; Mother. We'd love to have you to tea sometime."

"Excellent. We look forward to it. Mr. Potter." Lucius held out his hand.

Shocked beyond measure to have it offered, Harry took it and gave it a shake. He looked at Narcissa and she was staring at him intently. Suddenly, she bent down and kissed his cheek. Harry jolted and stared back at her, body rigid with surprise. "You make my son happy," she said. "I shall not forget it." And then she offered him a cool smile and a soft, "Mr. Potter," before they swept out the front door.

Draco closed the door and then fell against it. "Fuck! That was different."

Harry rubbed the place Narcissa kissed him, not quite knowing what to make of it. "You seemed to hold yourself well, though."

"You think? Father is all about appearances and duty and such. Did I do all right?"

"You looked like the head of the house to me."

Draco smiled to himself. "Well, all right, then." He took Harry's arm and walked to the stairs with him. "Mother seems quite taken with you."

"Yeah, well. I guess I'm the Chosen One all over again."

Draco chuckled. "I guess you are. It's not everyone who gets to bed the Malfoy heir." Harry's face warmed. Jeez. Putting it that way he felt like some royal concubine. "We've got to get cleaned up," Draco went on. "We have a lot of paperwork to file today. And reporters to face."

Damned reporters. His good mood faded. "I won't face them. I'll hex them!"

"What would Minister Shacklebolt say to that?"

"He'd back me up," said Harry, climbing the steps. Harry thought for a moment before he ventured, "By the way, the marriage thing."

Draco wore a guarded expression. "Yes?"

"Have you...have you thought about remarrying? I mean, you know. Me?"

"Don't know. I haven't been asked yet."

Harry's puzzled expression turned to a smile. "I see. Well, when the right time comes, I'll ask you properly." Draco tried to hide his blush by turning his face away but Harry grabbed him and turned his chin toward him. "And it will be lovely and romantic." He kissed Draco tenderly, stroking his arms. "You know," he said, pulling away only inches from the other's lips. "We didn't make love properly yet this morning. I'd like to. Do we have time?"

"All the time in the world, Harry," he answered breathlessly.

When they got to their room, Harry peeled Draco's dressing gown off his shoulders and let it slip to the floor in a silken puddle. He stripped off his own with less finesse.

Naked, Draco was an ivory statue of male perfection. Harry reached up and pinched each pink nipple with his fingers. Draco gave a little gasp. "You're so responsive," murmured Harry. He leaned in and took the flesh of Draco's neck between his lips. He sucked on it and then nipped it. "Everything about you," he said to his skin, "is so beautiful. I'm going to take you slowly, Draco. I'm going to make you mine."

"I'm already yours," he replied in a voice husky with emotion.

Harry's hands skimmed over Draco's chest, up and over his shoulders. He pulled, dragging Draco up against him, naked skin to naked skin. "Mine," whispered Harry. He kissed Draco's ear and pulled his earlobe into his mouth, sucking it gently. Draco keened.

Harry's hands stroked slowly up and down the man's pale back, sliding down to cup his arse and squeezing. "Do you want me to fuck you, Draco?" he whispered to his ear. Draco shivered. "Do you want me to push your legs wide apart and fuck you deep and hard?"

Draco clutched at the back of Harry's neck, writhing his body against Harry's. "Yeeesss," he breathed.

Harry pushed him back and he fell to the bed. Draco quickly scooted up the mattress, stroking his stiff penis enticingly. He watched Harry with drowsy lids and slowly opened his legs, bending his knees to angle his arse upward.

Harry knelt between his legs and grabbed his thigh, stretching one leg outward into the air. He hooked his hand under the knee and pushed it up, effectively exposing Draco's tight little hole. Harry looked down at it. "Mine," he said, and Draco moaned.

Harry cast a nonverbal lubricating charm and watched as a gob of oil dripped from Draco's pink arse. "Perfect," said Harry. He didn't even hold his dick to aim it. He simply plunged and Draco cried out. The squeezed little entrance expanded, taking him in, opening over Harry's cock like an intimate kiss. The tight, hot flesh swallowed him, devouring Harry's dick, sheathing it in compressing warmth. Harry sighed as he pushed in all the way, never stopping until his pubes touched Draco's bollocks. He opened his eyes then, not realizing he had even closed them.

But now he looked into Draco's eyes, and absorbed all the love and lust he saw there. No, there hadn't been anything like this before. He had loved Ginny, but there was nothing to compare to this complete and utter "belonging" he felt with Draco. They did belong together, like a hand in a glove, and Harry thought he had actually known it in the back of his mind for a very long time. He had the feeling Draco was coming to that realization, too.

"Are you ready for me, love?" he asked Draco.

Draco's face was flushed with excitement. "Oh yes, my Harry. Give me all of you." He clenched his teeth. "Do it hard. Pound me."

The words made Harry's cock twitch. He tightened his grip on Draco's leg and drew himself out halfway before sliding back in. The next pull out was sharper and the thrust in more forceful. He shoved in harder with each pull out and thrust. His hips were soon snapping forward and he gritted his teeth. Draco's arse clutched him tightly and the friction was sending rolls of pleasure radiating from his balls. With his other hand, he began to jerk off the man below him. Draco thrust his hips up into it, into Harry's thrusts, and the two were soon in a frantic rhythm, drawing closer and closer to coming.

Harry pushed into him deeply and his body exploded in pleasure, cock shooting cum high up into his lover. Harry strained against him, eyes tightly shut. His hand on Draco's penis squeezed and he felt the organ shudder and spurt over his hand.

Arched stiffly over Draco, Harry came down slowly from his high and stickily opened his eyes. Draco was staring up at him, mouth agape from his own shouted orgasm. Harry looked down at his hand covered in Draco's cum. Without tearing his eyes from his lover, Harry lifted the hand to his face and slowly licked the white release from his fingers, laving in long strokes of his tongue. Draco watched, his eyes glazing. His cock actually twitched again. Harry smiled as he finished his treat and lowered Draco's leg. He scooted up beside him, laid down on his side, and propped his head on his hand. "You're mine, you know."

"I know," said Draco coyly. "You prove it each time we're in this bed."

"I don't care what anyone says. I like being gay. I love it, in fact. If it means being with you, it's a grand thing."

Draco laughed, so different from his smirking days at school. "I've never heard it put quite that way. You can head the next Gay Wizards' Pride Day."

"Is there such a thing?"

"No, you pillock! Only fool Muggles do that."

“Oh. Well we should.”

Draco threw his arms around Harry and kissed him soundly. “Mmm. I love tasting myself on your mouth.”

“Come on, love. We need to take a bath and get going.”

“Buzzkill.” But they both dragged themselves up and over to the bathroom.

When they got out, an owl was waiting for them.

“What now?” sighed Draco as Harry walked over to it.

When he pulled off the scroll and read, his heart sank. He showed it to Draco:

My dear Mr. Potter and Mr. Malfoy,

I take it you are residing together. I wish I had been corresponding with you on a happier topic, but I regret to inform you both that your children have been involved in several altercations today and have sent some students to the hospital wing. I did not feel that ordinary detention would suffice. Indeed, some of the hexes they used might ordinarily get them expelled. I thought it best to contact you in the hopes that you will remedy this situation post haste. No doubt, this was precipitated by this morning's Daily Prophet.

I hope to see the two of you within the hour.

Regards,

Minerva McGonagall

Headmistress Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

\* \* \*

McGonagall allowed her Floo to be opened so that Harry and Draco could arrive swiftly. They walked into her office solemnly, allowing her to take the lead.

“Sit down, gentlemen. It is good to see you again Harry. And you Draco. I haven’t seen you in some years.”

“Ma’am,” said Draco, clearly embarrassed by the last time he saw her. No doubt it was on That Day.

She folded her hands on the desk that had belonged to Dumbledore. Harry supposed it had belonged to all the headmasters prior to him, perhaps including Godric Gryffindor himself. He cast a swift glance at Dumbledore who was eyeing the both of them with a twinkle in his eye.

Everard was looking at Harry as well with a slight smile and nodded toward Malfoy. Harry gave him a brief nod in return.

“Now then,” said McGonagall. “It was James who first got into a fight. It started when a third year Ravenclaw boy said something rather derogatory about...well, about your person, Mr. Potter. It soon degenerated into fisticuffs. That was enough as it was, but then it escalated into spell-casting. I should not dignify it by calling it a duel. James Potter was quite accomplished with his hexes. Quite unheard of for a second year.”

Draco looked at Harry with admiration, but it only made Harry squirm.

“In fact,” she continued, “he never actually cast an Unforgivable, but he might as well have done. The other boy ended up in the hospital wing. But that was only the beginning. Then Scorpius Malfoy was attacked by his fellow Slytherins.”

“WHAT!” Draco was on his feet but Harry grabbed his arm and pulled him back down.

“Yes, I’m sorry to say. Although young Scorpius was also quite adept not only in defensive magic but in Transfigurations.” Her mouth twitched at that. Harry knew deep down that she was proud of the boy but could never let it show as headmistress. “Though not as adept at changing them back.”

Draco covered his mouth with his hand. Harry saw that he was smirking beneath it.

“Albus Potter soon joined the fray and the hexes were coming so fast that I’m afraid Mr. Filch was caught in the crossfire. He is an old man but he has enough Wizarding blood—even as a Squib—to be able to withstand it. Though Madam Pomfrey did say she was having trouble removing all the scales.”

Harry choked back a snort, hiding it as a cough.

“But that is not the worst of it. Come with me.”

Harry caught Draco’s eye. Not the worst of it? Harry was beginning to think that the boys would get expelled. And he and Draco would have to do detention on top of it.

They followed her out of the office and down the staircase. She moved quickly through the corridors and Harry felt the sense of familiarity at a place he first called home. They were headed toward the Great Hall.

But when they turned the corner, he didn’t recognize it at all. Every stone had been moved and rearranged. Vines hung from the ceiling and one of the tables was sinking into a pit of quicksand. It reminded Harry of the prank Fred and George had perpetrated as they left Hogwarts in Harry’s fifth year.

“Holy shit!” said Draco.

“Indeed,” McGonagall agreed. “I believe the quicksand was Mr. Malfoy’s addition.”

Draco winced. This was far more than either of them expected.

“Our boys did all this?” asked Harry, now more worried.

“Yes. Those vines are Devil’s Snare. They were Summoned from Greenhouse Three and broke all the glass in one wall of it. Professor Longbottom will have no difficulty repairing it, but this....” She gestured futilely. “What will we do for dinner?”

Harry looked at Draco dubiously. “W-we could try to fix it—”

“No need. Filius Flitwick has agreed to work on it and should be at Hogwarts within the hour. I should think the two of you have enough to contend with at the moment.” She didn’t look as if she particularly approved of their situation.

“What about our boys?” asked Harry. “Where are they now?”

“Mucking out the hippogriff enclosures with Hagrid. You may speak to them, if you wish. I trust you know the way.” With that, she swept away. Her footsteps rang hard on the stone floor.

Harry and Draco stared at the Transfigured Great Hall. “Bloody hell,” Harry murmured.

“That is some impressive Transfiguring,” said Draco.

“Draco, it’s nothing to be proud of. They probably lost all the house points for their houses and they may be in detention till their seventh year. If they were anyone else’s children, they would have been expelled.”

Draco shrugged. “With fame comes privileges. If one can’t be rich, be famous, I say.”

“Well you’re both. Aren’t you lucky.”

“I am infamous. There’s a difference.”



“Oh, yes. And my fame has done me such good over the years.”

“Don’t bitch, Harry,” said Draco, heading outside toward Hagrid’s. “Being famous got you your job as head of Magical Law Enforcement.”

“Excuse me? I bloody well offed Voldemort. That won me my bloody privileges. And well-earned I’d say.”

“Yes, yes. Whatever. It comes to the same thing.”

They said no more until they reached Hagrid’s. The half-giant was hoeing his garden and looked up on their arrival. “Harry!” he boomed.

Fame, Draco mouthed at him.

Hagrid then turned to Draco. “And Malfoy.” Disdain dripped from his tone.

Harry mouthed infamy back at him.

“I ‘spect yer here for yer boys.”

“Well, we’re just going to talk to them. Hagrid, how much trouble are they really in?”

“Well now.” He tucked his dirt-crusting hands into his belt. “What they done was pretty bad, by my reckonin’. And Headmistress McGonagall was none too pleased. But in my way of thinkin’ they was only defendin’ themselves from...er...unkind words.”

Draco sighed and looked heavenward. But what came out his mouth next surprised Harry. “What do you suggest we say to them, Professor Hagrid?”

Hagrid looked at Malfoy with equal surprise. He never expected to be addressed with respect, Harry supposed. He shuffled his feet in the mud. "Well now. It's a sticky situation, that. All the cruel things them other boys said to them. And Slytherin and all. I don't rightly know what to say."

"Can we see them?" asked Harry.

"Course. You know the way. Reckon you can protect Malfoy from them hippogriffs."

Draco sneered.

Hagrid motioned to Harry for a private moment. Harry stepped away from Draco, who rolled his eyes. Hagrid bent down and spoke in low tones. "Harry, I don't pretend to know about such things. I didn't know you was...tha' way...and it don't matter," he quickly added. "All that matters to me is tha' yer happy. I thought you was happy with Miss Weasley—" He saw Harry's pained expression and took another tack. "Awright. None 'a that, then. But does Malfoy make you happy, Harry? Cause if he does, I'll be the first defendin' you. But if he don't, I'll be there to pound him into mincemeat."

He put his hand on Hagrid's arm. "Hagrid, you were my very first friend. Please believe me when I tell you, that Draco makes me extremely happy. He loves me. And I love him. I know that may be hard for you to understand—"

Hagrid shook his shaggy head. "I understan' love right enough." He smiled. It crinkled the lines at his eyes even deeper. "So then. Let's talk to yer boys."

They followed the huge form of Hagrid and turned the corner of his little cottage. There, in a muddy pen, worked James, Albus, and Scorpius, shoveling out the muck while two hippogriffs in stalls looked on.

Albus looked up at Hagrid's approach and noticed Harry. "Uh oh." He nudged his brother who stopped in mid heave with his spade to watch his father approach. Scorpius looked up to see what the others were looking at and his pale face grew even whiter.

Hagrid cleared his throat. "I'll leave you to it." He lumbered off and Harry and Draco stood just outside the enclosure.

Harry didn't know what to say. The boys had only been defending themselves and, he supposed, Harry's honour.

It was Scorpius who spoke up first. "I'm sorry for disappointing you, Father, but I'm not sorry for what I did. And I'd do it again!"

"Me, too," said Albus.

James aimed the spade downward and leaned on its handle. He said nothing but stared at Draco defiantly.

"People were saying the worst things about you and Scorp's father, Dad," said Albus, coming to the fence and peering over the top. "They were waving the Prophet around and...and...well, I wasn't going to let them say that stuff."

Harry's heart hurt. That his sons would have to defend him was awful. "Look, boys," he said quietly. "I'm not saying they didn't deserve it, but you can't go doing these things again. They might expel you and then what would you do? I can take care of myself."

"But Dad! The things they were saying--!"

Harry winced. He could only imagine. Of course, the Prophet had said quite a lot, too. "I know. But you're more important than my supposed honour. They've been saying bad stuff about me long before any of you were born, believe me."

"Yes, and I was responsible for some of it," said Draco.

James turned to him with a look of utter loathing.

"But Father," said Scorpius. He had a smear of mud on one cheek, a bruise on the other, and straw in his hair. It was probably the most disheveled he had ever been. "I couldn't let them disrespect the Malfoy name. You've always said—"

“And quite right, too. You did a fine job of it, Scorpius.”

“Draco!” hissed Harry.

He gave Harry a mild look before he turned back to his son. “As I said, you did a fine job of it.” Scorpius glowed with the praise. “But you mustn’t do it anymore. I think Slytherin got the point, don’t you? You’re a powerful wizard, even for a first year, and I don’t think they will mess with you further.”

“No, Father, they won’t. Some have said so. And there is a girl and a boy, the Zabini twins, and they said they want to be my friends.”

“Good. Trust the Zabinis. Steer clear of the Goyles. You’ll do fine.”

“I lost us all our house points, though.”

Draco nodded. “Gryffindor, too?”

“We’re in negative numbers ‘cause there is two of us,” said Albus gloomily.

Draco smirked. “Then Slytherin is ahead of Gryffindor. Well done, Scorpius.”

“Draco!”

Albus looked a little more cheered, but James was still silent. “James?” said Harry. “You’re older. You should have known better.”

“How was I to know you would ponce off with Malfoy all over the papers.”

That hurt. He cleared his throat and picked at the fence to buy some time to think. "James, I know this is difficult—"

"Difficult? Difficult? My best mates in Gryffindor are calling you the Boy Who Bugged. They're saying that I'm probably queer, too. The girls won't look at me. No one will sit with me at the Gryffindor table and I'm a leper in the common room. So thanks a lot, Dad. 'Difficult' is an understatement."

Harry's heart gave a painful pang. "I'm sorry, James. If there's something I can do—anything—"

He jerked a thumb at Malfoy. "You can drop him, for one. And move back home with Mum, for another. Other than that I've got nothing to say."

"You spoiled, little beggar," sneered Draco. "Can't you allow your own father a speck of happiness?"

"Draco, I can handle this."

"Yeah, Draco. He can handle it. So why don't you shove off!"

"James! I will not have you talking to an adult like that!"

"Why? You used to do it. To his father, no less. I've heard the stories. I've read about them in Hogwarts: A History."

"Draco Malfoy is important to me and you will address him more civilly. And you will not smart back to me."

James lowered his face. "Yes, sir," he muttered.

"Now then. You will all finish your detentions here for however long Headmistress McGonagall decides. And no matter what anyone else says to you, you will not attack them."

“But Dad!” whined Albus.

“No arguments! If someone says something, you are to report it to your head of house at once! Do you understand me?”

Three sullen voices chorused, “Yes, sir.”

“All right, then. Let’s all behave like gentlemen, shall we?” He directed his last to James who had yet to look up at him again. “I’m going now. When your mother hears about this you can be sure she will be sending a Howler.”

The boys winced at that. Scorpius touched Albus’ shoulder in sympathy. No doubt Scorpius would never receive a Howler from Draco.

Harry turned on his heel. He didn’t look back to see if Draco was following; he only knew he was there from the hand on his arm. “He’ll come around, Harry,” he said.

Harry stopped, puffing from the climb...or maybe from his emotions. “Dammit, Draco. I love him so much.”

“And he loves you. This is going to take a while for everyone to get used to. But he will. In time. It had to be quite a blow. His family breaking up, his image of you. Did you think it would be simple?”

“No! But I....” He slumped, clutching Draco’s hand. “It hurts, that’s all.”

Draco enfolded him in his arms. Harry’s eyes burned but he refused to cry. He had done enough of that. “Do you want to file those papers today, or scrap it?”

Harry took a deep breath. “No. Let’s get it over with.”

Harry turned to go up the hill when someone, robe flapping behind him, was tearing down the hill toward them. Before he had a chance to call a greeting, the man engulfed him in a hug, nearly toppling all of them.

“Watch it, Longbottom!” sneered Draco, wiping down his robes.

“Harry! Oh, God, Harry! What in Merlin’s name?” He stared at Draco as if he didn’t believe it. Probably he didn’t.

“It’s true, Neville. At least the basic story is. I didn’t bother reading what was actually written in the paper.”

“You’re with Malfoy? Him? Surely you can do better.” But Harry saw it for the good-natured ribbing it was meant to be.

He smiled at his professor friend. “Oh, I don’t know. Hanging out with rich people has its advantages. All the best restaurants wait on you hand and foot; the best theatre tickets; the best tailors.”

“Of course that’s all I am to you,” said Draco, his nose in the air.

Neville smiled, but it soon faded. “Did you talk to your boys?”

“Yeah.” Harry looked back toward Hagrid’s hut. “I’m worried about James, though. He’s not taking it very well. Could you...I don’t know. Look out for him?”

“Give him time, Harry. That was quite a shock. I spit my coffee all over my robes when I saw that in the papers this morning. Half the staff went ballistic.” He looked back toward the castle. “How’s...Ginny?”

Harry shrugged. “As well as can be expected. I’ve moved out.”

“Blimey.” Neville glanced at Draco. “Well, Malfoy. I hope you’re taking good care of him. The Wizarding World has its eye on you.”

“Thanks, Longbottom. No pressure, eh?”

“Come to see me sometime, Harry. When things cool down. Or...just to talk. If you need to. You know.”

He patted Neville’s shoulder. “Okay, Neville. Thanks.”

The three walked silently up the hill back toward the castle. “I’m sorry, Harry, but I had to take points. You understand.”

“Course, Neville. No hard feelings.”

He smiled weakly. “I’ve got to get back to class. But Firecall me or owl or something. Take care. You, too, Malfoy.”

“See you, Professor,” said Harry, waving. He sagged again, looking over the school. “Want to get a drink in Hogsmeade? We can Apparate from there.”

They stopped in the Hogshead, made their greetings to Aberforth, and Disapparated after a few drinks.

They Apparated again outside Draco’s solicitor’s London office. Wizards and witches nearby recognized them and whipped their heads around to stare.

“Let’s get inside,” said Draco.

They walked up the steps into dusty old offices with a creaky clerk bent over his desk. “Yes?” he inquired without looking up.

“Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter to see Mr. Wynn.”

The secretary raised his head and stared at them through a veil of dirty spectacles. “Is it, now?” he said. “Do you have an appointment?”



“Since when do Malfoys need an appointment in this office?”

The clerk raised his lip in either a sneer or a smile, Harry wasn't certain. But he wagged his wand and shook out a Patronus that looked like a gopher which scurried into the other room.

They waited a few minutes. Draco was becoming agitated and leaned on the clerk's desk.  
“You did mention that Draco Malfoy is waiting, did you not? And Harry Potter. The Harry Potter?”

The clerk raised a brow but not his eyes. “Yes, sir,” he drawled.

Another moment passed when the door finally flew open. “Mr. Malfoy! And Mr. Potter! I must say! You two have certainly made the newspaper today, haven't you? Come in, come in.”

His manner reminded Harry of Horace Slughorn but he couldn't have looked more different. He was rail thin and very tall, and sported a skewed white-powdered wig on top of his grey hair.

As soon as they entered the office the door closed on its own. It was a cozy room with a roaring fire and overstuffed leather chairs. Wynn sat behind a monstrous desk and folded his spindly fingers together.  
“Well now. Mr. Malfoy. Shall I be presumptuous and guess that you have come for a divorce settlement from Mrs. Malfoy?”

“Presume away, Wynn. Although I have already handled matters. Here.” He took a folded parchment from his shirt pocket and handed it over.

Wynn perused it and nodded, smiling. “Well, well, well. Mr. Malfoy. Should you ever retire from Ministry work you can certainly hang a shingle as a fine solicitor. I believe you have covered every angle.”

He smirked. Slytherin, thought Harry.

“I need only file these with the Ministry. I see the lady has signed them.”

“And she has already left the country.”

“Splendid. Splendid. All is in order, then.” He turned to Harry expectantly. “And so. Mr. Potter. A very great pleasure to meet you, sir. I only hoped it would have been over much more pleasant circumstances.” He allowed a frown for the requisite three seconds and then smiled again. “What can I do for you?”

“Um...the s-same thing, I guess. I need to file d-divorce papers.”

Wynn tisked elaborately and shuffled some papers on his desk. “A pity. Three children? A house in Godric’s Hollow, is it? Well, we will make certain you get the best financial arrangement in this.”

“Oh no,” said Harry, scooting forward in his chair. “I’ve given her the house and half of all my assets—”

“Mr. Potter!” He sat back aghast. “You made these arrangements without first speaking to your solicitor? Did you make a magical contract?”

“Well, no, I—”

“Oh good, good. Then it isn’t binding. Give me a list of your Gringotts assets and I’ll—”

“I’m not changing anything. I said she can have the house and I meant it. My children need to live somewhere and that is their home. And she’ll need those assets to raise them properly. I don’t need anything. I get a salary.”

Wynn sighed heavily. “I see. That is very generous of you, Mr. Potter,” he said, but it came out in such a way as to infer, “that was very stupid of you, Mr. Potter.” “Well, there’s nothing to be done, then. Has the lady made any stipulations?”

“Stipulations? I don’t know...I mean...we agreed on stuff already....”

“Well, that’s a mercy.” He picked up a very long quill and began to scribble. And then he left his desk and the quill continued to write like a QuickQuill. He paced before the fire. “Your name is Harry James Potter—It isn’t Henry or Harold, is it?”

“No.”

“...Harry James Potter. Born 31 July 1980. Married to Ginerva Molly Weasley, born 11 August 1981. Married 16 August 2000... Is that correct so far?”

The sound of the man’s voice was depressing him. “Yes,” he answered blandly.

Wynn ticked off more of Harry’s statistics: when the each child was born, when the house was purchased, when James started Hogwarts. Sometime during this litany, Draco took Harry’s hand and held it.

There were tears in his eyes when the man finished. The solicitor looked up and sighed. “I am sorry, Mr. Potter. I realize this must be difficult for you. And it is a fine thing that you wish to provide for your family. We need only obtain your wife’s signature and your own and it shall be done.”

Just the stroke of a pen, eh? Sixteen years gone. Just like that. Had they meant nothing? Harry stood and paced about the room. It had to be done. He knew that. There was no more life there with Ginny. When he turned he saw Draco. The man was in profile. That pointed nose and chin and that white-blond hair were glazed with light from the fire. This man he had come to love against all odds. And Draco loved him as much if not more than Ginny had done. If there was that much love, couldn’t he build a life again?

“Shall I sign it now?” he asked, voice steady.

“If you like,” said Wynn, offering him his quill.

Harry took several strides to the desk and took up the quill. Before he could think about it, he wrote his name where the man indicated and set the pen aside.

“We have only to owl a copy of this to Mrs. Potter and all will be finished,” said the solicitor in a grave tone.

“Thank you,” said Harry. He clutched Draco’s hand. “Can we go now?”

“Yes. We’re done.”

“Thanks, Wynn,” said Draco. He took Harry out of the office, but when they opened the door, there were flashbulbs and a hoard of reporters.

“Mr. Potter! Mr. Potter! How does it feel to be divorced after so many years of marriage?”

“Mr. Potter! Do you plan on living a gay lifestyle?”

Harry's eyes were blurred with tears and with the flashes going off and the questions hurled at him, he simply snapped. He whipped out his wand, and with a mighty roar, a wave of magic engulfed the crowd and suddenly they had vanished with a great thunderclap.

Draco slipped down to his bum on the top step. “What the hell happened?” he whispered, terrified. “Where did they go?”

“Do you care?” Harry gasped.

“Well...yes. I’d hate to have you up on multiple murder charges.”

He sighed. “I think some are in the Thames, some are on the roof of Parliament, and some are in the Tube station.”

Draco’s mouth hung open. “H-how did you do that?”

Harry shrugged. “I can, sometimes. Maybe they’ll leave us alone now.”

“Not bloody likely,” Draco muttered. “Let’s get you home.”

They Apparated outside the London house and saw a figure standing just outside it. He was slim and tall and his hair changed from dark blue to flaming pink.

“Teddy?” asked Harry.

The man turned and spied Harry. His face was an open question mark. “Harry. What the fuck?”

\* \* \*

Draco grumbled as they let Teddy Lupin in. He had wanted to fix Harry some food and get him into bed. But now he had to endure the visit of this half-werewolf—though Harry had assured him many times that he wasn’t a werewolf at all.

Teddy sat back in one of the chairs—Draco’s chair—with one long leg draped over the other. He was watching his godfather steadily as Harry tried to explain. He kept shaking his head and his hair kept changing annoyingly. He glanced at Draco from time to time, narrowing his eyes at him.

At the end of Harry’s story, he shook his head silently for a long time. “Well! Fuck me. Never saw that coming. Mind you, I had my bisexual stage back in Hogwarts.”

Harry nearly fell out of his chair. “WHAT? What do you mean?”

“I mean, my dear godfather, that I experimented with blokes as well as birds. I weighed my options—” He made a gesture with his hands like a balance—“and came to the conclusion that I was overwhelmingly in favour of birds. And in particular, Victoire.” He had the decency to blush a bit.

Harry wiped his brow. “I see. Well, this isn’t anything like that. I wish circumstances had been different. I wish I could have just loved Ginny for the rest of my life. I mean, I do love her, but just...not that way. I love Draco now and that’s not going to change.”

Draco sat up at that and looked at Harry. Harry was gazing at him and blinking those large, innocent eyes. Draco’s throat felt suddenly dry.

“Teddy,” said Harry, clutching the arms of his chair. “It’s going to be important for you to visit them often.”

Teddy laughed. “That’s not too much of a stretch. I’m there all the time anyway.”

“But you know what I mean. Ginny will be lonely. The boys need a male influence—”

“Whoa, whoa, Harry. It’s not as if you won’t see them, will you?” and he eyed Draco again—implying that Draco wouldn’t let Harry see his family? The turd!

“I know. But...I didn’t plan on hanging about with Ginny. It’s not fair to her. You know. So she can move on. And James is really having a hard time of it.”

“Ah, Harry. This is so fucked.”

Harry nodded and fell into a melancholy silence.

“As enjoyable as this is,” said Draco, rising, “we can either add to the morass of self-pity by drinking ourselves into a stupor, or I can do something about dinner. Are you staying, Lupin?”

“Am I?” He looked at Harry.

Harry smiled. “You know you’re always welcomed here.”

Teddy looked at Draco. His hair started to change rapidly. “Only if my other goddaddy says so.”

“I’m not your godfather, Lupin! I don’t care if you stay.” He stomped out of the room and exited to the kitchen. He summoned his house-elves and instructed them to prepare a dinner for three. It wasn’t the romantic little dinner he had planned on with Harry but he supposed there was time enough for that.

He stayed in the kitchen drinking an opened bottle of wine he found on the counter. Sneaking through the foyer, he listened at the door as they continued to converse.

“But seriously, Harry,” said Teddy. “Malfoy? I thought there was this long-standing feud with them.”

“Not exactly. I mean in school he was a right prat. A real knob. We spent our time hexing each other. And I hated his dad. He tried to kill me a few times, you know. Not exactly on friendly terms. But on That Day, things sort of...changed. Lots of things changed. I saw Draco and his family all huddled together after Voldemort died. And they looked...just like everyone else. Shell-shocked, scared. I saw them at the manor, too, through Voldemort’s eyes—”

Draco choked on his wine. What? How had Harry seen that?

“And I could tell they realized what a colossal mistake they had made. Not too many people get a do-over. But I thought, if anyone could use one, it was the Malfoys.”

“But how did you and Malfoy...you know? Did you meet in a gay pub or something?”

Harry laughed. “No. I’ve never even been to a gay pub. No, we just...met one day. And...it’s hard to explain, Teddy. But have you ever felt that you suddenly knew someone? Knew them so well as if they were the other half of your soul?”

Draco gasped. His heart warmed.

“I think perhaps I feel a bit of that with Victoire,” he said softly.

“Well, it felt like that with Draco. I couldn’t admit it to myself at first. You can imagine how shocked I was, feeling these feelings for a bloke, and Draco Malfoy at that. But...there it was. Undeniable. And Teddy, he’s so good to me. He’s got a grouchy exterior—”

Draco frowned and clenched his fist around his wine glass. Do not!

“—but he’s a pussycat inside. He dotes on me. He’s perfect, really. Aren’t you, Draco?”

Draco’s eyes rounded. He pushed the foyer door opened gingerly. “D-did you call me, Harry?”

“Prat. I knew you were listening at the door.” He held out his hand for him and Draco—a slave to his feelings—came to him and took it. Harry squeezed it. “He’s just perfect,” said Harry, gazing into Draco’s eyes.

“O-kay!” Teddy snapped to his feet. “That looks like my exit line.”

“But wait,” said Harry, rising. “Aren’t you staying for dinner?”

“Some other time.” He walked up to Draco and slapped him on the back. Some of Draco’s wine sloshed out and onto the carpet. “Look, you old Slytherin, you’d better take good care of our Harry here. Because if I hear you haven’t—”

“I know, I know. The whole bloody Wizarding world has threatened me. And just because we’re cousins doesn’t mean you get to treat me so familiarly.”

“Oh,” said Harry. “That’s right. I forgot.”

“He wouldn’t bring it up if he weren’t trying to impress you,” said Teddy, a crooked smile on his face. “Come to think of it, you two are related, too. Distantly, of course, so it isn’t incest. Hate to add that to the bag.” He winked and chuckled as he made his way to the front door.

Draco shook his head. Was he that transparent these days? He must have lost his touch.

“Ta, Harry. And I’ll go make myself at home at Godric’s Hollow. Like always.” He pulled opened the door. “Bye, Cousin Draco!”

“Don’t let the door hit you on the way out, Lupin.”



When the door closed at last Harry was looking at Draco. "Don't you like anyone?"

"He's all right. But no, I don't make friends too easily. Difficult to know where one's loyalties lie."

"Loyalties?" Harry made his way through the foyer and peered into the dining room. The elves had laid the table and lit the candles. "It isn't a contest, you know. It's a matter of trust."

"And I don't trust easily."

"I've noticed. It wouldn't hurt you to try, though."

Draco sat, scooting his chair closer to Harry. He took his serviette and gently laid it on his lap, setting the wine glass at the head of his plate. "Whatever you say, Harry."

Harry chuckled. At least he was in a better mood.

They ate and chatted, trying to keep the conversation light. Draco did his best to be himself, which seemed to make Harry smile and laugh. He didn't mind being laughed at, as long as Harry was happy. He got so tired of all these people threatening him to make Harry happy. What did they think? That he had wanted to disrupt his own perfectly ordered life for this? But on the other hand, had he known years ago that such happiness existed, that his loneliness could be alleviated by the simple touch of a hand, by the beard-stubbed cheek of this man, he would have moved heaven and earth to have it. Never mind that it was Harry Potter, the absolute last man he'd ever suspect he'd be interested in.

Harry finished his meal. He dabbed his lips with his serviette and dropped it on his plate. "Thanks, Draco. That was excellent."

"You do know it's the house-elves, don't you?"

Harry smiled. "But you're the one who tells them what to do. Someone needs the credit."

Draco mentally shook his head. And that was why house-elves and centaurs and giants liked him. There was no better manipulation than honest genuineness.

No wonder Draco couldn't master it.

Harry was gazing at Draco with a secret smile on his face. "Whatever shall we do now?"

Draco's heartbeat thrummed suddenly in his chest and his cock stood to attention. "I've an idea," he said. He kept his lids seductively low and gazed at Harry from under his lashes. He knew Harry liked that. He called it Draco's "smoldering look".

Harry took his hand and rose from the table. He said nothing as he led Draco upstairs.

Harry undressed Draco without a word, kissing each portion of skin that was slowly exposed. Draco sighed under his gentle ministrations. Harry's strong hands skimmed over Draco's skin, exploring the feel of the crook of his arm, kissing his armpit, touching his stomach. Harry seemed transfixed by his pale skin and Draco had to urge him to disrobe, so absorbed was he.

Both starkers, Harry continued his silent exploration of Draco's body. Each pass of his fingers sent chills of delight over Draco's sensitive skin and he moaned and writhed.

"So sensitive," Harry murmured.

"You have an amazing touch," whispered Draco.

"Mmmm," came the reply and then he fell silent again.

His hands grasped Draco's hips and his thumbs traced down the hollows at Draco's groin, just missing his pubic hair. Draco's cock was throbbing with need, bobbing against his belly with an angry red colour.

Harry touched his lips to Draco's ear, sending more chills down his goose-fleshed skin. "Let's go to the bed," he whispered.

Draco squeaked his reply and let Harry pull him toward the four-poster. Harry laid him down with his arm under Draco's back, cradling him. He gathered Draco in his arms and slowly drew him in for a kiss. His warm lips touched Draco's and Draco thought he would expire on the spot. The kiss was soft and gentle, just lips teasing his mouth. A tongue poked at Draco and he parted his lips, allowing the intrusion. Harry's tongue gently explored, sliding over Draco's mouth, his teeth, his own tongue. That tongue moved languidly, like a painter gently stroking colour to the canvas. Draco's whole body was throbbing now. Harry's kiss threw him into a state of intense need. The gentler he was, the sexier it felt. And Harry was taking no prisoners.

Draco writhed beneath him, chest pressed to chest. His arms snaked up and clasped Harry's neck. Draco opened his mouth wide and sucked Harry's tongue around his lips, moaning into his mouth.

And then Harry deepened the kiss claspng their mouths together, drinking in the soft mewls Draco was making, lovingly entangling their tongues, breathing in with his nostrils Draco's excited puffs of air blasting Harry's cheek.

They held each other and kissed this way for a long time, until, gasping, Draco had to pull away first. There were tears in Draco's eyes as he looked at Harry. Harry gazed down on him with the tenderest expression. "Do you have any idea how very much I love you?" he asked.

Draco could only squeak again.

Harry smiled. "I'm going to turn you over now. I want to see your beautiful bum."

Draco didn't protest. Harry turned him and Draco's cock pressed painfully into the mattress. Harry's hands never stopped and he smoothed them over Draco's backside, cupping the underside of one cheek and lifting it. This was worse! Far worse. Draco wanted Harry inside him right now! But he didn't want Harry to stop touching him like this either. Those hands, those fingers, slowly explored, tracing imaginary lines down his arse cheeks, squeezing, tormenting.

At last, Draco felt thumbs dipping into his crack and spreading his arse cheeks, holding them opened, exposing his pulsating hole. He felt the warm sensation of Harry's breath there and gasped loudly when the gentle flick of a wet tongue tested his furled entrance.

All his nerve endings concentrated in that sensitive spot and he waited, his hole twitching for Harry's tongue to continue. Please! he pleaded in his head.

The tongue returned with the flat pad of it sketching a long, firm lick upward. It repeated the gesture and then lanced at it, forcing it to open with whirling licks. Draco tried to keep himself still, but it was a chore. He panted into his hands, his face hidden in the mattress.

Harry's tongue continued to slowly drill its way in, making little circles, pushing, forcing. Draco felt himself open, felt the tongue, hot and wet, stab into him in its sinful quest. "Oh Harry!" He couldn't help himself. The cry climbed out of his throat without his permission.

But Harry was not deterred and kept stabbing his tongue into Draco, fucking him with that wet muscle, changing occasionally to swirling his tongue all around the gasping entrance.

"H-Harry! Oh god, Harry!"

A kiss to his arse was his signal. Harry sat up, cast the lubricating charm, and pushed Draco's legs even further apart. Draco waited in anticipation, waited for the feel of Harry's cock kissing his entrance. Waited impatiently to feel it—Ah! There! The tip of Harry's cock pressed firmly to his loosened hole. Draco spread himself as much as he could, but it was never quite enough.

Harry pushed and his thick cock forced open the tight hole, spread it and then the muscle enclosed the shaft as it slid inside. Oh the fullness! The completeness Draco felt! Harry's cock was still moving, still shoving in until Draco felt the soft pat of Harry's sac rest against his wide-open arse.

Harry didn't move for a moment. He was allowing Draco to get used to his girth and Draco needed that moment. His sphincter clenched a few times involuntarily, as if it were chewing on the intruder, until the muscle relaxed enough to expand and embrace the shaft.

It was then that Harry started to move. His cock slid outward, and Draco's channel molded around the new sensations. And when Harry slammed back inside, Draco clenched again. Harry fucked him slowly and changed angles. His cock glided over that sweet spot inside of Draco. It made Draco suddenly tremble with unimaginable sensation and he shouted with pure pleasure.

Harry hit that spot again and again as his thrusts sped up. Draco pushed his hips into the bed and humped the duvet until he came seconds later, clenching his arse tightly.

Harry was pumping into him madly, grunting with each thrust until he, too, released inside, gasping and choking from the intense pleasure. His hips continued to fuck, but they were slowing, until they gradually came to a stop. He clutched at Draco's hips for a long time and then slipped out of him. He crumpled beside him, arm thrown over the prone man.

Draco gasped into the mattress. The few times he'd had sex with his now ex-wife had never compared to this. Even his best wanking sessions didn't come close. He never imagined that taking a cock up the arse would be so wonderful.

Harry breathed into Draco's sweaty neck. "Oh, Malfoy. You are an amazing lover."

"I was about to say the same thing, Potter," gasped Draco. "If I ever get my breath back."

Harry nuzzled him sleepily. Draco felt a deep lethargy overtake him and he was about to doze off when an owl pushed open the casement and landed with a thump on their bed.

Draco jumped with a start, staring at the tiny chirruping owl. "Merlin's tits!"

Harry reached over him and took the note from the owl, which nibbled Harry's finger affectionately before flying off. Harry read the note and then let it fall.

"Well?"

"We've been invited to Ron and Hermione's for dinner next week."

Chapter Seven—Mending

Draco thought it was the worst idea ever. They had only just filed their respective divorce papers. They were effectively in their honeymoon period. The last thing he wanted to do was sit down to dinner with a blood traitor and a Mudblood.

No, no. He absolutely had to stop thinking that way. Thank goodness he never said that sort of thing aloud at home where Scorpius could hear it. Not any more. Of course his father still spouted that philosophy, but Draco had been careful to debrief his son when he spent too much time with Grandpapa.

Harry, of course, thought it was a marvelous idea and had penned a reply to them at once, fixing the day on Thursday, which was tonight.

Draco paced in front of his wardrobe. What to wear. He had to look good but not overdress. Definitely had to outdo the Weasel so he'd make him feel inadequate—What was he thinking? Anything he wore would do that!

Harry was actually humming. The man was happy. Well, of course he was! Hadn't they had the best week ever? Sleeping with Harry every night and waking to him every morning was the most amazing thing Draco had ever experienced. He didn't know how he'd ever gotten along without it all this time. To simply hear Harry breathing beside him, the bed warm and cozy from his presence was priceless. When Harry was in the shower, one of Draco's guilty pleasures was to grab Harry's pillow and sink his nose into it, smelling his scent.

Of course, they would separate during the day to go to their own offices to work, but just sitting in his office, Draco would daydream of Harry, of touching him, of Harry's smiles and his laugh. And he would glance at the clock and realize an hour had passed.

Oh yes. Draco had it bad. But did he care? He was getting shagged daily and was learning quite a lot about the fine art of cuddling.

"What's gotten into you?" his co-worker, Philips, had asked that morning. He was a stately wizard, upper crust like the Malfoys but never entangled in Pureblood problems. Draco liked him in an abstract way but it was never a share-a-pint-after-work sort of relationship.

"What do you mean?"

"Well. Look at you. You're just about walking two feet off the floor. I've never seen you...um...well...happy, I guess."

What had gotten into him? Draco blushed at the thought.

“Oh. That’s right. Must be that Potter bloke. Gay life seems to suit you, Malfoy.”

Draco couldn’t help sneering at him. “Whatever private schooling you had, Philips, it obviously didn’t include training in class.”

Philips laughed. “No, indeed. But I still say you’re much more pleasant to be around. I’ll have to congratulate Potter if and when I see him.”

But Draco thought about his comments for the rest of the day. Was he really different? He felt different. He did feel happier. Even Scorpius seemed to loosen up a bit if his letters were any indication. Probably that Albus Potter’s influence.

But now that he was dressed and ready to go to the Weasleys, he felt uneasy again.

Harry stood in the bathroom trying to brush his hair. All these years Draco just thought Potter didn’t care about his appearance, but now he saw that Harry was fighting a losing battle with a genetic magical problem. It actually looked quite sexy on him. Draco never minded the messy hair anymore.

“Potter, give it up as a bad job, would you, and come on!”

Harry sighed into the mirror and put the brush down. “I know. I never stop trying, though.”

They stepped into the Floo together and popped into an ordinary sitting room in a modest and clean house. Draco Scourgified his robes and looked around. Everywhere he looked there were photographs of ginger-haired people. He shuddered inwardly. Weasleys!

“Ron! Hermione! We’re here!”

Someone was thundering down the stairs and tore around the corner. Hugo Weasley leapt into Harry's arms and Harry nearly fell, laughing. He spoke to Harry all in a rush. "Uncle Harry! I'm glad to see you but I'm not staying. Teddy is coming to take me to dinner! It will be a very grown-up evening, so he said."

"I hope not that grown-up", Harry muttered.

"He's taking me to a restaurant and then we're going to the Muggle cinema! I can't wait!"

Hermione came around the corner at that moment and smiled indulgently at her youngest. "Hugo. Give Uncle Harry a chance to breathe. Did you say hello to our other guest?"

Hugo climbed down from Harry and seemed to notice Draco for the first time. The boy examined him a little like Granger used to look at books.

"Hullo," he said, standing slightly behind Harry.

Draco decided to try maturity. He stretched out his hand. "I am pleased to meet you. My name is Draco Malfoy."

Hugo looked first at Harry, who urged him forward, and then up at Draco. He edged forward, quickly took his hand and released it, claiming his spot behind Harry again.

Well. That was awkward.

"Come along, Hugo," said Hermione, shooing him out of the room. "Get your coat. Teddy will be here any minute."

He scampered away and Hermione smiled at the both of them. "I thought it would be better if it was just us tonight." She approached Draco and for a moment he thought she might kiss him or something. "May I take your cloak, Draco? Please. Make yourself at home. I'm so glad you could come."



Okay. So things had changed in nineteen years. He shrugged off his cloak and allowed her to take it. She kissed Harry on the cheek as she took his and retreated to a coat rack and hung them both on pegs.

By then Teddy arrived in the Floo and he slapped Draco on the back again. "Hey, old Slytherin. How goes it? Hugo ready?"

"I'm here, Teddy!" Hugo bounded into the room and gave Teddy Lupin a hug. "Can we go now?"

"Right! Let's get this evening extravaganza underway!" He rubbed his hands together. "Goodnight, parents! Goodnight, Goddaddys!" And they were off into the Floo.

Draco fumed. He was not that bloody were-wolf's godfather!

"I think we can use some drinks," said Hermione.

She served wine and just as they were sitting down, Weasley finally arrived.

"Sorry I'm late. Couldn't get out of the shop. George was trying to make me test something and you know how that can get." He took his glass from Hermione, sat with a huff, and then glared at Draco. "So. We're here tonight to clear the air."

"I wasn't aware," said Draco, speaking for the first time to them, "that the air needed clearing."

"Well, it's all been quite a shock, hasn't it?" said Hermione. "We just want the two of you to know that we have no hard feelings for anyone. I mean, you have to admit, Draco, that we all didn't get on in school."

"School was ages ago, Granger."

She smiled a self-satisfied smile. "But you've just made my point. I haven't been a 'Granger' in fifteen years."

Draco rolled his eyes. Point taken. "Okay. Sorry. Mrs. Weas—Oh bugger it. Her-hermione."

She was grinning like a fool now. But Weasley wasn't as easily cowed. "First names, is it? All right. I'll give it a go. Dra-co." He looked as if he had tasted something unpleasant.

"Don't bother, Weasley. It will be a cold day in hell when I call you 'Ron'."

"Right!" He shot up from his chair and went to fetch more wine.

"Draco," Harry whispered. "Be good!"

Draco slumped. This night was going to be interminable.

"How's Ginny?" asked Harry, turning to Hermione.

She nodded. "She's doing all right. I know she cries a lot. But she'll get over it, Harry. I know she will. Lily is her strength and Teddy is there all the time."

Harry heaved a sigh. Without thinking about where they were, Draco reached over and clutched his hand. When he realized they had an audience, he quickly let him go. He glanced at Granger, who was looking at him with a tender expression. Merlin's beard!

Weasley returned and refilled everyone's wine glass. Why he didn't do it with magic, Draco would never understand.

"It's good to see you two," said Harry. And Draco realized for the first time how important Harry's friends were to him. He had sacrificed it all to be with Draco. He had no idea if his friends would still be his friends after this. Draco was certain he wasn't capable of that much bravery. Good thing he really had no friends to speak of.

“You, too, mate,” said Weasley and he lifted his glass to him. “Did Hermione get you up to snuff on Ginny? Yeah, it’s rough. But I don’t see that waiting would have made things any easier. And I heard about James and Albus. We’ll do whatever we can.”

Harry shrugged. “What can one do? He’s in adolescence and just discovering his own sexual self, I imagine. This is a big blow.”

Hermione leaned forward. “Harry, I’ve been reading up on that.”

Draco smirked. Some things never changed.

“And it will take time for James to adjust. Try not to take what he might say to you to heart. He needs to lash out right now. As you said, he is finding his own identity. It’s been tough enough being the child of a celebrity. Now the publicity is none too kind.”

“But it hurts just the same, Hermione. I love those kids.”

“And they love you, Harry.”

“But enough about this,” said Weasley. “I want to know how life with the Ferret is like.”

Hermione elbowed him. “Ron!”

“That’s all right, Gr-We—Bugger it. Hermione! Let’s just owe it all to friendly banter.”

“That’s very mature of you, Draco,” she said, eyeing Ron meaningfully.

“Malfoy knows I didn’t mean anything by it. Much.” He grinned. “So is it the life of luxury? House-elves and all?”

Hermione gave Ron an especial sneer at that.

“Er...” Harry looked from one to the other. “Well, Draco does have house-elves.”

“Harry!”

“Hermione. I can’t help what he has. It’s his house.”

“Correction, Potter. It’s our house.”

“What?”

“I had Wynn draw up the papers. It’s actually in both our names now.”

Harry turned the sweetest expression toward him. “You did? That was lovely of you.”

He straightened his robes. “I’m a very lovely man.”

And then Harry leaned over and kissed him on the cheek.

“Here now!” said Ron, wincing. “We didn’t need to see that!”

Hermione was looking at them as if they were fuzzy puppies. “Actually, I think we did.”

Ron looked a bit sheepish. “I guess ‘Mione’s right. Truth be told, Harry. I haven’t seen you this happy in years. I’m only sorry it couldn’t have lasted with my sister like that.”

“Me, too, Ron.”

Hermione wiped at her eye. “Dinner is ready,” she said, rising.

They filed into their tiny dining room and Draco sat where they put him. He was desperately trying to think of conversation topics that they could all discuss. He really didn't want to dwell tonight on Harry's former marriage but it looked like that's what they all intended to do.

Strangely, it was Hermione who saved the day by bringing up other noteworthy issues in the Wizarding world and listening politely to Draco's views, commenting on them and opening a full-blown discussion between the four of them.

Draco hated to admit it, but he was having a good time.

And then all hell broke loose when the Floo exploded.

\* \* \*

Harry reeled back. His first instinct was to protect Draco. But when he recognized Mr. and Mrs. Weasley he let his guard down. But when Molly opened her mouth he realized he should have left it up.

"HARRY JAMES POTTER! I want a word with you!"

"Now, Molly," said Arthur, obviously trying to control her.

She shook off her husband's grip. And it was then that Harry saw that she had her wand in her hand.

Draco was suddenly in front of him.

"Mum! Bloody hell!"

"Mrs. Weasley!" cried Hermione.

She glared at Draco as if all her suspicions were finally confirmed. "So I see. And you, Ron and Hermione. Complicit in this? You approve of Harry's behaviour? Leaving his wife and children for this disgusting relationship with Malfoy?"

Harry gently pushed Draco aside. He was grateful that the man wanted to protect him, but ultimately he would have to face this alone. Just as he had faced every other terror of his life alone.

"Mrs. Weasley," he began, trying to calm her by the gentle timbre of his voice.

"Don't you 'Mrs. Weasley' me! I want you to answer me. Ginny is devastated and your children are running amok at Hogwarts. Your selfishness is destroying your family!"

"Molly!" It was Arthur this time who stepped in front of her. "Are you mad? This is our Harry you're talking about. Let us all just sit down like civilized people and discuss it."

"Not while he's here." She pointed a finger at Draco who reddened at the sudden attention.

"Mrs. Weasley, I am certainly not going to ask a guest to leave—"

Hermione. The bravest woman he knew. She was a match for Molly any day.

But it was Draco who surprised him. "I think it best I go," he told Hermione.

Harry grabbed his arm. "No, Draco—"

"This is family business. You don't need me here."

"But you're my family now, too."

He smiled. Harry could tell in his eyes he appreciated that sentiment. "Thank you for that. But I think it best I go for now. Hermione. R-ron. Thank you for a lovely evening. Goodnight."

Before Harry could stop him, he stepped into the Floo and was gone.

“Everyone come into the sitting room,” said Hermione, and shooed them like a flock of geese.

They moved slowly into the lounge and Harry took a seat on the sofa flanked by Hermione and Ron. Molly and Arthur sat opposite in chairs.

“I don’t understand this, Harry. You have always been welcomed into our home as another son. I never imagined that you were capable of this kind of disgraceful behaviour.”

“First of all, Mum,” Ron began. “Harry didn’t know he was gay. But when he discovered it, he tried to make things right.”

“That’s not how Ginny tells it.” Molly had a look of vicious triumph on her face. “She says that Harry had been cheating on her for some time and she finally confronted him with it.”

Harry felt hot shame wash over him. His face was scarlet with heat. There was no denying this. He hadn’t really thought it was any of their business but Ginny was no doubt hurting. Was there no end to the pain of all this?

“That’s true,” said Harry softly. “I didn’t understand what was happening to me. I tried to stop it, but I couldn’t. But as soon as she confronted me I immediately agreed to move out. It wasn’t fair to her, my staying. It wasn’t fair to me.”

“But what about your children? Should they grow up without a father?”

“I promised to be there as much as possible. I can only do so much. I know James is having a rough time of it. I don’t know what to do.” The tears came again, and as much as he tried to suppress it he couldn’t. He pushed his glasses off his face and wept into his hands.

No one said anything. Ron put his arm around him. And then the space where Ron sat emptied and was replaced by another warm body who took him into her soft arms. "Harry," said Molly, rocking him. "Oh, Harry. What's to be done?"

He shook his head. He didn't know. He had caused so much pain and suffering. What right did he have to chase happiness when it made everyone else so miserable? He should have just stayed. He should have done the brave thing and ignored these new feelings.

"No, you shouldn't have," said Molly. Had Harry said all that aloud? He realized he had, between sobs. "Hush, now. I said a lot of things out of anger and in love of my daughter. Surely you recognize that. You are such a good father to our grandchildren. And of course you have a right to happiness. I'm sorry you felt so unhappy."

"But I wasn't," he whimpered. "I love Ginny. I will always love Ginny."

"I know, dear. Just differently. Dear me, dear me. We just never expected this."

"Neither did I."

Harry looked up and saw tear tracks on Molly's face, but she was smiling at Harry. His heart felt lighter at that. He didn't want to lose the only family he had ever known. He hoped against hope it would be all right. And now it looked as if it might be. He glanced at Arthur who also had tears in his eyes. Ron was staring at his lap and Hermione was openly weeping.

"Look at us," said Harry. "We're a mess."

Molly actually chuckled at that. "Oh, dear. Hermione. Could you put some tea on?"

"Of course!" She jumped up. She waved her wand and tissues flew into the room, a small pile for each person. Harry grabbed at his and blew his nose.

They all soon had cups and saucers in their hands and Harry was trying to explain—while leaving out the more personal details—how much Draco had come to mean to him; how he was learning who he was;



and why it seemed to have taken so long for him to discover this important aspect of his personality. He answered Molly's questions—as honestly as he could—about homosexuality and how it hadn't been a choice. He ended his talk with a soft, "I hope I'll still be welcomed to your house. You have all meant so very much to me. I don't want to lose the only family I've ever known."

Molly started blubbering again. "Of course not! Of course you're welcomed, Harry. We wouldn't dream of excluding you. You are like a son to us. Isn't he, Arthur?"

"Harry, my boy," said Arthur. "You are every bit a son to us. Don't mistake it. Ginny and the boys naturally come first, but how can we deny you?"

"You mean everything to me, too," said Harry.

"We'll all get used to it." He rose and touched Molly's shoulder. "I think we've taken up enough of these young people's time. Do give our apologies to Draco, Harry."

"Oh, yes!" said Molly contritely. "Tell him I'm sorry, Harry. We'll invite you both to tea. Or lunch. Or dinner. Anytime, really. You'll tell him?"

"Yes. I will."

She hugged him again and then went with Arthur to the Floo.

And then the Trio was alone again. They looked at each other. "Enough tea," said Ron. "I'm bringing out the Firewhiskey."

"I think that's an excellent idea, Ronald."

He eyed Hermione and cocked his head toward her in amusement, much like he had done the very first time they met her, barging her way into their compartment in the Hogwarts Express.

Ron poured three glasses and handed them out. "To the Trio!"

They drank it down, Hermione shivering at hers. But she took another when Ron offered.

“So here we are. It’s been a long, strange trip.”

Harry and Hermione laughed. Ron didn’t get it.

\* \* \*

Draco stared at the clock again. He tossed his book aside. There was no way he could concentrate on it. Harry was very late and he found he didn’t like it. He was certain he’d be all right. The Weasel and Granger would see to that. But Draco wanted Harry home.

And then he heard the Floo whoosh downstairs and he waited anxiously for that thud up the steps.

The door opened and Harry came in and sat on the bed.

“How did it go?” asked Draco neutrally.

Harry nodded. “It was okay. Everyone forgave me. It’s so exhausting going through it each time. But I think that’s really the last people that I truly care about that need the full explanation.” He fell back on the bed, fully clothed. Not usually how Draco liked to have Harry on the bed. “But they don’t hate me and that’s the important part.”

“How could anyone ever hate you?” Draco leaned over and kissed his forehead.

“You used to.”

“I was a fool.”

“You were a wanker.”

“Yes.” He kissed Harry’s lips, upside down.

Harry reached up and pulled Draco down. “But you’re my lover now, aren’t you?”

“And your true love. Gosh that sounds pathetic. Too girly.”

Harry smiled. “True, though.”

“Yes. Very true.” He surrendered to Harry’s kisses, languishing in soft, warm lips.

“It’s almost unbearable how much I want you all the time. I was never this randy before.”

“You never slept with a Malfoy before.”

“That must be it. But why are you wearing this dressing gown?”

“Why are you wearing your clothes?”

Harry looked down at himself. “Oh. Forgot.” Harry stripped as fast as he could. Draco watched Harry as he slowly peeled his dressing gown off. He lay back starkers against the pillows, amused as Harry wriggled about on the bed, trying to get his trousers down.

Harry finally tossed the last sock over the side and turned to Draco. Harry was already hard. That magnificent erection was always an extraordinary sight.

Harry got up on his knees and held his hefty cock in his hand. He was looking at Draco like he was pudding. Draco supposed he was. “Gonna fuck you, Malfoy.”

Draco swallowed hard. "Yes."

Harry's eyes scoured over Draco's body. Draco positioned himself so that he was on display, but even though he had planned it, Harry's bold and naked appraisal made him blush.

"I want to do it face to face," said Harry.

Draco's eyes rounded and his dick throbbed. They'd seldom done it that way. They were still neophytes when it came to sex, even as often as they had it. They weren't aware of all the intricacies. But Draco could see that Harry was learning a few things. He wondered where he was getting his information. A stab of jealousy wriggled into his heart. But he knew that Harry would never see other men. He probably got a book. Hermione probably gave it to him.

"Come here, Malfoy." Harry grabbed his ankle and dragged him down the bed.

Harry Potter, caveman, he mused, growing more excited.

With his wand in hand, he incanted the lubricating charm and tossed the wand aside. He pushed Draco's thighs up to his chest, exposing not only his hole but his cock and balls as well. Draco felt squished and also a bit embarrassed, even though Harry had seen, tasted, sucked, and nibbled on all of his bits at one time or another.

Holding his thighs in place, Harry looked down at Draco. "I want to see your face when I'm fucking you. I want to see your face when I make you come."

Draco whimpered. Harry looked so powerful, so domineering. It excited the hell out of him. Draco was never submissive anywhere else in his life. How did Harry turn him into a pile of goo each time he took charge like this?

Pushed wide open, Draco waited anxiously for Harry to proceed. But Harry seemed to be relishing merely looking at Draco's arsehole. "Harry. Want you," he murmured.

A slow and tender smile spread on his lover's face. "Oh, I want you, too, sweetheart."

Sweetheart? Harry had never called him that before. It was always 'love' or 'lover' or 'Draco'. But Draco found he liked this new endearment. He felt himself melting for it.

Harry juttred his hips forward and sunk his cock into Draco's opened entrance. But Draco was hardly ever prepared to simply take all of Harry at once. That cock was so thick and taut that he had to concentrate and open himself. Harry pushed slowly forward, sinking in deeper with each small thrust.

When Harry was fully seated, they gazed at one another with a shared hungry expression. "Mine," whispered Harry.

"Yours," Draco mouthed. He was so full of emotion—and Harry's considerable cock—that he was unable to speak.

His arsehole clenched around that remarkable organ and the sensation of fullness was almost overwhelming, especially since Harry slid over that nerve bundle inside Draco when he stopped at last. But then Harry began to move, taking his time with languid thrusts and keeping his eyes glued to Draco's face the whole time.

Draco rocked back, taking in as much of Harry's cock as he could. He wasn't able to move much in his present position, but it did make Harry hit that spot over and over. His own cock was quivering, and then Harry reached down and closed his fist over it.

Harry began to pump his cock and it was almost more sensation than Draco could bear. The fullness in his arse, the squeezing and stroking of his penis, his bollocks sliding against Harry's wiry pubic hair—in no time Draco was coming, screaming his pleasure to the rafters.

He looked up at Harry, whose concentrated expression and furious thrusting told Draco he was close. Draco clamped down deliberately on Harry's dick and Harry's eyes widened before he threw back his head and came like a storm. His hips snapped into Draco's arse hard and he keened his pleasure, pumping into him until his motions slowed and finally came to a halt. He panted and dropped his head. His black fringe hid his face as he breathed. He was still deeply imbedded into Draco and it began to hurt, but in the bent double position Draco was in, he could hardly protest.

When Harry didn't look like he had any intention of moving, Draco prodded him. "Look, Harry. I'm not as limber as I used to be."

Harry snapped up his head and looked down at him. "Oh. Sorry." He pulled out and his release dribbled from Draco. That was Draco's second favorite part.

Draco unwound and flattened his back against the bed. "That was intense, Harry. Fucking fantastic."

"Yeah. I like to see your face when you come."

Draco smiled and closed his eyes, nuzzling into the thatch of hair on Harry's chest. It just couldn't get better—

A tapping on their casement. Draco looked up and cursed. Of course something had to interrupt when he'd had the best fuck of his life.

Harry rushed to the window and opened it for the owl. The owl stuck out his leg and Harry took the note. The owl flew off as Harry read, but then he dropped the paper and sank to the bed, his face devoid of colour.

Draco snatched up the missive and immediately noticed the arms of Hogwarts at the top.

My dear Mr. Potter,

I regret to inform you that expulsion proceedings against James Potter have been ordered. James Potter was discovered in the restricted section of the library this evening looking for reverse love spells. It is our understanding that he was looking for a spell to break you and Mr. Malfoy apart. These are very dangerous curses and as close to Unforgivables as they come.

I am very sorry about this, Harry, but it is now out of my hands. The Board of Governors will meet tomorrow morning at Hogwarts and you are strongly urged to attend. I might advise that you do not bring Mr. Malfoy with you.

Regrets,

Minerva McGonagall

Headmistress of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

\* \* \*

Harry didn't sleep a wink all night. Draco had tried to comfort him but there was nothing for it. He had a lot of thinking to do. His priority had to be his children and he had given them precious little priority in the last few weeks. It had all been about Harry and what he believed were his needs. Well, no more. His children's futures were at stake. If Harry couldn't convince the board to keep James in Hogwarts then they would have to arrange some sort of tutoring, which was bound to be expensive. Not that they couldn't afford it, but the experience was bound to affect James even more than Harry's coming out had. He couldn't have that. He was not going to be responsible for James losing this chance.

When Draco fell asleep, Harry rose as quietly as he could. He showered quickly and dressed. Standing in front of the wardrobe, he looked for a long time at the both of their clothes hanging there. He looked back at the bed and at his sleeping companion. Draco was so buried under the covers that only the top of his blond hair stuck out. He breathed deeply in exhausted sleep. Harry's heart ached with longing. He longed to rush back to the bed and jump in, enclosing himself in the man's arms, to forget everything. He longed for everything to be easy, for decisions to be made for him instead of his having to make these tough choices.

But in the end, Harry knew what he had to do.

As he strode down the stairs he patted the small bundle that was shrunk and stuffed into his pocket.

Behind him in the room he shared with Draco, the empty hangers where his clothes had been, swayed with a draught.

Chapter Eight—Decisions

Harry arrived before sun up to Hogwarts. McGonagall was up and shared tea with him in her office as the portraits of the headmasters looked on. Dumbledore was particularly pale, Harry thought. Maybe that was a bad sign.

He had no stomach for the tea, but he drank it anyway. McGonagall didn't say much. She was very distressed and Harry didn't much feel like making small talk. He kept glancing at the clock. The Board was supposed to arrive at ten and then James would be called up. Harry felt sick to his stomach. He finally asked the question he had been dreading.

"What do you think they will do, Minerva?"

She looked up at Harry with rheumy eyes. He seldom called her by her name. But they both needed that little comfort right now. She shook her head.

"Harry, I wish I knew. Because you are Harry Potter...well. That might make a difference. But with all the negative publicity lately, I don't know—"

"That's done with," said Harry harshly. "I'm moving back in with Ginny."

She looked at Harry as if he had lost his mind. Surely he had.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm done with it. It's too much. No one is happy about it. No one. And I can't sacrifice my children anymore for some dream that doesn't make sense. I'm moving back home. I'm stopping the divorce. It's over."

McGonagall stared at Harry, her mouth hanging open. The portraits looked at one another. Harry noticed a hand from another portrait pushing at Dumbledore's shoulder but the old wizard refused to say anything. It was just as well. Harry didn't want to hear any moldy platitudes. He wanted it all over with.



He refused to think of Draco. Refused to picture him reading the note Harry left; refused to imagine his face when he saw the empty wardrobe and bathroom with Harry's things gone. It was over. Draco would understand. He'd get over it. Just like everyone was telling him his kids would do.

The clock struck the hour and not too long thereafter, there was a knock on the door. McGonagall stood at her place and whisked away the tea things with a wave of her wand. "Come!" she called, and twelve grumpy-looking witches and wizards entered. McGonagall conjured twelve chairs and a long table for them and they took their places. McGonagall sat again and Harry followed suit.

"Minerva," said the head witch, "we are convened here to look into the case of James Potter. I presume this is his father, Harry Potter."

As if they didn't know, Harry fumed. He stood again and made a respectful bow.

"Mr. Potter, are you aware of the charges against your son?"

"Yes. But I haven't spoken with him yet and it's very important that I do."

"Of course. But I think it best we review the circumstances first before we speak to the boy."

Agitated, Harry sat again.

The witch conjured some parchment and read from it. "'James Potter was discovered last night in the restricted section of the library. He was researching reverse love spells—' My, my. That is very dangerous. Some of these curses are almost impossible to reverse. And he a second year. What was the purpose to which the boy wished to put these spells?"

You very well know! he wanted to shout. Harry cleared his throat. "Recently, I became aware of my—my sexual orientation and I separated from his mother. But I have since had a change of heart and intend to move back home today. That's what I wanted to talk with him about."

There was a rumbling amongst the board and the head witch shushed them. "I see. And when did this 'change of heart' come about?"

“This morning,” said Harry. “But it has to be done. I can’t sacrifice the happiness of my children any further.”

The witch looked at Harry with narrowed eyes and turned to her colleagues. “I am calling a recess. Ten minutes.” The others looked surprised, but they shrugged and called the house-elves to bring them tea. The witch stood at her place and waited by the door. “Walk with me, Mr. Potter.”

Harry looked back at McGonagall but her questioning look only reflected his own. He joined the tall woman by the door and they exited down the Griffin stair.

They walked a long way down the quiet corridor before she spoke

“I tell you what, Mr. Potter. I should like to talk to your son privately.” She took out her wand and sent a Patronus. It was a barn swallow and it swooped down the corridor in search of James Potter.

Soon Harry recognized that familiar shuffle of feet. James Potter, swimming in his black robes, followed the small Patronus until he spied the witch—and Harry. He looked pale and frightened. When he approached Harry he lowered his eyes.

“Mr. James Potter, I presume? I am Cassandra Midgen. I am the head witch on the Board of Governors. Please come with me.”

Before Harry could say anything, she led James into an empty classroom and closed the door. But strangely, their conversation was broadcast outside the room. She must have cast a form of Sonorus. For Harry’s benefit?

“There. Sit down, Mr. Potter,” she said to James. Harry leaned against the wall, staring at his scuffed shoes. He supposed he was to wait. “My younger sister was a seventh year the year your father defeated Voldemort,” she said. “She was there, in fact. On the front lawn. She saw it all. Are you aware of those circumstances, young man? Have you been told the stories? Perhaps even your father has regaled you on his exploits.”

James mumbled something and she told him to speak up. He cleared his throat. "My dad never talks about it. I've heard about it from my relatives and then I read about it in *Hogwarts: A History*."

"Never spoke about it? Not once?"

"My dad doesn't like to talk about it."

"Extraordinary. Well, then you surely know that the Wizarding world was at the end of its collective rope. We were done for. And families like mine, Half-bloods, were in trouble. Not as much trouble as those Muggleborns. I believe your aunt, Hermione Weasley, is Muggleborn."

"Yes," he answered quietly.

"Then you must also know that Muggleborns were to be either enslaved by wizardkind or simply disposed of. Your aunt would have been killed. And you would never have had your cousins Hugo and Rose. Isn't that correct?"

"Um...I guess so. I never thought about it."

"Well I suggest you do, young man. There is a reason we teach history. So that those who were not there would know what transpired, both the good and the bad so that—hopefully—we could learn from our mistakes and rejoice in our triumphs. History is not merely the retelling of dusty dates and old Goblin wars."

Harry sighed. If Binns was still teaching it, it was.

"On that day, nineteen years ago," she went on, "your father saved every last one of us from horrible enslavement. Even those who called themselves Death Eaters. Yes, they were enslaved as well. Some more than others. While it is true that the Malfoys were in the thick of it, it was toward the culmination of Voldemort's plans that they had begun to be as ill-used as any other chaff beneath the Dark Lord's feet. There were even a few Death Eaters who testified—and some not under Veritaserum—that the Malfoys were failing rapidly in Voldemort's eyes and had little wish to help him in his cause. Not that I am defending Lucius Malfoy, but his son Draco did fine work in the Ministry, helping to find homes for Wizarding children orphaned in the war."

Harry gasped. He had never actually known what Draco did for a living. He thought it was just some name-only position. He felt horrible that he hadn't known.

"I see your skepticism, boy," she said. "Well let me tell you. Today, he still finds homes for orphaned Wizarding children. If he cannot place them in Wizarding homes, he does extended research and places them with Muggles who have distant relations with wizards. He carefully schools these Muggles to be able to be parents to these children, breaching long-standing laws against revealing the Wizarding world to Muggles. And he does this work in complete secrecy. If he were to be caught doing this, he would be in breach of one of our harshest laws and sent to Azkaban. As much as you dislike Mr. Malfoy for your perceived notions of his status as 'Home-wrecker', can you honestly say you would wish for his work to cease and for him to be sent to prison?"

Harry held his breath. Of course, James could simply answer the question in the way he knew the woman wanted to hear, but he heard the hesitation and quivering in his son's voice, and he felt the answer was genuine.

"No, ma'am."

"Indeed. I believe I was telling you about my sister. As I said, she was there on that day your father defeated Voldemort. She said when Voldemort fell and no longer moved, she was one of the many who cheered and lifted your father up. She said it was the single most important moment of her life and she would never forget it. On that day, she changed entirely what she intended to do with her life. Instead of becoming a cosmetic Transfigurations specialist, she devoted her life to St. Mungo's in their Incurables department. Because of your father, countless witches, wizards, and Muggles have been saved because she and others like her were inspired to do good in the world." She paused and took a breath. "May I ask you something else?"

Harry heard the chairs shift.

"Has your father ever told you about the Muggle family who raised him? What his life was like prior to his entering Hogwarts?"

"No," came the feeble reply.

"I thought not. Well I shall tell you. He was treated like a house-elf. He was belittled, forced into labour, and shoved under the stairs instead of having a proper room to sleep in. Your father was given no love, no comfort, no friendship—none of the basic human needs."

Harry could hear James crying now. Harry wiped the wet from his own face.

"And did your father—after being treated thusly—become a dark wizard? Answer me, boy."

"N-no."

"No, he did not. True, his adventures in Hogwarts were sometimes less than stellar, but his intentions were always to the betterment of others. If he plotted, he plotted to stop another student from doing harm to another. If he stole into the restricted section of the library, it was to learn how to defeat Voldemort the many times he encountered him. It was not to find a dastardly curse and harm another person for selfish reasons!

"Mr. Potter, do you think for one moment I will allow you to throw away any scrap of happiness for your father? Do you think the Wizarding world does not owe him anything he desires? And do you know what it is he desires? Your happiness. Once again, Harry Potter is sacrificing himself for the happiness of others. Do you know what he has told the board this morning? He told us that he is leaving Mr. Malfoy to move back in with your mother. He told us that he cannot live that life anymore knowing how much unhappiness it has brought to you and your family. Tell me, Mr. Potter. Do you think after all Harry Potter has done for the world that this is right?"

James was crying openly now, sobbing words Harry couldn't understand. He cried for a while until Midgen intervened.

"There, there, James," she said, quieter. "I know you didn't realize all that. I just knew you didn't. And I knew that if it was laid plainly before you that you were a reasonable boy and that you did indeed take after your father. You wouldn't want him to be unhappy because of your actions anymore than he wished to make you unhappy because of his. What do you suppose is the solution to this?"

James sobbed out something and the witch concurred. "Yes. I think that is a good idea. Shall I call him in?"

The door suddenly swung open, and Harry saw James through the doorway, his face in his hands, still sobbing. Harry's heart cried out to help him, but Cassandra Midgen blocked the doorway. "Mr. Potter, I think your son is ready to speak to you now. When you are finished, please return to Headmistress McGonagall's office for our decision."

She passed through the archway and walked quickly down the stone corridor back the way they had come. Harry approached the doorway and walked into the room. James was wiping his face and looking up at his father. He wore the most sorrowful expression Harry had ever seen. Suddenly, he launched from his chair and wrapped himself around Harry. He was sobbing harder, his face buried in Harry's robes. Harry embraced him, rocking him. He laid his cheek on James' head and cried along with him.

"I'm sorry, Dad. I'm really sorry. I didn't know. I didn't know! I'll never do it again. You don't have to do anything for me. I just want you to be happy. Firecall Mr. Malfoy and I'll apologize to him, too."

Harry was speechless. He held his son tightly and James seemed to want to let it all out. "I wanted to hurt him, Dad. I did. But I don't anymore. I want you to be happy, Dad. I want him in your life. Don't leave him for me. I know it won't do any good. You and Mum aren't going to work anymore. I know all that. I do."

James pulled away and looked up at his father. Harry was incapable of speech and looked down at his son, trying to convey with the love in his eyes how much he appreciated what his son was saying.

James wiped fitfully at his face and took a deep breath. "I mean it, Dad. Even if they expel me, I want you to stay with Mr. Malfoy. I'll even take Lily to tea at your London house myself. Honest. I love you, Dad. You're a great man."

Harry rolled his moist eyes. "That's...quite a speech. I'm not raising your allowance for it, just so you know."

James laughed. Relieved, he laughed some more, and hugged his father again.

After a few more moments, Harry Scourgified their robes and their faces. "Do you think we look presentable again?" asked Harry.

“Yeah. But...Dad. Do you think I’ll be expelled?”

“I don’t know, son.”

“If I am, will you and Mr. Malfoy tutor me?”

Harry never felt prouder of his son than he did right now. He kissed his forehead and took a deep breath, trying to keep from crying all over again. “Let’s go.”

Back they went to McGonagall’s office, riding the Griffin stair to their fate. So much had transpired in that office, thought Harry. Some of the most important decisions of his life were made there. He hoped this one would turn out all right.

When they entered, Harry glanced at Cassandra Midgen, but her stern face made no indication what they had decided.

“Mr. James Potter,” she said. “Have you anything to say?”

James stepped forward. “Yes, ma’am. I want to say that what I was doing was completely wrong and mean-spirited. It was not worthy of a Gryffindor, a Hogwarts student...or a Potter.” He looked at Harry sorrowfully. “If you wish to expel me I will entirely understand and hold no ill will for any of you. You will only be doing your jobs. Anyone who tries to do what I did doesn’t belong here. I am truly sorry.” He swallowed and turned toward McGonagall. “Professor, I am deeply sorry for all this trouble. Even if I’m expelled I am prepared to do whatever detention you ask of me. Really.” He sniffed, almost crying again. “I just want my father to be proud of me again.”

Harry put his hand on James’ shoulder and squeezed. He was never prouder.

Midgen seemed to be touching her own eyes before she whipped her head up. “Well now. Thank you, Mr. Potter. I believe the board has made its decision.” She took up a parchment one of the others handed to her. She read: “It is the decision of the board to put James Potter on two weeks probation. If in that time he has adequately proven his worthiness to remain, the board shall advise that he continue his schooling at Hogwarts. Headmistress McGonagall shall supervise and make her recommendation.’ We are adjourned.”

James looked up at Harry. "What does it mean?"

Harry was grinning from ear to ear. "It means your staying. You'll be in detention for the rest of your life, but you're staying."

He sighed deeply and smiled back.

The chairs and tables winked out of existence and the board filed out. Midgen remained and shook James' hand. "A very fine speech, Mr. Potter. And may I say, those sentiments were surely worthy of a Potter."

"Thank you, ma'am. I really meant them."

"I know you did." She looked up at Harry. "You have a very fine boy here, Mr. Potter. I am very pleased to have met both of you."

Harry shook her hand and watched as she left with the others.

McGonagall made a relieved sigh. "Well now! That's one thing taken care of. I need not tell you, young man, that much detention awaits you."

"I look forward to it," said James, smiling.

"Do you have anything to say to your father before he leaves?"

"We've already spoken, Minerva," said Harry.

"Then if I need to owl you, I expect I will call for you at the London house, will I not?"



Harry looked at James who nodded solemnly. “Yes,” he said, a tear leaking from his eye again. “I expect you can. Oh!” Harry remembered the note he left for Draco. “I’d better get home fast and console someone.”

He left by Floo and when he arrived in the sitting room at the London house, it looked as if a cyclone had passed through. Books were torn apart, the walls were scarred with hexes, vases were shattered. Harry's Auror instinct fell into place and he whipped out his wand. “Draco!”

Rushing through the house, Harry stopped dead when he spotted Draco with a plate over his head ready to smash it to the ground. His eyes were red and there were tear tracks down his face. He stared at Harry, his expression wounded and heartrending.

“Oh, Draco. My love. I’m back. And I’ll never leave again.” Draco dropped the plate and fell into Harry’s arms.

“Don’t ever, ever—!”

“No, I won’t.”

“You promised!”

“I know. But they needed me. My children. They love me.”

“But I love you, too. And I need you!”

“I know. It’s all right now. It’s all right. Everything is going to be all right.”

Epilogue—Nine Years Later

Harry and Draco held hands as they stood on Platform 9 ¾, waiting for the Hogwarts Express to bring home Lily Potter for good. She had finished her Hogwarts schooling with honours and they couldn’t be prouder.

“There’s the old married couple!” shouted Teddy Lupin with his wife Victoire. Their twins Sirius and Remus scampered after them.

Harry waved and smiled, thumbing the ring on his left hand. He and Draco had married a year after their divorces. Though Ginny hadn’t come to the wedding, James had stood up for Harry and Scorpius for Draco.

There was a cheer at the end of the platform and Harry saw the gleam of the engine chugging toward them. It let out a whistle, a sound that meant home and adventure and love to Harry. He knew he’d miss it. Until grandchildren started to arrive, that is.

Ron and Hermione trotted up just in time. “Hoo!” puffed Ron. “Thought we weren’t going to make it. Couldn’t pull Hermione away from the wedding preparations.”

“Well, Ronald, there’s a lot to do.”

“She’s making it fancier than her own wedding!” said Ron, smiling from ear to ear.

Harry grinned. “How is Rose holding up?”

Ron laughed. “Better than her mother. How is the groom’s father?”

Draco sneered. “As well as can be expected, Weasley.”

“Oh, come on, old Ferret. We’re going to be in-laws.” And he grabbed Draco around the shoulders. Draco squirmed, trying to get away but Ron had a tight grip. “Two Pureblooded families joining together!”

Draco finally got loose. “Oh yes. Oh happy day.”

Harry looked up and down the platform as parents pushed trollies with bright balloons attached to them. “Anyone seen Ginny?”

"Here I am!" she called. Harry turned. Ginny was arm in arm with her husband of three years.

"Hey Ginny," he said, leaning over to kiss her cheek. He put out his hand to her husband. "Hi, Neville."

Neville grinned and shook his hand. "Hey, Harry. Draco."

"Longbottom," said Draco. "Long time no see. Just the way I like it."

Neville laughed. "He never changes, does he?"

"I wished you had been teaching the last few years of Lily and Hugo's schooling," said Harry, ignoring his husband.

"I know. But they've got a thing against married teachers. And it's not really convenient, is it, Ginny?"

"Not really. Not conducive for romance when you were there and I was here—"

"Merlin's bollocks, Ginerva," winced Draco. "Spare us. The last thing I want to think about is you and Longbottom."

Ginny grinned, winking at Harry.

Students were piling out of the train now and Harry was straining to see his daughter and nephew. Suddenly they came running out together, laughing their heads off.

"What?" said Harry.

The cousins laughed together, shaking their heads. A seventeen-year-old's joke, not be shared with stuffy old adults. It made Harry feel a bit old. Was he ever seventeen? Oh yeah. But there was little to laugh over that year.

The families managed to gather the luggage and owl cages and tried to sort out the stories from Hogwarts newest alumnus as they giggled madly, voices overlapping. They'd meet up later with Lily's brothers, James and Albus, at the party at Godric's Hollow.

Harry and Draco fell behind watching their growing family moving ahead of them along King's Cross station. "I'm so proud of them. Proud of them all," said Harry.

Draco took Harry's hand and held it as they walked. "Me, too. They all take after you, thank goodness."

"Well Scorpius takes after you, and I consider that a fine compliment." Draco turned to Harry and smiled at him. "I feel as if Scorp is my son, too. Is it too sappy my being excited by this wedding?"

Draco kissed him, something he seldom did in public. Harry drew back surprised. "It's not too sappy. You're adorable, you know that?"

Harry grinned but it changed to a frown as he gazed at Draco's head. "You know, Draco, in this light, it looks as if your hair is thinning—"

Draco slapped his shoulder and scowled. "Bite your tongue. My hair is just as luxurious as it's always been." And he shook his head out as if to prove it.

Harry chuckled. "I was only joking. I love to tease you, you know."

"I know. It's annoying."

"I love you. After the party and all, I plan on giving you my very own special celebration."

"Oh?" Draco's lips twitched. "And just what did you have in mind?"

Harry leaned in and whispered to Draco's ear. "I plan on stripping you naked, tying you spread-eagle to the bed, licking every square inch of you, and then fucking you into next Tuesday. Sound okay?"

Draco squeezed Harry's hand and drew in a shaky breath. "I'm going to kill you for giving me an erection during this damned party."

Harry laughed. He squeezed Draco's hand back. Everything and everyone was in their place, it seemed. Five years ago, Harry was taken aback when Neville asked all in a rush if he had Harry's permission to date Ginny. Harry had been surprised as a surge of jealousy arose in him about it, but it was easily set aside. Harry could see that Neville had always had a thing for Ginny and Ginny was just beginning to see that she was getting a thing for Neville. And though the kids loved Professor Longbottom it was a different thing indeed to have their favorite professor dating their mum. But those kids had already gone through much, and they could see how happy their mother was. And if there was anything the Potter kids were good at promoting, it was their parent's happiness. James had been the first one to step in and cheer for it.

Things were definitely looking up. They were looking forward to a wedding that would tie the Potters, Weasleys, and Malfoys even closer, Ginny and Neville were entirely happy together, and Harry and Draco were more in love than ever before. All was definitely well.

The End

A/N: Now, isn't that a better epilogue? I tried to portray what would really happen for a man coming out late in life with a wife and children. It's definitely full of heartache and tears but with time, all wounds are healed. I also worked hard to keep the Harry Potter part of it in canon as much as possible. We can't have him living happily ever after with Ginny, now can we? We know he belongs with Draco. J

This is a revised version of King's Cross previously posted. Since J K Rowling made her surprising announcement about Dumbledore, I thought it meted to change the scene in McGonagall's office. And she also gave us new information. Formerly, she said that Snape's portrait would not be in the headmaster's office, but then she said in this latest appearance that he was, due to Harry's insistence. Also, she told us that Neville married Hannah Abbott. Absurd. There was never any indication of that in the book. And I think Ginny would have seen the hero in him, the hero she was always attracted to, and

they would have gotten together. That is my concession to canon and I guess I'm permitted this extra bit because, after all, Harry and Draco are together here, so...

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