



The Wand Chooses the Wizard

By Mystwriter

Summary: A month after Voldemort's defeat, Harry returns Draco's wand. But now Draco must make a deal with the devil to keep his family safe. But is it worth the price?

Warnings: Deathly Hallows compliant—except for that poo-poo epilogue. Just forget that. NC-17 for the usual boy frolicking. Straight!Draco (don't panic).

Chapter One—Lamb to the Slaughter

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Chapter One—Lamb to the Slaughter

Harry Potter lay on his bed at Grimmauld Place, twirling the hawthorn wand in his hand. It had been a month since Voldemort's death, and what a month it'd been!

The first several weeks since it happened, he had stayed at Hogwarts to try to set things right and also to shield himself from the Wizarding world. McGonagall had known they wouldn't leave him alone and offered him sanctuary there. He had been grateful. So much had happened. So much. So many deaths. And after Fred died, he and Ginny seemed to evaporate. She threw herself into helping the healers and was blind to all else. Actually, for Harry, it had been somewhat of a relief. He hadn't known how to tell her it was over between them. Really over. The kiss at Bill and Fleur's wedding had been nice, but it only served to convince Harry that he wasn't cut out for love.

Well, that kind of love anyway.

The Malfoys, too, were offered sanctuary by McGonagall. Word spread that the Manor had been Voldemort's lair and the Wizarding world decided to take their revenge on the Malfoy ancestral home. Part of it was burned before the house-elves could put up the wards. McGonagall, in a gracious move, thought it best they stay on a bit and help with the repairs. They had silently agreed with her. The three of them looked disheveled and decidedly chastened, always staying in a close huddle, working quietly together.

Whenever Harry was near, they stiffened in terror, Draco especially, as if Harry was going to finish them once and for all. As if he would.

But it was at these times that Harry had taken note of Malfoy. When he had started following him around in his sixth year, Harry had noticed him quite a bit; his every nuanced gesture, his expressions. He just hadn't known, he hadn't realized what it had meant.

It was no stretch to testify on the Malfoys' behalf to the Wizengamot. The Malfoys had been shocked. But Harry was steadfast in their defense, which also seemed to baffle his friends. But didn't everyone have enough of Voldemort and bad feelings? Wasn't it time to move on?

Was that really the reason, he asked himself later?

But now, lying on his bed, he had come to the awful conclusion that he might be one of those blokes who preferred boys. Not that it was awful per se. Just awful for him. Because he knew the moment the papers found out, they'd never leave him alone. Not that they were leaving him alone now. He couldn't seem to take a piss without it being front page news. He had blockaded himself at Grimmauld Place, only allowing his closest friends in.

He looked at the wand again, Draco's wand. It had managed a pretty incredible feat; forcing Voldemort to end his own life. It had allowed him the chance to fix his own wand with the Elder wand. And he liked his own wand. The magic in it fit him better. "The wand chooses the wizard," Ollivander had told him all those years ago. And it was true. His wand had chosen him. And this wand had chosen Draco.

He ran his hands over the smooth wood. Draco had done some dastardly things with this wand over the years. But he knew from his spying on the Malfoys through Voldemort's eyes that Draco had never done anything really heinous with it. Not of his own choosing, anyway. He had performed the Cruciatus with it, but Voldemort had forced him. Harry had seen. He had also seen Draco lower this wand when confronted with killing Dumbledore, and he hadn't gone through with it. Couldn't. That went a long way in Harry's eyes.

Draco hadn't given him away to the Death Eaters, either. And Draco had warned him in the Room of Requirement. He could have just Stupefied him. But he hadn't. He prevented Crabbe from outright killing him. There was something inherently good in Draco. He knew there must be. He just wished the prat had manifested it sooner. They could have been friends. They could have been...

Harry shook his head. Just because Harry suddenly liked boys didn't mean Draco was that way. After all, he and Pansy were all over each other at school. The day on the train when Draco stepped on Harry's face, Draco had had his head in her lap, for Merlin's sake.

Still. It was nice to dream.

He stroked Draco's wand again, and then sat up in embarrassment. He simply could not get Freudian with the man's wand! What he had to do was give it back to him. It was a good excuse to see him again, since he and his family had returned to Malfoy Manor. He'd just give it back to him. And maybe talk to him a bit. He probably wasn't gay, but at least he could see him again before he gave up and tried to decide what to do with his life. It was a plan. Of sorts. Not a good one, but a plan.

"Oh hell!" He dropped his head in his hands. He was bloody lonely, and he hoped that maybe if Draco was gay and interested they could go out or something. Especially the "or something" since besides being lonely he was awfully horny. Ron and Hermione had finally hooked up and everyone else seemed to be doing it, too. Except for Harry. Hero of the Wizarding World. The Boy Who Lived Again and Again.

Hermione had been right, though. He was obsessed with Draco Malfoy.

* * *

Harry Apparated outside Malfoy Manor. He could see the curse damage that had been done to the building and there had been a day when Harry would have been the first in line to inflict it, but that had been a long time ago.

He walked up the gravel walk right up to the large front door. He looked around and found a bell chain and pulled on it. Though he'd seen the interior through Voldemort's eyes, he'd never seen the outside before.

A house-elf opened the door and its large, round eyes grew even larger and rounder on recognizing Harry. "Y-you is Harry Potter!" it squeaked.

“Um...yeah. Can I—” But as soon as he opened his mouth, the house-elf Disapparated. Harry stood in the doorway feeling like a fool. “Er...h-hello?” He took a step into the large, empty foyer and raised his eyes to all the marble and carved stone. “H-hello?”

Suddenly, there was a loud bang and all three Malfoys Apparated before him. They looked as terrified as the house-elf. He glanced at Draco, who seemed the most terrified. Harry didn't like this look on him at all.

Lucius Malfoy stepped away from the tightly knit pack his wife and son made. “M-Mr. Potter. What an unmitigated pleasure.” His nervous manner seemed to belie his words. “Please come in. What may we do for you?”

Lucius led him into a large sitting room that looked more like a library, though many of the bookshelves were stripped of books. Probably all dark magic, Harry imagined. Narcissa and Draco scurried after them, never far from Lucius. The three sat gingerly together on their sofa.

Harry noted that Lucius still had that haggard look about him as if he had just come in from a gale. Life as the Malfoys had certainly not returned to normal.

“Tea?” Lucius inquired. “Something more bracing? A brandy, perhaps?”

“Uh...no thank you.”

“Then to what do we owe the pleasure of your company? Not that you need an excuse—” He looked worriedly back at his family, as if the merest faux pas would destroy them. Harry hated that they were so scared.

“Actually, I came to speak to Draco. If that's okay.”

Silence. Lucius slowly looked at his son. His expression seemed to convey that this might be the last time he saw him in one piece. “I see,” he said, resigned. He took his wife's arm and forcefully pulled her away from the young Slytherin. Draco looked back at his retreating parents imploringly.

“Then we shall leave you two alone,” said Malfoy. He made a curt bow with his head, and with Narcissa quietly weeping, left the room and closed the door after them.

Draco wouldn't look up. He sank to the sofa and clutched his hands until the already pale fingers were white. He was trembling.

Harry had no idea he would cause such a panic. He crossed briskly to the fireplace to put some distance between them and sighed. “Jeez, I'm not here to hurt you!”

Draco slowly raised his head. “Y-you're not?”

“Bloody hell, Malfoy! Do you really think I'm here to exact some sort of revenge?”

“Well...yes. Not that you wouldn't have every right to—”

Where was that old Malfoy spark? Even a bit of hatred would be better than this fear. Harry realized Draco looked at him as he used to look at Voldemort. “Malfoy, I'm not Voldemort.”

Draco cringed at the name. Harry rushed to sit beside him. Draco jerked back.

“Draco,” he said softly, using his given name for the first time. “I'm not here to hurt you. I swear. I only came to return this.” He reached into his Muggle jacket and pulled out Draco's wand.

Draco, though, must have only seen Harry pull a wand and he leapt from the divan and nearly fled up the wall. He threw himself against the bookcase, paralyzed.

Harry rose slowly, afraid to scare him more. “Draco...i-it's your wand. I'm giving it back.”

Draco stared uncomprehendingly at Harry. His eyes flicked from Harry's face to the proffered wand then back again. Finally, he said hoarsely, “Y-your giving it back? My w-wand?”

“Yeah.” Harry urged it on him but Malfoy wouldn’t move.

Draco suddenly looked appalled. “But...why?”

“Because it’s yours.”

“But...you killed the Dark Lord with it.”

“Well, technically, I didn’t. I never actually used an Unforgivable. He did it to himself, truth be told.”

Draco shook his head. “But you still...I mean you—you—”

“Draco, take it. It’s yours. I don’t need another wand.”

“I thought yours was broken.”

“I fixed it with...another wand. So it’s all right now. I much prefer my own. But er...thanks for letting me use it.”

They both well knew that Harry had forcefully taken it from him.

“Why are you really doing this?”

Damned Slytherin. “Because you need a wand and this one is yours. Can’t you get that through your head?” Harry urged it on him again and this time, Draco relaxed a bit from the book shelves, lowering his arms to his sides. He stared good and long at the wand in Harry’s hand and took a step closer. He reached out with trembling fingers and closed them over the stick of wood. Grasping it, he took possession and just stared at it.

“You didn’t have to return it,” he whispered. When he looked up, his eyes glittered. “Thank you.”

Harry shrugged. "S'okay." He looked around the room to hide his embarrassment. Now that the deed was done he had little excuse to hang around. He didn't really know what to say to Draco and Draco didn't look much like he was up for conversation.

Draco didn't put the wand away. He seemed reluctant to take it out of his hand. Harry racked his brain to come up with some sort of exchange. "Erm...so, do you plan on returning to Hogwarts to finish up your seventh year?"

Draco looked at him appalled. "Are you kidding?"

Harry wasn't. But he suddenly felt stupid for asking. "Why? What's wrong with that?"

Draco laughed mirthlessly. "Do you have any idea what would happen to me there? I wouldn't survive the first night."

"Oh." Harry had forgotten. Just because he was willing to let bygones be bygones didn't mean anyone else was. "Well, I get to skip it. Seems they've just given me my N.E.W.T.s" He waited for Draco to say something snarky and was a bit disappointed when he didn't. "I guess I'll go into Auror training. Seems they'll take me."

"That's a surprise," came the muttered reply. Harry smiled. That was better.

"Well, yeah. I wasn't that great in school so it's kind of a relief. Besides, I learned a lot of practical things out in the world."

"And aren't we all glad you did."

Harry searched Malfoy's face and decided that his comment was genuine. He smiled. "I never thanked you for not letting on that it was me. You know. When we were captured."

Draco squirmed. "I couldn't tell if it was you. Your face was all puffy."

Harry smiled broader. "Yeah. Right."

Draco licked his lips nervously. "Well I...I never thanked you...for...you know...."

Harry remembered the feel of Draco's arms around him when they flew to safety on Harry's broomstick. There was many a night that Harry wanked to that feeling. "Yeah. No problem."

"I don't actually know why...you...did it."

It had been reflex. Someone—even a villain stuck in a burning room—was worth saving. Anyone would have done it.

"It was the right thing to do. I couldn't very well let you burn to death—"

"Yes you COULD! ANYONE ELSE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD!"

Harry drew back. Draco had finally come to life. His face was red and his arms flailed. He moved away from the book case and paced around the room.

"It's insane!" he went on. "I was there to capture you, to take you to the Dark Lord!"

"You wouldn't have, though."

This seemed to infuriate Draco. "How do you know that! I was scared out of my wits. I would have done anything he told me to!"

"But you didn't. You didn't kill Dumbledore. I saw that. I saw lots of things through Voldemort's eyes while he was at the manor. I saw you."

Draco froze. He stared at Harry. "You saw—"

Suddenly, Harry was uncomfortable under that gaze again. "Yeah. I saw your whole family. Why do you think I testified for all of you?"

"And that's another thing!" Draco was on the move again, pacing, his wand clutched tightly in his hand. "Why do you have to be so damned good about everything! It's not right. It's not—not—oh bugger!" Draco stared down at the carpet.

"Look, Malfoy. I'd really like it if we could be friends from now on. Get past this. What do you think?"

Draco looked as if he was going to explode. Maybe it was too much all at once. Harry backed toward the door.

"Are you toying with me? Because if you are I don't want to play. I really don't. It's all I can do to get up every morning and face the day."

That cut right to Harry's heart. He stepped toward Draco again, longing to take the man in his arms. "I'm not toying with you. I just think we should have done this all along."

"Well I offered you my damned hand seven years ago!"

Harry chuckled softly. "Yeah. After you got done insulting the only friends I ever had. What would you have done?"

Draco considered. His face relaxed. "I guess I would have snubbed you, too."

"But we don't have to do that anymore."

"We don't have anything in common."

“We might find something. There’s always Quidditch.”

That finally brought a faint smile to Draco’s lips. “Yeah. I suppose.”

Harry’s chest was filling with excitement. “Do you want to get a pint sometime? Leaky Cauldron or something?”

Draco stared at him with disbelief. He shook his head. “I don’t...it’s not a good idea. Can’t you just...leave us alone?”

Harry’s spirits fell. “If you change your mind...”

Draco shook his head again.

Harry left the manor somewhat deflated. He thought he was making progress but it all seemed to fall apart again. But he didn’t want to give up. He didn’t really have any other plans. He was terribly lonely, missing Hedwig and the others who had died. But if he were to convince Draco, he had to owl him.

So that meant that first thing tomorrow, he had to get himself a new owl.

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Draco had exactly one minute to himself after Potter left to contemplate his visit before his parents showed up again.

What was that about? He looked down at the stick of hawthorn in his hand. Potter seemed awfully anxious to be his mate. He felt the wand in his hand and sighed. It was good to have it back. It did belong to him. It had been...nice...of Potter and the noble thing, of course, for the man to give it back. And it felt just a little like Potter’s magic. Of course a bit of it would have been imprinted on the wand since Potter had used it for some pretty big things. Potter’s magic. He shivered It was still a bit terrifying.

A scrambling at the door and he turned to catch his parents hurrying in. "Draco!" cried his mother. "Are you all right?" She dragged him into an embrace and Lucius stood over them.

"Son," he said in a heartrending voice. "Is Potter...is he...did he...?"

He couldn't imagine what his father might have thought, but in answer he raised his wand. "No. He just returned my wand to me. See?"

Lucius and Narcissa dropped their jaws and stared. "And...that was all?" said his father.

"Yeah. Except...that he says he wants to be my...friend, forgetting the past. It was pretty queer, if you ask me."

Lucius paused and then the most radiant smile he had seen his father wear in years bloomed on his face. "Draco. You might very well be the salvation of this family."

Draco frowned. "He just wants to be 'friends', Father," he said softly. "Whatever that means."

"But don't you see," said Lucius. "Harry Potter is obviously interested in you in more than a platonic sense. You should encourage it."

Draco stared. "What are you talking about?"

Lucius straightened his robe. His gaze rose above Draco's head and he realized his father was no longer talking to him. "Certainly as a Pureblood I was concerned for the continuation of the line. But if you should take up with Potter...well. Things will be different but far better than we could have anticipated."

"What?"

Lucius snapped back to the present and narrowed his eyes at Draco. "Listen, boy. Harry Potter wants you. Give yourself to him. For the sake of the family."

“WHAT???”

“Do stop saying that word,” said Narcissa, looking nervous. She was twitchy and didn’t look directly at Draco. Pink bloomed on her cheeks.

But Draco's jaw dropped. His mother and father had suddenly become strangers to him. “Are you saying...do you mean to say that you think Harry Potter is a poufter?” They nodded solemnly. “And you want me to—?” They nodded again. “But I’m not gay!”

“That doesn’t matter,” said Lucius with a wave of his hand, as if deciding against tea, and to go with coffee instead. “Ingratiate yourself. Become his friend. And—if necessary—more than that.”

“Do you know what you’re saying? You want me to whore myself to Harry Potter for the sake of the Malfoy name? Your straight son?”

Lucius bore down on him. His hair—already in disarray—flew out from his paler than usual face. His eyes had become wilder even than when he first was freed from Azkaban. “That’s exactly what I’m saying,” he said, voice cold as ice. “Do you have any idea, any idea at all, how we hang from a thread? A thread! The Ministry is watching our every move. They’re just waiting for us to slip up and when we do the manor and all our fortunes will be seized forever. Your mother and I will be tossed into Azkaban and you, dear Draco, will be out on the streets. Is that what you want?”

“No,” he said in a small voice.

“Then you had best open your mind a bit...and anything else necessary to make Harry Potter happy. His happiness is all that is standing in the way of the Malfoys complete destruction. Do you understand?”

Horror filled his veins with an icy chill. Trembling, Draco slowly nodded. Draco had become the only hope of his family. And that meant becoming the sacrificial ram to Harry Potter’s lust.

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Harry got himself to Diagon Alley the next morning and though it hurt his heart to do it, he entered Eeylops Owl Emporium. It was dim inside as one might expect from nocturnal birds. The air was thick and close with floating, downy feathers and the smell of sawdust. He looked around at the many cages

on shelves or hanging from the rafters, and the sounds of the snuffling of sleepy birds, but when he turned, he immediately came face to face with a snowy owl in a silver cage.

Harry froze on the spot. He stared at the owl and his eyes and throat began to burn. He hadn't even been able to bury Hedwig properly because there had been no body to recover. Harry himself had seen to that on that horrible, mad ride on the sidecar. Poor Hedwig. He knew she would have understood, though. Harry had grown up with her. He had assumed she'd be with him a long time. But then again, he had assumed that about a lot of dear friends who were no longer with him.

Harry felt a presence beside him and he turned to see the friendly face of Mr. Eeylop. "Mr. Potter," he said quietly. He glanced at the owl cage and smiled sadly. "May I help you, son?"

Harry turned to him. He was one of the few who could really understand how he felt. And Mr. Eeylop had called him "son", not "sir" like he was someone particularly important. "I...I guess I am in need of a...a new owl."

"Yes, of course." He put his hand on Harry's shoulder and steered him away from the snowy owl. The man knew that Harry couldn't look at it anymore, certainly couldn't buy another white owl.

"Mr. Potter, I have over here an owl who has been itching for an owner. He's a beautiful tawny owl. Would you like to meet him?"

Harry smiled. "Meet" him? It was as if Eeylop was setting him up on a date. But he did suppose getting a new familiar was a bit like a relationship.

Harry saw the stocky little owl who immediately turned his round head toward Harry and gave out a loud hoot.

Eeylop smiled proudly, as if he was introducing one of his children. "Harry Potter, meet Spike."

Harry grinned. "Spike?"

But the owl scooted to the bars of the cage, looking Harry over, and even reached his beak out. Harry lifted a knuckle and the bird nibbled it gently, hooting again, only softer this time. Harry instantly liked this owl. "Hey, there, Spike. Fancy going home with me?"

The owl fluttered and puffed out its chest, clicking its beak.

"I take that as a 'yes'," said Harry. He smiled at Mr. Eeylop. "I guess we're meant for each other."

"I thought so!" He prepared a package of owl treats "on the house" and took Harry's Galleons with a deep bow. "Thank you for coming in, Mr. Potter."

"Thank you, Mr. Eeylop. You helped make the experience...much better than I anticipated."

Harry left Diagon Alley and Flooed to Grimmauld Place. Once inside he set the cage by a window and opened it. The owl immediately hopped out and perched on top of the brass enclosure. "So Spike," said Harry sitting at his writing desk. "How would you like taking your first message for me?"

* * *

Dear Malfoy,

I'm really sorry for upsetting your family like that the other day. You must know I didn't mean anything by it. Crikey, I didn't expect everyone to take it like that!

So except for some Auror books, things are pretty boring here for me. I'm just trying to stay out of everyone's way, you know. Keep a low profile. But I wondered if you'd reconsidered getting that pint. If the Leaky Cauldron isn't a good idea, why not some Muggle pub? I can give you directions if you like.

Come on, Malfoy. You must be kind of stir-crazy at the manor, too.

Sincerely,

Harry Potter

Harry rolled up the parchment and attached it to the patient owl's leg. "Okay, Spike. It's all yours."

The owl tossed its head with a haughty hoot, and launched out the window. Harry slouched and finally rested his head on his arms on the sill. He wondered how long it would take Malfoy to reply.

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Apparently, it would take till Doomsday. Draco didn't seem to have any intention of replying.

Harry petted Spike when he returned empty-handed. Absently, he stroked the downy head, staring at the blank parchment on his desk. Spike nudged his hand like a cat, and trilled. Harry smiled at him. It was nice to have a friend again. He knew no owl could ever really replace Hedwig, but Spike was finding his own way to be close to Harry. And one way was to send messages for one's master. Spike hopped down onto the desk and pecked at the parchment.

"I've only just sent it," said Harry. "Well...yesterday."

Spike cocked his head and blinked languidly, first one eye and then the other.

"You think I should write another?"

Spike hooted and rustled his feathers.

"Okay. If you say so." Harry picked up his quill, dipped it in the ink, and then paused. What was he going to say? He was crap at stuff like this. Sure, he could kill an evil wizard but trying to get another wizard to go out with him was another story. Especially if he didn't know if the other wizard was gay.

"Hey, Malfoy. Fancy a spot of sex?" Harry pretended to write. No, of course he couldn't write that. Merlin! What if it were intercepted? By The Prophet! He almost put the quill down but Spike pushed his hand with his head. "Steady on, Spike. I'll get to it. Pushy bird."

Harry settled in, dipped the quill again, and started to write.

Hey Malfoy,

Maybe you didn't get my last letter—Who am I kidding? Of course you got it. I guess you didn't know what to do about it. I mean it. I'm not out to hurt you or your family. This is a new day. A Voldemort-free world. I think it calls for acting in a different way than before. Of taking chances. What do you say? Can a Slytherin and a Gryffindor get along now?

Meet me at the Hogshead in Hogsmeade. Please?

Harry Potter

Was it a little too desperate? Harry couldn't tell. He decided to send it anyway. Spike was happy to take it. "Don't leave without an answer this time."

He watched the owl fly away and wondered what the reply would be.

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Harry must have fallen asleep. He lifted his head from the parchment-covered desk and looked around. Spike was near him and flapped his wings. Harry noticed a note on his leg. He snatched it off the owl and tossed him some treats.

When he unfurled it, he frowned.

Potter,

Don't you get it? Do yourself a favour and just leave me alone.

Malfoy

That seemed like a challenge to Harry. He put quill to parchment once more.

Malfoy,

You are such a git! Get over yourself and meet me at the Hogshead. I mean, what have you got to lose? I'll be there tomorrow at one o'clock. You'd better come. I might leave nasty notes about you on the walls of the loo.

Harry Potter

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Harry fidgeted. He toyed with his pint glass. He flicked the edge of his coaster with a fingernail. He tapped his leg against the table leg.

He snatched another peek at the clock on the wall just as it struck one. Malfoy wasn't going to come. Damn him and his cowardice! Couldn't he just buck it up and do something courageous for once in his life—

Harry sat up. The door creaked open and a pale, pointed face peeked in. Grey eyes spotted Harry and he slunk into the smoky room.

Harry realized he had had his mouth hanging open, and when Draco sat down opposite him, the Slytherin gave a familiar smirk. "Close your mouth, Potter, or the flies will get in." But after he was done speaking, his expression faded as if he suddenly feared retribution.

Harry quickly shifted forward and tried a smirk. "I'm just surprised you had the bollocks to be here."

Draco sneered but said nothing. He looked around. He almost leaned on the table but when he looked it over, he seemed to decide against it.

"I know it's not a place a Malfoy would usually go," said Harry.

Draco's face reflected that fearful expression again. "Well," he said cautiously, "we Malfoys are learning to reassess our values." He seemed to say it with some resentment. He clasped his fingers nervously and sat back in his chair.

Harry shrugged. He was just glad Draco had come. "Want a beer?"

"We're only seventeen, Potter."

"That's of age in the Wizarding world, isn't it?"

Malfoy only lifted a brow. Funny Harry explaining something about the Wizarding world to him.

Aberforth brought over another pint and set it down sloppily before Draco, sloshing some of its contents on the scratched table. Draco only looked at it but never attempted touching it.

Harry looked his fill at Malfoy. He still seemed a little peaked and his hair wasn't as glossy as it usually was, but he was still Malfoy, still Draco. Harry wondered if he had built up fantasy expectations about him, imagining him more handsome than he was, but the reality met and exceeded his fantasies. He guessed it was a given, then, that he was gay. Malfoy looked good enough to eat. Well, to snog anyway, and his tightening trousers attested to that.

"So...um...I've been accepted into the Auror program."

"Yes, you told me last time."

"Oh." Harry tapped his glass. "So what are you doing these days?"

"Staying alive."

“Come on, Malfoy. You must be doing something. Don’t you want some sort of a career?”

“I don’t know. I never had to contemplate it before.”

“Why? Because you thought you and your family would rule the world with Voldemort?”

Draco shot up from his chair, a look of horror on his face.

Harry leapt up, afraid he would run away. “I’m sorry! That was rude of me. I—”

Draco panted, staring at the floor.

This was all wrong. Harry was messing it all up. He glanced back at their table and decided to abandon it. “Look, why don’t we take a walk instead. Get some air.”

Malfoy nodded. He followed Harry outside, and waited silently with him. Harry motioned to the high street and they began to walk.

Harry was nervous again. How do you tell a bloke you like him if you don’t know whether he’s gay or not? Especially Malfoy?

“Everything seems to be recovering,” said Harry absently, noticing the shops that had opened again since the Death Eaters took over Hogwarts.

“Yes,” said Draco quietly.

“Jeez, Malfoy. I’m not used to this meek Draco.”

“What do you want me to say?” he retorted angrily. “Call you Scarhead again?”

“Might be better than this mouse you’ve become.”

“I’m no bloody mouse, Potter! I’m just trying to get used to things again, all right! Does that please your high and mightiness?”

Harry smiled. “Yeah, actually. It does.”

* * *

Draco stared at the man beside him. What the hell was wrong with Potter anyway? Why was he playing this cat and mouse game. Why didn’t he just get to the point?

But then, listening to Potter prattle on about this and that, Draco was getting the feeling that Harry didn’t know what he was doing. If he were trying to seduce Draco, he wasn’t going about it very skillfully.

As much as Draco hated the idea, he was going to have to move things along himself. He swallowed, trying to buck up his courage.

“Say, Potter,” he interrupted. Harry turned to him, eyes alight with attention. Merlin, the man was so obvious! He guessed his father was right. “Want to get off the high street? Go somewhere...you know. More secluded? Where we can talk undisturbed?”

Harry was suddenly breathing more rapidly. Got it in one, Draco, he told himself. On the one hand, he was proud of himself, but on the other, the nervousness returned. What Draco had planned would probably get him thoroughly snogged. By a boy. By Potter.

He veered off the street and led Potter to a path in the outlying woods. Dappled by the forest, it was a pleasantly cool, dirt path, shouldered by ferns and shrubs. There was a bench hewn from an oak stump sitting in the path not far ahead. Perfect! Secluded and—Draco supposed—romantic.

“How about here?” he asked. He couldn’t believe how remarkably calm his voice was.

Harry sat gingerly on the bench and Draco sat beside him, not too close. With hands on his knees to keep them from trembling, Draco surveyed their surroundings. "I always liked Hogsmeade. I don't suppose I'll ever be welcomed to the Three Broomsticks again, though."

"Madam Rosmerta agreed not to press charges. But no. I don't think so."

"And why did she agree to that?"

"Oh. Well. Because...because...you know—"

"You talked her out of it?"

Harry blushed. It still pleased Draco to make the man uncomfortable.

"I guess I did."

Draco scooted closer. In for a Knut... "And why would you do that?"

"Because it wasn't fair. You were coerced into doing that."

"Maybe I was and maybe I wasn't. You never asked."

"I assumed."

"That's always been your problem, Potter. You assume too much." Draco slid closer.

Harry's upper lip was speckled with sweat. "I was suspicious of you from the start. I assumed you were doing something evil and you were."

“Now that’s different,” said Draco in as smooth a voice as he could muster. He tried to imagine Harry as a girl as he slid even closer. “You’ve always known me. You’ve known me since we were kids.”

“Yeah,” said Harry breathlessly. “But I have a feeling I don’t really know you at all.”

“How true. And I have the feeling I don’t know the half of it about you.” He was as close as he could be without being in Harry’s lap. His face was only inches. If you want a kiss you had better come get it, git, because this is as far as I go!

But he needn’t have worried. Harry was looking intently at Draco before he slowly leaned forward, swept his eyes closed, and softly, gently, touched his lips to Draco’s.

Draco cringed back and shut his eyes, trying to forget the fact that he was kissing a boy. And it worked to a certain extent. Harry’s lips were warm and softer than he imagined they would be. But Draco could tell the man was a complete neophyte. His lips were barely opened, and his mouth only just in contact with Draco’s. But Draco wasn’t about to help him out. He dearly did not want to be doing this.

Harry drew back. His eyes opened lazily and he smiled. “So you are gay,” he said softly.

Draco nodded. What was one more lie to add to his many sins?

“I guess you’ve figured out that I...well. I had in mind being a bit more than friends.”

“Yeah. I gathered that.”

Harry took Draco’s hand. He held it gently, rubbing his thumb back and forth over Draco’s knuckles. “What do you think?”

Draco looked down at his hand in Harry’s and felt a little sick. He couldn’t believe, after all the manipulation, after all he had been forced to do by Voldemort, that his own parents would ask this of him. But even so, a small practical part of him saw the wisdom of it. The Malfoys were sinking fast. The only thing that would save them was a boost from the Boy Who Lived.

He swallowed his gorge, made himself smile, and said, “I think I’d like that...Harry.”

Chapter Two—Eyes Wide Shut

Of all the schemes Draco had ever planned, this was the screwiest. What had he been thinking? What had his parents been thinking? Didn't they care that he was doing this for them? They owed him big time!

They ended up snogging for the next fifteen interminable minutes. Harry was getting better at it, but each time Draco let his guard down, let himself think about what he was doing, he almost lost it.

To steady himself, he grabbed Harry's head and deepened the kiss. He felt Harry moan against his mouth, felt his tongue slither over his lips, and Draco did his level best to snog the breath out of the fucking Boy Who Lived.

It wasn't all bad, though. If he looked at it clinically, Harry was very gentle and respectful. He wasn't sneaking any gropes and he held Draco with the utmost care. He stroked his back and then cradled him in a very comfortable and warm embrace. But they were sitting. Draco knew that if he had to kiss face to face with Potter in this first encounter and feel his hard dick press against him, he would have run for the hills. Better that they were chastely on this little bench and free of those encumbrances.

The kissing went on for a while. Draco had time to think of other things as it continued. He wondered what the house-elves would prepare for dinner. He wondered if he could get a new robe soon, if they could get the money from their vaults. Maybe he would ask Harry to help with that when they were finished. Mustn't hurry that, though. It would be rude.

Harry changed positions and his kisses were getting more urgent and deeper. His chin was rough from an uneven shave. Didn't the man even know how to do a decent shaving charm? And his breath wasn't all that fragrant either. Hello? More magic would help.

He clutched at Draco now and Draco decided he should probably caress Harry. He started with his hair since his hands were already on his head. His hair was thick enough that it could have been a girl's and it actually felt softer than he imagined it might. His hand soon cupped the back of his head, and Harry moaned. He dropped his other hand to his chest and shoulder and stroked him through his clothing.

Potter had muscles! When did he get those? In fact, he was looking better these days, now that Draco bothered to notice. Not so scrawny. Filled out. Macho, even. Not that he cared about such things. But all that magical power rippling under those new muscles. It was a bit intoxicating. Harry was a powerful wizard. No doubt about that now. Even though it was rumored he killed Voldemort with an Expelliarmus! Of course he had told Draco as much. But was he just being modest or—No. He knew that much about Potter. It was genuine. Stupid, but genuine. What had Harry discovered that he knew he could kill Voldemort that way? What sorts of things had he learned on the road with Granger and Weasley?

Obviously, Harry would have been allowed any post he wanted, but he was best suited to being an Auror. And most of them weren't stupid. So that must mean that Potter wasn't all that lame.

Harry was still kissing him, tongues entwining. It wasn't really so bad once one got started, Draco mused. It was a bit of a turn on in some sense, truth be told. The kiss itself, he supposed. He hadn't been kissed lately. Not like this. Harry wasn't half bad at it. Not that Draco had that much experience. Girls liked him well enough. Pansy had accommodated, but he hadn't really thought of other girls much. Maybe that Ginny Weasley. If one could get past all those freckles. She was supposed to be one hot number. Everyone expected that she'd be the trophy wife of Harry Potter. But, apparently, she was the wrong gender. Now, Draco supposed, he would bloody well be that trophy wife.

He pulled away breathlessly. Dazed, Harry stared at him. "What's wrong?"

"Mmmm. Nothing," said Draco, wiping his swollen lips. "Just needed to come up for air."

Harry smiled sheepishly. "Sorry. I got a little carried away."

"That's all right. You're my first male kiss."

Harry nodded. "Me too."

Oh great. But thinking on it, that might work in Draco's favor. He smiled in what he hoped was a fetching grin. "Well, you did just fine."

Harry grinned like fool. "Yeah? I wasn't too sloppy?"

“No. No drool at all. It was...nice.” And Draco surprised himself by realizing that it really was.

Harry reached for Draco again, and in a seductively low voice said, “I’m not done by any means.” His eyes glittered and Draco saw them full of lust. For him! He gulped. For the family, Draco. He let Harry embrace him again, and the snogging began once more.

Finally, after another long interval, Draco pulled away and told Harry that he had to get back. Harry was disappointed but he made another “date”, this time to take Draco out to dinner the next night.

Oh my God. I’m being wooed. Draco bid Harry farewell, walked to an Apparating point, and escaped to the manor. In the foyer, he shouldered his way by his father up the stairs.

“Draco!” his father called after him. “How—how did it go?”

“Fine. Just fine.” He stopped at the landing and glared down at him. Lucius looked a lot smaller somehow. Older. Worn out. “He wants me, all right? I’m giving myself to him, just like you wanted. I’ve got a ‘date’ with him tomorrow. If I were you, I wouldn’t wait up.” Without looking back, he stomped to his room and slammed the door after him.

He stared at the floor, breathing heavily until he flung himself on his bed where all the pent up emotions came out in one great sob. Why? Why did this have to happen to him? Hadn’t he suffered enough?

He rolled to a sitting position. “Get a grip, Malfoy,” he said to himself, wiping away the tears. “It’s got to be done. Thank Merlin it’s Potter and not the Weasel.” He shuddered. Harry was at least rather sweet and gentle. He hadn’t known that about him. He always thought of Potter as an uncouth brute and Draco was usually on the business end of Potter’s wand— But that thought in all its Freudian implications didn’t give him any comfort. What if...what if tomorrow, Potter wanted to...shag?

Draco threw his legs over the side of the bed and sat on the edge, wringing his hands. He’d have to do it, wouldn’t he? He’d have to give it up for Potter.

He wriggled uncomfortably on the bed. Maybe he should practice first. He looked around the room for something comparable. A butterbeer bottle! He Accioed it and looked it over. No. He shook his head and set it aside. He didn't want to do it. Didn't want any of it.

He grabbed his pillow and rolled onto his back, rocking himself in a vain attempt at comfort.

* * *

Harry was walking on air. Malfoy liked him! He liked him that way! Amazing that he was gay too! It had been marvelous kissing him, even though Draco seemed a little stiff. He might still be intimidated by Harry but Harry reckoned by tomorrow he wouldn't feel that way. He'd take him to a nice romantic dinner, they'd go back to his place, and—

Harry pulled up short. They'd do what? Shag? Harry bit his lip. Oh, he wanted to all right. But would that be too much for Draco? Probably not, though. Draco was probably as horny as he was. After all, they were both seventeen year old wizards, fresh in their new found freedom. What better way to celebrate than a shag? Except that Harry was a virgin about these things. He could imagine it, though. He had gotten some magazines. He had tried sticking a finger in his own arse and though it had been strange he also kind of liked it. He knew about lube and all. They'd figure out a position and then Harry would...Harry would...

He slumped against the wall, grabbing his aching crotch. Oh how he wanted to! He wanted to push Malfoy face first to the mattress, spread his succulent white legs, part his plump arse cheeks, and shove his cock in his quivering hole. "Oh God!" He grabbed himself hard. The very thought almost made him come. How would he ever make it through the date?

Harry could barely sleep from excitement. He rolled over and over and finally sat up, looking at the fire. Maybe if he could talk to Draco one more time. He scooted off the bed and flopped onto the floor in front of his hearth. He grabbed a dollop of Floo Powder and tossed it in. "Draco Malfoy's bedroom!" he told it and thrust his head in.

At first, the spinning disoriented him, and even when it finally stopped he was still a bit wobbly. He adjusted his eyes and looked around. The room was dark and he wondered if it was the right place. "Malfoy!" he hissed. "Hey, Malfoy! You asleep?"

Something rustled on the bed. And Harry noticed, as his eyes attuned to the dark of the room, that it was a very big bed. A sudden pang of dread lanced his chest as he wondered if he hadn't gotten the

Malfoy senior room, but when a platinum blond head popped into view, it was clearly Draco. His grey eyes caught the firelight and grew to saucers.

Harry sighed at the sight of him. He felt a little stupid, all this mooning over the man. "Hey, Malfoy! The fireplace."

Draco stared. "Potter? What the hell—?"

"I just wanted to say goodnight to you." He shook his head at himself. "Lame, I know. But what can I say? I'm pretty new at this."

Draco crawled to the edge of the bed and stared down into the glowing embers. It cast a warm glow on his face, softening his features. "Oh. Well. No one's ever— I mean...Merlin, Potter. You're making a bloody fool of yourself."

Harry laughed. "Yeah. I know. But I can't help it. That was some really good snogging."

"It's late. And I'll see you tomorrow."

Harry's smile faded. "Oh. Sorry. I'll go then...."

"Wait." Draco seemed to debate with himself. He sat up and Harry could see he wore what looked like a silk t-shirt with satin pajama bottoms. Harry instantly wondered about how it would feel to run his hands over that smooth fabric...and Draco's bits.

Draco had a mollifying tone. "I...I...had a good time."

Harry found his smile again. "Yeah?" And then he got an idea. "Can I come in? Just for one more kiss?"

"I don't know, Potter."

“I know it’s late and I won’t stay. But just one kiss.”

Draco’s cheeks grew spots of red and he bit his lip. Harry thought it was delightful. Draco studied the floor for a long time and finally nodded.

Harry got up and walked through. And suddenly he was standing in Draco Malfoy’s bedroom in Malfoy Manor. But he little noticed the enormity of the room. All he saw was Draco, looking suddenly small and a bit forlorn in the firelight. Harry went right to him, drew him to his feet, and tilted his chin upward with a finger. “I promise. One kiss,” he whispered. He leaned in and pressed his lips tenderly to Malfoy’s—and how wonderful it was. Warm, soft, his breaths puffing from his nose to Harry’s cheek. Harry didn’t take more, didn’t urge his lips open, but even so, he couldn’t resist a final lick to the man’s lower lip as he drew away.

“Goodnight, Draco,” he whispered.

“G-goodnight, Potter.”

Harry smiled. “‘Harry.’ Can’t you call me ‘Harry’ by now?”

Draco looked down, his face hidden under his fringe. “I’m still nervous. I...it’s a hard habit to break.”

“I know. I’ll leave you alone now. Until tomorrow night, then.”

“Goodnight...H-harry.”

* * *

Harry rose early the next morning, trying to think of a place to take Draco to dinner. He didn’t know of any Wizarding places and so many had been shut up when Voldemort’s minions took over. Businesses were barely getting started again. That meant he should find a Muggle place. But would Draco go to a Muggle restaurant?

Harry wrapped himself in his coat and stepped down out of Number Twelve Grimmauld Place and started walking. He could find a place and Draco would go. After all, the git had to get used to the new world order. Couldn't wallow in Death Eater self pity forever.

Harry inhaled London with a new purpose. He felt good. He felt alive. For the first time since Voldemort's death, he felt almost...normal.

He came upon a row of shops and restaurants and began to read the menus posted outside. He'd have to exchange his money for Muggle money and after going inside the place he chose and making a reservation, he turned quickly down the lane and headed for Diagon Alley.

He reached a deserted side street and Disapparated, appearing again on the cobblestoned avenue of London's Wizarding street. Gringotts stood tall and gleaming in the sun at the end of the lane and he headed for it.

Inside the Goblin bank, people turned their heads to watch him make his way across the marble floors, but he ignored them. He had better things to think about these days.

The Goblin looked him over, but when Harry presented his key the Goblin didn't so much as flinch at the name "Harry Potter." Harry quickly retrieved a bag full of Galleons from his vault and exchanged most of them for Muggle money. And then a thought occurred to him. He turned back to the Goblin. "Erm...excuse me. But...what of the Malfoy vault?"

The Goblin eyed him with a sneer. "What of it?"

"I was just wondering if the Ministry had...you know. Blocked it in some way."

The goblin smiled a crenellation of yellow teeth. "Block it? The Ministry?" He leaned forward. "Whomsoever holds the key may enter their vault, Mr. Potter. It is a sacred trust between the keyholder and the Goblins of Gringotts. Anything less is unacceptable."

"Oh, I see. Well...thank you very much."

The goblin had already forgotten Harry. Harry shrugged and went on his way. But as he passed a window, he caught his reflection and looked at his clothes, and wondered if he shouldn't go shopping first. He could do with something nice. And though he liked being a wizard and all, he still favored Muggle clothing over robes. He'd have to do his shopping in Muggle London. But where to go?

* * *

The hour struck and Draco jumped as the clock chimed the time. He looked at himself in the mirror one last time. An owl had arrived a few hours ago from Harry, explaining that Draco needed to wear Muggle clothes. Muggle! Queering himself was one thing, but going Muggle was quite another!

He found it in the back of his wardrobe. A turtleneck and an Armani suit in charcoal grey. It still fit him well, though he was thinner. He brushed his fringe away from his eyes and tried not to sneer at his reflection. "All right, Draco. Show time."

He Apparated to the place Harry wrote about and found himself at the mouth of a Muggle street lit by street lamps. Couples and Muggles in small groups were milling in front of the closed shopfronts, window shopping. Light spilled from the restaurant where he was to meet Harry. When he reached the door, he noticed the smells coming from the place were at least appetizing. He hadn't known what to expect.

Inside he looked around and a man in a suit approached him. "Are you looking for the Potter party?" he asked.

It felt so strange, all of it. "Erm...yes," he answered nervously. The man led him to a far corner of the candlelit room. At least they know how to light the place, thought Draco, looking at the couples at the tables. It seemed to be the place for romantic assignations. Oh great, great.

And there he was. The candlelight reflected off the lenses of his glasses and he looked up as Draco approached, those bright green eyes even greener when the light caught them. He stood at his place and smiled, gesturing toward the empty chair. Draco noted that their table was in the very back against a wall. A lot of privacy.

Potter even scooted around the table and for one horrific moment, Draco thought he would pull the chair out for him like a bloody gentleman. But it was far worse; Harry leaned over and kissed his cheek. Harry reddened and then sat again.

Taken aback, Draco stood like a fool until he realized what he must look like and quickly sat.

“Hi,” said Harry. “You made it.”

“I said I would come.”

“I know. But it’s Muggle and—”

“One must get used to these things,” he said distractedly fiddling with his serviette and glancing at the couples at the other tables, absorbed in one another.

“It’s just that there weren’t that many Wizarding choices right now. And this is better. No one knows us.”

Yes, it did have that advantage. Draco had already thought of that. It was one of the reasons he agreed to it.

The waiter arrived, saving Draco from staring wordlessly at Potter who was beaming back at him. What did Harry see in him, anyway? They’d never gotten along before. Why this sudden interest? He decided to ask.

“Look Potter—er...Harry. Why is it you just decided to...to...ask me out? It’s not as if we were best mates, you know.”

Harry flicked the corner of the menu annoyingly. “I know. It’s just that...I’m attracted to you.” He blushed furiously. It took all of Draco’s control not to make fun of it. “I mean...,” Harry went on, “I guess I always have been. Our Quidditch competition was just some sort of alpha male rivalry and then there was sixth year when I followed you around all the time.”

“Alpha male rivalry’? Has Granger been filling your head with psychological rubbish?”

“No. I’ve been reading about it myself. At the library. Muggle library. And Hermione and Ron...don’t know.”

“Don’t know? About you being a poufter, you mean?” Draco leaned on the table and laughed. “Oh Potter! It would be such fun to blackmail you.”

Harry wasn’t smiling. “Except you’d be implicated, too, remember.”

Draco stopped laughing and frowned. “Hmm,” was all he said and looked down at his menu. “So. What’s good here?”

“Don’t know,” said Harry behind his menu. “Never been here before. Never been in a restaurant before.”

Draco’s menu slammed down. “What? What do you mean you’ve never been in a restaurant before?”

“That’s pretty simple to interpret, Malfoy. I’ve never been in a restaurant. I don’t think you can really count the Leaky Cauldron. I guess there was that one time with Cho Chang in Hogsmeade in that bloody tea room, but that’s it, really.”

“Potter, everyone’s been to a restaurant.”

“Well I haven’t.” He was starting to look irritated.

“What about those Muggles you lived with?”

“Could you keep your voice down,” he whispered, looking around. “Those Mug—my relatives never took me out. Whenever they wanted to go, they left me with a sitter.”

“You’ve got to be kidding!”

“And just what about my tone of voice would indicate that?” Harry’s dark brows were furrowed and he was studying his menu with unrelenting intensity, refusing to look at Draco.

I’ll be damned. Draco shifted on his chair and raised his menu again. “Well...I didn’t know. Always thought you had the world served to you on a silver platter.”

It was Harry’s turn to lower the menu. “Whatever made you think that?”

“Oh come on, Harry. I heard about ‘Harry Potter’ all my life before I got to Hogwarts. You were as famous as the Dark Lord himself. Everyone always assumed you lived the life of luxury.”

Harry laughed unpleasantly. “Luxury? I didn’t even have my own room until I discovered I was a wizard.”

Draco’s menu hit the table again. “What do you mean you didn’t know you were a wizard? How much of an idiot were you, anyway? You surely must have done accidental magic.”

“Yeah, I did all the time. I just never knew what it was.”

“It was magic, for Merlin’s sake!”

Harry looked around again and leaned forward, talking in a hoarse whisper. “But I didn’t know! If you had been raised like a Muggle you would have put all those things down to weird coincidences. Muggles are raised to think that magic doesn’t exist.”

Draco frowned. What the hell? How lame was that? No wonder the Ministry had all those laws about keeping it a secret. Draco had never really given it much thought before. “So...so you didn’t have it easy?”

“Right in one, Malfoy.”

“So why were you so stuck up?”

“I wasn't stuck up. You were stuck up.”

“Was not.”

“Was too.”

“It's just a certain manner of the very rich, Potter. I suppose knowing your upbringing, you wouldn't understand that.”

Potter smiled and then began to laugh. Draco frowned. “What's so funny?”

“You. I missed this 'you'.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean you and your family. You all seem scared of shadows now.”

Draco sneered. “And you would, too, if everyone hated you. Hate mail, people trying to curse the house, sending Howlers. And we can't even access our vaults.”

Harry sat back, his menu forgotten. “People do those things?”

“Yes, Potter, they do.” Draco crossed his arms over his chest and pouted at the table.

“But, that's not right. You should tell the Ministry—”

“Right. That would help. Why didn't we think of that?”

“Oh.” Harry fiddled with the menu’s corner again. “I’m sorry about that. But what did you say about your vaults? Because the Goblins told me as long as you have the key no one can touch them.”

Draco sighed. “Well, that’s the trouble, isn’t it? They confiscated our keys.”

“Damn,” Harry muttered. “Do you think...do you think I should mention something...?”

Draco smiled inside and eased his arms off his chest. He toyed with the tablecloth and looked down at it in a coy fashion. “I don’t know, Harry. That’s sort of taking advantage of you.”

“But it’s not fair. I mean...I think you all paid your price. Everyone has to get along now. I’ll go to the Ministry tomorrow and see what I can do.”

Score! Draco hid his smile as he raised his menu. “I’m suddenly feeling hungry. The steak looks good. How about you?”

* * *

The steak was good and so was the wine Draco chose for them. Draco was feeling better now that he had accomplished at least something he was supposed to do. And Harry seemed to be having a good time as well. They chatted. About Quidditch, about some of the dirty tricks they played on each other. And then they even had a long talk about Snape over their coffees.

This was all news to Draco. Snape had never hinted at any of it. But it all made some twisted sort of sense. Leave it to Snape to be enigmatic to the last.

Harry was very quiet and thoughtful when talk of the former Potions Master diminished. Draco stared at the dregs in his cup. Maybe this is where they would end the evening. Draco felt better about that, too. Until Harry looked up, his sober expression falling away. He suddenly looked nervous again.

“Want to go back to my place?” he blurted.

Draco stiffened. "Oh. I...I guess so."

Harry got to his feet and tossed several strange papers to the table. "Let's go then."

Shit. Draco slowly got to his feet, laying the serviette gently on the table. Suddenly, all his new found confidence drained away. Potter wanted to shag him. He knew he did. He might even be forced to suck the man's cock. Oh God!

They side-alonged to a street that looked vaguely familiar to Draco. When they climbed the front steps of a particularly dark, brick house, Draco recalled where they were.

"This is the Black house," he said as Harry pushed the door open.

"Yeah. My godfather left it to me. Have you been here before?"

"When I was little." Draco peered around. Some of the wallpaper had been stripped off and there looked to be a general refurbishing process going on. One wall in the foyer was burnt with a curse scar.

"What was there?" asked Draco, pointing.

Harry looked at the scar with pride. "That used to be where a very disagreeable painting hung. But I managed to finally reverse the sticking charm."

"You'll have a hell of a time removing that curse scar."

Harry smiled. "Don't want to."

Draco shrugged. Potter was a strange bloke, to be sure. "I came here several times when I was young. I remember mad old Mrs. Black. And my cousin Nymphado—" Draco cringed at that and snuck a look at Harry. Harry looked suddenly bereft.

“I forgot you were related. I don’t suppose you knew that she married Remus Lupin.”

“Yeah. We heard that. The Dark Lord—”

Harry nodded. “Well, they had a baby. They named me the godfather.”

Draco was taken aback. “You’re taking care of a baby?”

“No. I wouldn’t know the first thing about it. He’s being raised by his grandmother. But I visit him a lot. He looks like Remus.”

“Is he a...a....”

Harry sighed. “He isn’t a werewolf. Jeez, Malfoy.”

“Sor-ree! I didn’t know.”

They both fell silent. And then the silence dragged on until Draco felt uncomfortable. He was beginning to think he might yet get out of sleeping with Potter when Harry said quietly, “Do you want a drink...or something?”

Nervous as he was, Draco sure wanted one. “Yeah. Have you got something strong?”

“There’s probably stuff here. I’m not sure....” He wandered out of the foyer and into the parlour. Draco hesitated for a moment before reluctantly following him.

Harry was picking up some cut glass decanters from a tea cart and peered at their coloured contents. He lifted the stopper of one and sniffed. The look on his face told Draco that Harry did not indulge. “Smells like liquor. Want some?”

Draco shook his head. Harry put the decanter down next to the glass tumblers and stared at the floor. He was clearly crap at seduction.

Draco, feeling that he had indeed dodged a hex, thrust his hands into his trouser pockets. "Well...maybe I should be going...."

"No!" Harry had come to life again and he whipped around the cart to stand in front of Draco. "No," he said more softly. "I...I want you to stay."

"I don't want a drink. And we've already eaten."

"I know," said Potter, drawing closer. "But I was hoping we'd...you know. Get to know each other better." Harry edged closer.

Draco began to sweat. He casually pulled his collar away from his neck and trailed his finger nervously along the tea cart. "We talked at dinner."

"Not talking," said Harry.

Draco glanced up. Harry was right there in front of him. His eyes were slightly dilated and his nostrils were flaring. His mouth, parted from panting, was slick and glistened in the firelight. His lips were plump and were the colour of coral. Draco held his breath.

Slowly, Harry moved in and gathered Draco in his arms. Draco wanted desperately to pull back, but instead, forced himself to be dragged into Harry's embrace. Harry just held him for a moment, his body trembling. Draco looked aghast, staring at the far wall, face against Harry's cheek. He could smell Harry's hair—just some light unidentifiable fragrance—the sweat on his neck, and the unmistakable musk of arousal. It was sweet, actually, the way he held Draco. Again, he wasn't groping or forcing himself on him. Just holding him. And then he pulled back to look at Draco's face, a tender expression in his eyes. He leaned in and planted a very soft kiss to Draco's lips, so soft the blond wasn't expecting it. Draco inhaled sharply and before he realized what was happening, Harry's tongue was snaking inside in an open-mouthed kiss.

A sudden flair of arousal assaulted the Slytherin. He felt himself moan as his arms went around Harry. Their bodies were pressed tightly together and the unmistakable feel of an erection was boring into Draco's thigh. But much to his horror, his own hardening cock was pressed taut against Harry as well.

He owed it to the intimate embrace and the gentle kiss, the likes of which he had never experienced before. Neophyte Harry may be, but he was a fast learner. And a natural.

And a kiss was a kiss.

Draco pulled back and Harry held him, his hands sliding up to Draco's head. He pressed his forehead against the Slytherin's. "Draco," he whispered. "Want to come upstairs?"

Oh God. Draco nodded, feeling the weight of his decision bearing down on him. Harry slipped his arm around Draco's waist and took his hand in his and walked with him to the staircase. Up they went. Like walking up to a gallows, Draco thought.

They reached a bedroom with an ordinary-looking four-poster. The floor-to-ceiling drapes were closed and a fat candle on the bedside table was lit, casting a flattering light across the silky duvet. Harry turned to Draco again and kissed him. "I've never done this before," he whispered to Draco's lips.

Shit, shit, shit! "Neither have I," said Draco. He hated that his voice was trembling.

Harry cupped Draco's face in so tender a manner that Draco gulped audibly. He kissed Draco again and Draco's mind was trying to catch up to the fact that his body was beginning to enjoy those kisses. "Let's get these clothes off, yeah?"

"Okay." Draco felt five years old again, being undressed by his mother when they had gotten home late from a party. Drowsy and relaxed, he'd allowed her to pull off his party clothes and redress him in his pajamas, tucking him into bed with a kiss. And though Draco didn't doubt he'd be tucked into bed with a kiss tonight, he did doubt he'd be redressed.

Even as he thought it, Harry was yanking his shirt free of his trousers and pulling it up over his head. Draco allowed it by lifting his arms. The cold air of the room assaulted the skin of his chest and he felt his nipples harden. Suddenly, Harry fixed his gaze to Draco's chest and Draco dearly wanted to cross his

arms to protect himself. He watched Harry leaning over, wondering what he was about, when he felt lips seal over one nipple and a wet tongue flick it.

“Oh!” Draco jerked up and Harry wound a steadying arm around his waist. Fuck! That felt fantastic! Harry was not only licking one hard nipple but now he was sucking on it. His teeth gently rolled it and Draco arched into it and felt himself grow even harder. What the—?

A hand was skimming up his chest, calloused fingers raking over his pecs. Harry straightened and looked at Draco with a smile. “I just had to do that. Your chest invites it, after all.”

Draco never knew his chest “invited” anything. It was just a normal teen-aged chest. At least he used to think so. His nipple was sore and cold when the wet met the cold air. Draco was stunned speechless. How was this night going to go when the least little thing turned him on when it definitely should not!

His cheeks feeling hot from a blush, Draco toed off his shoes as Harry did the same. Harry unbuttoned his own shirt, but he seemed impatient and only undid the top few before he pulled it off over his head and tossed it aside. Draco looked at Harry’s chest and wondered if he was supposed to suck his nipples too. Harry’s chest was broader and the skin not as pale as Draco’s. He also had a smattering of dark hair sprouting from between his pecs and trailing down a long line to disappear into his trousers. His nipples were wine-coloured ovals ringed by bits of hair. His nipples had hardened in the cold air too—or was it from arousal? Draco didn’t really want to know.

Harry reached for Draco again and his trembling hands fumbled at his belt and trousers. Draco didn’t want to help but Harry was getting nowhere fast, so he gently pushed Harry’s hands away as he unbuttoned the front of his own trousers and lowered the zip. He pushed the trousers down his legs and stepped out of them, feeling rather foolish standing in nothing but socks and his Y-fronts.

Harry was quickly shucking his own trousers and he did a little dance to step out of them that would have been amusing in any other circumstances. But Draco was certainly not amused. He was worried that he might faint from hyperventilating.

Harry’s thighs were well-formed and muscled. And hairy. Standing in nothing but his underpants, Harry still looked like a hero. It almost made Draco cackle in hysterical laughter to imagine Harry facing the Dark Lord in nothing but his undies.

But he could have.

And the bulge in said underpants was pretty spectacular, too. If a bloke was into that sort of thing.

Harry was doing his own staring at Draco's package. But Draco knew that fear had driven his erstwhile erection away and Harry seemed a bit disappointed. "You aren't hard," he said.

"Th-this is new to me. I'm a bit nervous."

Harry smiled gently. "It's all right. We'll go slow." He grabbed his own crotch unselfconsciously. That erection was definitely not going away.

Oh God.

Harry approached him and drew his hands gently up and down Draco's arms. "Can I take off your underpants, Draco?"

Draco, never in his craziest dreams, imagined he'd hear Harry Potter's voice ask him that question. "O-okay," he croaked.

Harry took him in an embrace again, kissing his neck. It was a nice feeling, except for the erection prodding his groin. Harry lowered his hands from Draco's arms, sliding them down his flanks before he dug his thumbs into the elastic waistband and nudged them down. He knelt a bit to pull them all the way, stealing a look at Draco's bits. Draco's balls were shrinking up and he didn't even want to know how small his cock was getting. Harry didn't seem to mind. When he regained his feet he was still looking down at it. "I like the way you look," he whispered. "Blond down there, too." Draco gave a shuddering breath as a reply.

Harry hooked his fingers in his own waistband and looked up at Draco. "Can I?"

Draco nodded. And Harry Potter eased down his underpants until he was as naked as Draco. With One. Big. Difference.

“Wow,” muttered Draco and then he cringed. Oh shit. That monster of a cock was never going to fit in his arse. No way. It was going to hurt like a son-of-a-bitch. Draco stifled a whimper.

Harry frowned at Draco’s expression. “You look a little worried. Don’t be. We’ll go as slow as you like.”

Not slow enough. Draco tried a brief smile. “I just never...I mean when we were in school I never....”

“Never thought of me this way? Like a...lover?” He offered a sheepish smile. “Well, I was hardly that. Not very handy in the love department. But even though I’m a novice here I still have learnt a few things.” He took Draco’s face in his hands again. “I’ll go slow. I’ll be gentle.” His eyes tracked up and down Draco’s nude body. “But I have to tell you, Malfoy. I really want you. I want so much to be inside you.”

Draco squeaked out a reply but Harry was already kissing him, swallowing whatever he was going to say. But this time, when he dragged Draco toward him, their skin touched. Draco gasped at the unexpected contact. Harry’s skin was more than warm. It was hot and sweaty. And...and...that cock of his! It slammed against Draco’s stomach like a steel pole between them. And he’d said it, said he wanted that...that thing...to be inside Draco, and Draco just wasn’t sure he could do it.

The blond was being maneuvered toward the bed. Harry got on it first and held Draco’s hand tightly, pulling him up. “Draco. I want you to lie on your stomach, okay? I’m just going to caress you and massage you a bit. That all right?”

Draco made a noise that seemed to imply he agreed. He lay down, grateful to hide his genitals. But the fact that his arse was on display left him feeling a bit more vulnerable. Especially with Harry’s dick so prominently presented behind him.

He laid his face on his hands and closed his eyes, willing it to be over. Oh, if he only had a TimeTurner! He startled a bit when Harry’s hands touched his lower back, but he relaxed a little when they only skimmed up his spine with gentle pressure. He really was just giving him a massage. Except that he straddled Draco’s body and sat on his thighs. Harry’s cock rested at the cleft of his bum, rubbing up and down the crack as he leaned forward to run his hands up to Draco’s shoulders and down to his hips.

“You have really beautiful skin, Draco,” he said wonderingly above him. “It’s so smooth. I bet you use something really expensive.”

Draco grunted. Whatever. He couldn't even begin to think when Harry was doing that. It felt good but at the same time the feel of his cock against him was downright scary.

Harry's hands traveled down to his bum and he squeezed and kneaded the cheeks for a while which was better because he had to slid down his thighs and his enormous member was now taken away from its intended target. But when Harry's hands cupped the underside of his arse and told him, "Scooch up on your knees, Draco," the Slytherin started to feel sick again.

Obediently, Draco did as told and with legs spread got up on his knees. He continued to hide his face in his arms and felt his whole body colour in embarrassment. Here he was, starkers, with his bare arse in the air and Harry Potter leering at him from behind. Get on with it, he kept chanting in his head. The sooner he got on with it the sooner it would be over. But what then?

It was torture, being in that position, just waiting. He could sense every part of his body suddenly. He knew his balls were hanging low, scraping the mattress, and because his thighs were spread so wide, his...his hole must be on full display. He'd never been so humiliated in his life! And so scared. No, he might have been more scared in the Dark Lord's presence, but at least he hadn't had to do this for him!

Draco wanted to sneak a peek behind him. What's he doing back there? Where the hell is he? Why isn't he—? Oh! A kiss dropped on his arse cheek. And then another. And was that...was that a lick? Harry's hands had returned but they were now clutching the back of Draco's thighs. But his breath, his face was definitely back there. And he was kissing his bum.

So now Potter decides to kiss my arse. Great. But that warm breath was moving southward and suddenly a warm, wet tongue—for that was what it surely must have been—was licking gently at the back of his sac.

Draco gasped. OmigodOMIGAWD! That felt fucking amazing! Potter's tongue laved all over his bollocks and Draco even felt teeth gently nipping at the loose flesh where it met the juncture of Draco's legs. Gooseflesh quickly spread all over Draco's body. Then Harry licked that spot behind his balls. He kissed it gently, and then moved down to rain kisses on his sac, sucking it a little as he went.

Draco couldn't help it. He moaned and juttled his hips.

Harry's voice sounded amused, even as roughened by lust as it was. "You okay, Malfoy?"

"Y-yes." Should he tell Harry to stop? He should. This was wrong. A straight boy had no business allowing a gay boy to do these things to him. Even if they did feel ridiculously good.

Harry's tongue continued its Draco tour, pressing firmly at his perineum. But he didn't stop there. Slowly, that warm tongue worked its way upward, gently at first. But it was definitely licking the skin of his crack near his hole.

"P-potter? What the hell are you doing?"

"Relax, Draco. It will feel good. I promise." His voice was strangely muffled and the reason for that was that his face was still nuzzling Draco's arse. There was a pause, and then Draco felt fingers opening his cleft even wider and that tongue again, that treacherously amazing tongue, licked little flicks of unspeakable pleasure directly on the soft flesh of his arsehole.

"OH! OH SHIT!" A flurry of trembling rippled up his body.

"Like that, do you?" Harry chuckled. And then that wet muscle licked all over his entrance and Draco could not control his hips as they rocked back and forth, simultaneously trying to avoid that tongue and to jam it further into his cleft. Those soft licks caressed Draco's flesh in a way he'd never dreamed of. Who would have thought that a bloke licking another bloke's... well...arsehole...could in any way be pleasurable? But it was. Oh it was!

"Oh Harry!" he groaned, not even realizing he said it.

A hand snaked beneath him and closed around the hard flesh of his cock. Yes, he had certainly hardened up at that. The hand was now pulling on his prick in long leisurely strokes. If Harry kept doing that then everything would be over soon.

But Harry soon stopped the licking and the stroking. Draco whimpered this time and almost complained aloud but something else was now happening behind him. Cool oil was dribbled on his gasping hole and there was something soft and blunt and large pushing at it. Draco immediately stiffened.

“Relax, Draco,” he soothed. “You’re loosened. I can see that.”

Harry pushed and Draco felt as if he were being split open. He couldn’t stop himself from yelping and then he scrambled up the bed and whipped around. “I can’t do it. I just can’t.”

He looked back at Harry. His red cock was pointing at Draco and it was dripping with a sticky strand of pre-cum.

“Draco.” Harry looked worried and he slid forward to soothe his blond lover, but Draco wasn’t having any of that. He had almost been lulled by that tongue thing. Almost. It was great. But this other. He just couldn’t go through with it.

He scrambled off the bed and hugged himself. Almost sobbing, he said, “I thought I could, but I can’t do it. I can’t go through with it. I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to,” said a now very worried Harry. He stood beside the bed, his erection still in full force. Draco looked away from it. “We’ll do something else. We’ll do it some other time.”

“No. No. There won’t be another time. I’m sorry. I really am. But I’m not queer. I’m not.”

Harry eyed him curiously, almost laughing. “What?”

Draco shook his head furiously and hurried to pick up his scattered clothing. He pulled on his underpants quickly and hopped about, sticking his foot in his trouser leg. “I can’t go through with it. It was a mistake. I’m really sorry about it but I’m not gay and I never was.”

“What are you talking about? What do you mean you’re not gay? Draco?”

Draco wiped the tears from his face and pulled on his shirt. “It was my father’s idea. He figured out that you were gay and that I should play up to you so that the Malfoys could be seen in a favourable light again. By association.” He stuck his foot in his shoe and pressed down, trying to slip it on.

It was dawning on Harry's face. Draco saw his expression change from worry to shock. He was beginning to look like he did when he discovered Fred Weasley died. For some reason, that sent a shock of guilt through Draco's gut.

Draco struggled for a while with his other shoe but he couldn't fit his foot in it so he snatched it from the floor and hugged it to his chest.

Draco now stood awkwardly, his shirt wrong-way around and his foot in one shoe. And Harry was looking more and more devastated. Draco suddenly didn't want to look at his face anymore.

"You mean...all of this...was just an act? You were trying to...use me? By...by...prostituting yourself?"

Draco refused to look at the man. If Harry had had his wand in his hand, Draco knew he would be toast. Best be prepared to make a run for it. "Erm...that was the general idea."

"And you're not gay? At all?"

"Um...no. Not really. I'm sorry."

"No," said Harry, sinking dispiritedly to the bed. His eyes blinked furiously. "I'm the one who's sorry. Look what I made you do. I kissed you and touched you. That must have been pretty disgusting."

"Well...." Draco shrugged. He edged toward the bedroom doorway.

"God, I nearly bugged you," he went on in that disconcertingly dead voice. "That will give you nightmares for weeks, no doubt."

"I just...I'm just really sorry." He crept closer to the door.

"Oh. Okay." Harry's face was blushing a deep red. He stared at a spot on the carpet halfway between himself and Draco. "All those things I did. All those things I said. They were just a joke to you. Well done, Malfoy. I guess you did it to me again."

Draco stopped in mid-creep. "No. Oh no, no. Harry, it was really great. And I wish to hell I was in a position to really appreciate it, you know. 'Cause it was nice. And sweet. Really it was. But I'm just not...that way."

Harry raised his face at last. His eyes were shining wetly behind his glasses. "So your dad put you up to this? Trying to get the Malfoy name in everyone's good graces again. Not very nice for you."

This completely defeated Harry was something Draco had never seen before. A strange flip in his stomach told him how wrong it was.

"Tell him it's all right," Harry went on. "I'll speak to the Ministry for you. I'll get you your vault keys back. I did promise."

"N-no, Harry. You don't have to do that."

"But that's why you went to all this trouble." His voice was steady and fell to a deadly tenor. "I mean my God, Malfoy. You certainly went to great lengths. You should get more than a free dinner out of it."

"Harry, really...."

"You don't have to call me 'Harry' anymore," he said sharply. "There's no reason to, after all. We aren't mates." Harry was trembling. His hands curled into fists.

"But I'm really sor—"

"I think you should get out now."

"But I'm—"

The room began to shake. "Get. Out."

Draco didn't wait. He took one last look at Harry—cheeks streaked with tears and brow furrowed menacingly—before he sprinted out the bedroom door, careered down the staircase, and Disapparated before he reached the front door.

Chapter Three—Worst Enemy

Draco stumbled into the foyer of Malfoy Manor and knocked over a priceless vase. It crashed to the floor in a million shards.

The crack of Apparation followed and Lucius appeared, wand drawn. He stared at Draco staring at the mess on the floor. Draco was still clutching his shoe.

“Draco? What’s wrong? What are you doing here? I thought...I thought....”

“You thought! You thought! What am I doing here? Here, in my own home instead of Harry Potter’s bed? Is that what you mean, Father?”

Lucius rocked uneasily on his heels. He lowered his wand.

Draco laughed unpleasantly. “Dear me. You would have been proud just a few short minutes ago. How proud!”

Lucius’ surprised look dissolved into a scowl. “You failed, didn’t you. You FAILED! A simple task, Draco. You would have won easily. POTTER WANTED YOU!”

“SHUT UP!”

Lucius pulled up short. “What do you say to me?”

“I said SHUT UP!” Draco felt the hot tears course down his face. He tasted their saltiness on his lips. He clutched the errant shoe to his chest even tighter. “Oh I had him where I wanted him, Father. Where you wanted him. Right there. With my bare arse in the air and Potter ready to pound me from behind.” He saw Lucius wince and he scrambled right up to him, nose to nose. “Don’t like the sound of that, eh? But it was you who sent me. You! Sent your own son to whore himself. And for what?” He drew back enough to straighten his shoulders. He knew his face was wet and probably red, but he didn’t care. “Yes, I failed. I failed SPECTACULARLY! I told him. I told him I couldn’t go through with it, that it was a plot to get what we wanted. I told him YOU put me up to it. And then I told him I was sorry.”

“You—you—!”

“YES! Me, ME! I told him I was sorry. I apologized for YOU!”

“The Dark Lord punished us. PUNISHED US when we failed to keep Potter. Do you remember that?”

“Yes, I remember that! How could I forget! But it was just one more horror YOU brought home to us. When am I ever going to stop listening to YOU?”

Lucius glared at Draco. But something in his eyes had changed. A flicker at first. And then Draco saw the change gradually take over his whole demeanor. Lucius did not physically sag, but something about his bearing seemed to. And Draco saw more. He saw a glint of sympathy and then...shame. It darkened the slate of his eyes to almost coal, and for once, that gaze lowered, like a wand hand surrendering.

Draco was able to walk past him, then, and Lucius didn't try to stop him.

In the morning his father greeted him, and when he passed Draco, he caressed his son's shoulder with a gentle hand. Draco supposed that was a great concession to a man who had lost almost everything, including his sense of purpose.

They spoke no more of it.

But today, two days after Draco had left Harry Potter, Draco was looking at the vault keys in his hand that had only just been delivered by Harry's owl. He stared at them in disbelief. There had to be a trick. Why would Potter—after the humiliation Draco had just put him through—still do this for him?

He looked at the parchment they had been wrapped in. Nothing. Not one word on it.

Lucius entered the library where Draco was standing and looked at his perplexed son curiously. “Draco? Was that Potter's owl?”

“Yes,” he said softly, still staring at the keys in his palm.

“What...what is it?”

Draco looked up slowly and proffered his hand. “He got us our keys.”

Lucius’ eyes rounded. “But...you said—”

“That I bollixed it up? Yeah. I did. But he sent them anyway.”

A smile curled Lucius’ lips and he took the Gringott’s keys from Draco’s trembling hand. “Well done. Potter’s a fool. A sentimental fool.”

For some reason, that statement made Draco incredibly angry. “He’s not a sentimental fool. He’s not any kind of fool! He’s just—” The frustration at not being able to figure out Potter was excruciating. “Who would do something like this!” he lashed out. “What’s the matter with him?”

“Draco, my son. That is something that you have never understood about Potter. He’s really quite predictable. He has a keen sense of honour almost as much as we have. And that Gryffindor nobility. You said that he had promised to do this for you before he discovered your deception. And to a Gryffindor, a promise is a promise. He is a fool to be ruled by such strictures. A Slytherin would never feel obligated after they discovered they had been deceived. They would plot their revenge instead.”

Draco rolled this over in his mind. Yes, he well knew that about Slytherins. He just never thought about how Gryffindors would handle it. It certainly did put them in a weaker position. Anyone could take advantage of them. But to Draco, it didn’t seem weak of Harry. It had seemed noble. And honourable.

“Well, you got what you wanted,” he said to his father. “I’m going to my room.”

Draco trudged up the stairs and found the sanctuary of his room. He stepped out to the terrace and looked out to the rolling hills of their estates. A big place like that could be awfully lonely. And it was. Draco had no friends anymore. If he hadn’t played this despicable trick on Harry, they might at least

come out of it as friends, not that he had any intention of being Harry Potter's friend. But at least he would have had one person to talk to, write to, be with.

Now there was no one.

The more he wallowed in self-pity, the more sorry he was about what he had done to Potter. The look of utter devastation on his face! He couldn't seem to wipe it from his mind. He'd never seen anyone look so saddened. But wasn't that something Draco had wanted to do to Potter for years? Their game of one-upmanship had escalated in sixth year. And in sixth year, it would have made Draco quite happy. Why now was he feeling like the lowest dung beetle?

Harry hadn't been stuck up. That kept rattling in his head. He hadn't. He had been oblivious, in fact. Barely knew what being a wizard was when Draco encountered him on the train that first day. But Draco could have helped him. He would have explained it. Except he had only really wanted to use Potter, then. Never really wanted to make friends with him. Not like the Weasel had. And wasn't that what Harry had needed the most?

"Bollocks. Could I have possibly messed up my life any more thoroughly?"

At least being Harry Potter's friend would have significantly improved the quality of his life. Now what had he got?

"Keys to a vault." All that Malfoy money. All that cold, Malfoy money.

Before Draco could talk himself out of it, he Disapparated and appeared again at the steps of Number 12.

* * *

Harry wasn't talking to anyone. He hadn't even owled Hermione or Ron. What would he say? He hadn't yet told them he was gay and he didn't much feel like it now. He just wanted to be left alone. He was embarrassed at how weepy he had gotten. He hadn't even been like that when Sirius died or any of the others. But for Malfoy and his stupid plot, he was completely whipped.

The worst part was that he had trusted him. After all these years, all the years of knowing the prat, he had let himself trust him. What an idiot! He deserved this, then, for being such a berk. He gave his heart without a second thought. Hermione would have told him he wore his heart on his sleeve and it turned around and bit him in the arse, all right. He couldn't believe he was actually falling for Malfoy. Stupid, stupid idiot!

He wiped at his eyes again angrily. The crying had to stop. Really. So what if his first sexual experience turned out to be the most humiliating one of his life? He'd get over it. Eventually. If Voldemort hadn't scarred him for life, this wouldn't.

He rubbed at his lightning bolt scar ruefully. Right.

The doorbell. Who the hell was that? Harry thought about ignoring it, but it might be something important. With a sigh, he wiped under his glasses with his fingers again, and trudged downstairs.

When he swung open the door, Malfoy was standing there.

Harry's heart was speared with a hot stab of renewed humiliation and hurt. He could feel himself actually snarl. "What do you want?"

Malfoy was wringing his hands. His brows winged outward, giving his face a look of unnatural vulnerability. He was trembling. Scared, Malfoy? You should be. Harry thumbed his wand in his pocket.

"I...I came to apologize."

"Great. Thanks." Harry started to shut the door on him when Malfoy lunged forward and stopped the door with an outstretched hand.

"Wait! Harry. I really want to apologize. E-e-explain."

"What's there to explain? You're a Malfoy so that makes you a bastard. Explained already." He tried to close the door again but Malfoy was pushing on it.

“I am. I am a bastard. That was really unforgivable. But I’m still asking for you to forgive me.”

“You got your keys, yeah? You completely humiliated me. What more do you want? Isn’t that enough for any Malfoy?”

“But that was never my intention! I didn’t want to humiliate you. I was just trying to—”

“Use me? Well, it worked. You got what you wanted. Now FUCK OFF!” This time he managed to slam the door. He was heading for the stairs when the doorbell rang again. He spun and flung the door open. His wand was aimed at Malfoy’s surprised face. “Do you have a death wish?”

Draco shook his head vigorously. “You have every right to hex me. I would have. But I sincerely want you to know—”

“‘Sincerely?’” he sneered.

“Yeah. Sincerely. I want you to know that I’m sorry. And that I wish we could have been friends. I wish we could have been friends a long time ago. But we never really understood each other.”

“And we do now? This is your idea of friendship? Bugger to that, Malfoy. Oh, that’s right. You aren’t into bugging, are you.”

Draco reddened. Well, at least the git had some kind of emotions!

“I want to make it up to you!”

“Really? Well try this. Don’t let me ever, EVER see your face again. Okay?” And he slammed the door.

* * *

Draco stood on Harry's doorstep, panting. That didn't go well. He was sure Harry was going to hex him. But again, he had underestimated the Gryffindor. It wouldn't have been right to their way of thinking to hex someone under those circumstances. That was letting one's emotions get the better of you. And as wild as Harry's emotions seemed to be, he had good control of his sense of right and wrong. If only Draco could understand what that was.

He stood a little longer on the stoop. It wasn't as if Harry was coming back, but a hopeful part of him wondered if he might.

Finally, with shoulders drooping, Draco relented and stumped down the steps. He was about to Apparate home when he decided to take a walk instead.

He walked along the pavement, not really paying attention to where he was. The traffic clamor of the Muggle conveyances were just background noise to his noisier thoughts. But the entrance to a pub caught his attention and he reasoned that he could use a drink. He trudged inside and sat at the bar, ordering a pint. He dug out the Muggle money he had in his pocket and hoped those odd coins were enough. The music blared a little too much and when he finally lifted his head to look around, something seemed a bit odd about the place. Sure there were a lot of men (weren't there always in pubs?) but there was something...something...

"Oh, for the love of Merlin!" He was in a fucking gay pub! He couldn't get away from it. He was about to leave when he looked at his half full pint. He turned grudgingly back toward to bar to at least finish his beer.

A hand came over his shoulders and then a face, bright with a smile. "Hi. You alone?"

Draco shrugged his hand off of him. "Bugger off. I'm not gay."

The man didn't seem affronted and looked at him with a curious expression. "Well, this is a funny place to be if you're not."

"I didn't know it was a gay pub when I came in, all right! I'm just finishing up and then I'm going."

“Right.” The man sat on the stool next to him and looked out at the room. “Slim pickings. Thought it was my lucky day when I saw you. I don’t mind my saying, but you are a looker.”

“Er...thanks.”

“You know,” he said budging closer to Draco. “You look as if you lost your best friend.”

“It’s very complicated and I don’t want to talk about it.”

The man shrugged and started to turn back toward the room when Draco said, “The thing of it is, I think I just...I think I just lost the only friend I was likely to have.”

“Ah now. Don’t think like that. Plenty of fish in the sea. You look like a bloke who can make loads of friends.”

Draco barked a laugh. “Me? I don’t think so.”

“You can certainly score plenty of boyfriends.”

“I’m not gay!”

“Steady on. Don’t get your knickers in a twist.”

Draco drank a long draught and put the empty glass down. His companion bought him another as well as one for himself. “You see,” Draco went on, “I was leading him on. Making him think I was gay to get in good with him.”

“What?” The man swallowed a mouthful of beer and set it back down on the beer mat. “Get in good?”

“He’s very influential. Being associated with his name would have brought my family out of disgrace.”

“So you...you...blimey!” The man nudged Draco’s shoulder. “Did you...you know.”

Draco spun his glass a bit. “Well...we...we snogged. And then we went to his place. And then he...he....” He sighed and shook his head.

“Wait. And you’re straight?”

Draco nodded.

“Did you shag?”

“Almost. I just couldn’t go through with it. I stopped him from...from....” He whispered the last, “...putting it in.”

“Holy shit! You went that far?”

Draco nodded miserably.

“Are you’re sure you’re not gay, mate?”

“Yes!”

“Well, when you snogged him, how was it?”

“It was disgusting... Well, it wasn’t all disgusting. Some of it was nice. Some of it was very nice. He’s a good kisser.”

“Did it arouse you?”

Draco wriggled on his stool. Boy, this bloke was nosy. "A little. I guess. It's been a long time since I kissed anyone."

"Hang on. You liked it?"

"I didn't like it. Not all of it. Some of it. He was sweet. And gentle. And...fairly sexy."

"Listen mate. If you liked it, then you aren't straight."

"Of course I am!"

"Straight guys do not kiss other guys."

"But I had to—"

"And they certainly don't enjoy it. I think you've got a problem."

"What are you talking about?"

The man leaned on the bar and looked Draco in the eye. "Look. It's all very well that you were playing gay to—as you say, "get in good" with this bloke. But straight boys do not get aroused by kissing a bloke. They do not think it is sweet. And they definitely do not think it is sexy. So I think you need to reconsider your sexual orientation."

Draco stared at him. Muggles! What was wrong with them? "I'm not gay," he said feebly.

The man patted him on the back. "You keep telling yourself that, mate." The man finished his pint and slid from the barstool.

"But I'm not!" Draco protested.

The Muggle waved him off and laughed as he delved into the crowd forming near the dart board. A man in drag replaced him at Draco's side and Draco stared at him.

"Do you think I'm gay?" asked Draco, feeling a little lost.

The drag queen looked him up and down. "Honey, you can be whatever you want with me." He winked a heavily mascaraed eye.

Draco fled and Apparated home at the next opportunity.

* * *

Draco lay on his bed in the manor, twirling his wand in his hand. Try though he might, he couldn't get out of his head what that gay bloke had said to him: Straight boys do not get aroused by kissing a bloke. They do not think it is sweet. And they definitely do not think it is sexy.

But Draco had been disgusted by kissing Harry, right? He'd been sickened by it.

Except.

Maybe it wasn't so much that he was disgusted, but scared. He hadn't really known what to expect. And Potter had been nice about it. He hadn't groped, he hadn't pushed. He'd been...been... He had been sweet, dammit! So what if that bloke thought it was gay of him. What did he know about it? He didn't know Harry. He hadn't kissed him.

The sudden thought of this other bloke kissing Harry ran through his mind and Draco was smitten with an unexpected fit of jealousy. Harry would never kiss a Muggle, he thought, mollifying himself. He stared at his wand again, the wand that Harry had used and that Harry had returned to him. He ran his finger up the stiff wood.

None of that meant that Draco was gay, right? He had just felt a sort of bond with Harry. Yeah, that was it. A bond. Maybe through this very wand.

Draco held it up to the light, watched it gleam off the polished wood. A wand was a very personal thing. And Harry had used this wand for some powerful magic. They shared a special bond through the wand.

The wand chooses the wizard. Those words echoed through Draco's head. He remembered Ollivander telling him that when he first put the hawthorn wand into Draco's hand seven years ago. And it had felt like that. It had felt like a surge of Draco's own magic seeking him out, as if the wand had chosen him amongst so many other witches and wizards, as much as his eagle owl had chosen to be his familiar.

But the wand had also chosen Harry because Harry had been able to take it and use it for his own. So there was obviously something about Harry and Draco that was the same. Certainly they were well-matched. Both Seekers, both excelling in certain subjects, both pretty devious.

Absently, Draco stroked the wand over his lips. But how about Potter being gay. There was no hint of that in school. Except for his interest in Quidditch players, and boyish one's at that. Not that that Chang girl was boyish, but she seemed to be quite competitive, perhaps using her wiles to distract Harry on the pitch. Oh yes, Draco had seen that. At the time he thought it was clever of the bint, but now the thought annoyed him. It wasn't nice using someone like that. He had seen the result firsthand. Harry hadn't deserved that.

The smooth wood of the wand caressed his lips and he thought again of Harry's kisses. No, they hadn't been bad. For a boy, he supposed. Kissing Harry hadn't been entirely gross as he fully expected it to be. Different, certainly. Pansy wasn't a very good kisser, what with all that perfume she wore, her sloppy delivery, and her breasts in the way—

Draco sat up. Hang on. Since when were a girl's breasts in the way? No, no, that's not what he meant. She was just too top heavy. Embracing someone with a strong flat chest was just better than—

What the fuck! NO! It was the fact that it was Pansy. She was annoying as all fuck most of the time. And that face! Pug dogs looked better. But she was Slytherin and Pureblood and well...one had to go with what was familiar. And there just weren't any other girls that seemed to interest him. Except for Ginny Weasley. She was smart, a clever witch, a Pureblood, mannish, and—

Mannish? Well, she was tough as nails and wouldn't put up with anyone's crap. She'd probably be able to cold-cock anyone who got in her way. Like a boy, really. That was sort of appealing—

Draco stared into space, picturing her throwing hexes at the final battle. She was mannish. Is that what Potter saw in her? And he snogged her, too. Was it as good as Draco's kisses? No, of course not. Harry wanted Draco, not her. That thought sent a warm glow to his chest, suffusing it with the most pleasant feeling—

“Oh shit.” Kissing Harry. He didn't want anyone else kissing Harry. Not Ginny Weasley, not that bloke from the gay pub. No one. And Draco...Draco...

He noticed suddenly that he was stroking his wand in a most obscene manner and cast it aside, as if it were searing hot. “I am NOT gay!”

He scrambled out of bed and readied himself haphazardly for sleep. He was so out of sorts he couldn't even follow his general routine. Finally, he blew out the candle and climbed into bed. He punched the pillow several times and nestled in, desperately trying not to think of Harry Potter.

After tossing and turning for over an hour, he finally fell asleep, but all he dreamed about was kissing Harry.

Waking himself up, he sat up and looked dazedly around his room. He couldn't even sleep without thinking of that blasted Gryffindor!

He pushed his fingers through sleep-mangled hair. The thing of it was, it felt good to think about Harry. It made him happy. Except that Harry was far from happy with him these days. And Harry...Harry...

Draco sighed. “Harry,” he murmured. Okay, okay! He really did like kissing him. Did that make him gay? “God, Draco who are you kidding? Of course it makes you gay! I'm such an idiot! I like kissing Harry Potter!”

His eagle owl swiveled his head to look at him and blinked languidly.

“And I liked...being intimate with him,” he whispered. “I did. His hands, his lips, his tongue. He made me feel good. He made me feel wanted. I haven't felt that way in a long, long time. And it isn't just that,” he told his owl. “It isn't just because I'm lonely. I mean, people just don't turn gay because they're lonely. I

like him. I do." He cast about for his wand and found it on the floor. Holding it seemed to be his last link with Harry. "I want him," he said desperately. "But he hates me. What should I do?"

The owl flapped his wings and lighted on the bed. Draco gazed at his bird and nodded. "Yes. I should send him a letter at the very least."

He climbed out of bed and scooted up to his desk.

Dear Harry,

I know I'm the last person you'd ever want to hear from, but I have something important to tell you. And I'd really rather tell you in person but I don't want to be hexed. Can I please come over and talk to you? Please?

Draco

Draco tied it up with a red velvet ribbon and gave it to his owl, who was happy to take it. Off it went, and Draco called for a house-elf to bring him his morning tea.

Two cups later the owl returned. A note was tied with string to his leg. Nervously, Draco took it off and read:

Sod off, Malfoy!

Draco lowered it and sighed. "All right. If that's the way you are going to play it." Draco wrote out a series of parchments and gave them in a bundle to the owl. "We'll just see about that, Mr. Potter!"

* * *

Harry was still steaming after receiving Draco's owl. How dare that git! What was his problem? Did he think this would work a second time? What did that cursed family want now?

Harry tried to concentrate on his Auror homework, but couldn't do it and gave it up as a bad job. He found himself staring out the upstairs window, and that's when he noticed the first owl.

It swooped over the housetops and landed on the wrought iron railing of his balcony. It had a large bouquet of flowers in its claws. Harry tentatively opened the French door and the owl hooted at him. Harry looked down at the street to see if anyone noticed an owl in broad daylight, but no one seemed to be paying him any heed.

Tentatively, he took the flowers and the note, and the owl instantly flapped away.

The bouquet was a colourful burst of roses, daisies, and peonies. Harry couldn't resist sniffing them as he unfurled the note.

I hope you like these. It's just a small token about how I feel. I had time to think about a few things, and I want to speak to you face to face. It's really important.

Draco

"Dammit!" Harry crushed the note and tossed it to the street below. He was about to do the same with the flowers when he stopped. He huffed to himself. The flowers were nice and there was no reason he couldn't keep them. He wandered downstairs in search of a vase, clutching the flowers in his fist.

An hour later, he heard an owl tapping at his library window. He looked up from his book and frowned. The flowers in a vase almost obscured his view of the window, but he got up and circled the table, staring out the panes for a moment. Relenting, he opened the casement and the owl hopped in and perched on the back of his chair. He took the package and note. He could plainly see that the package was a very large box of Honeyduke's chocolates.

You were very sweet to me, so the least I could do was offer you something sweet in return.

Please let me talk to you!

Draco

“Fucking Malfoy!” The crumpled note sailed toward the fireplace. The chocolates almost followed, but he caught the scent of them as he cocked his arm back. Harry really did like chocolate.

He lowered the box and looked at it. A gold octagonal box wrapped in gold ribbon. He slipped off the ribbon and lifted the lid. All his favorites; the gooey ones with caramels and nougat. He waved his wand over it to see if there were any spells and smiled when he found none. At least he’d learned that much in Auror studying. He took one and popped it in his mouth. The creamy chocolate melted on his tongue, sending rapturous delight to his taste buds.

Just because stupid Malfoy sent it didn’t mean it had to go to waste.

Later, at dinner (even after half his box of Honeyduke’s was consumed) another owl was tapping at his kitchen window. With a sigh, Harry let it in and it almost landed in his soup bowl. He took the note and felt a fleeting disappointment that there was nothing else with it.

This is just a note to wish you a good-night. I hope your dreams are pleasant and your morning bright. I wish I could be there. I want to be there. I want so desperately to talk to you, to see you, to be with you.

Won’t you please reconsider? Please, please let me talk to you!

Draco

Harry didn’t crumple the note or throw it away. He stared at it, puzzled. It seemed sincere, but Malfoy had seemed sincere before. What was he plotting?

Harry had missed the cues before. Malfoy hadn't seemed all that anxious to be with him. Lack of erections aside, he was always nervous, always fidgeting. If Harry wasn't so besotted with the guy, he might have noticed a lot sooner that Malfoy wasn't into him.

But this time? What had changed? What did he want?

He read the note again. It sounded strange. Odd wording for someone who just wanted to apologize. Or was Harry projecting again, reading into it what he wanted to see.

"I want to be there. I want so desperately to talk to you, to see you, to be with you."

That didn't sound like someone who was only trying to apologize.

Harry's heart was hammering. But no. Could he fall for this again? Let Malfoy get under his skin? He had a bad crush on him, it was true, but if he let that rule him he was a goner. Malfoy would surely break his heart again. Could he let himself fall a second time?

Harry finished his dinner, glancing now and again at the unfurled note leaning against the salt shaker. With a heavy sigh and the sense that he was letting himself in for a world of hurt, he pushed himself from the table and entered the library. Sitting down at his parchment, he whistled for Spike.

Malfoy,

Against my better judgment, I will agree to meet you tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock. Be one second late and I will change my mind.

HP

Chapter Four—The Heart's a Funny Thing

Draco changed his shirt again and was much more pleased with the results. The creamy silk looked good against his skin and he trotted downstairs to get his cloak but ran into his mother.

“Going out?” she asked.

He didn't know why but he began to blush. “Er...yes. Um...out.” He tried to skirt past her but she gracefully blocked his path.

She looked him over coolly. “And meeting whom?”

“W-what makes you think I'm meeting anybody?”

“Come, Draco. You could never lie to me. Who is it? Is it someone we know?”

Draco looked around the foyer, expecting to see his father, but when Lucius didn't appear he relaxed. “Look, Mother. I just don't wish to discuss it.”

He took several steps toward the door when his mother said, “It's Potter, isn't it?”

He froze for a second time. It seemed to take him a full minute to turn around and stare at her. He felt his lips flapping but no sound came out. She approached and cocked her head at him. Her smile was genuine. “I knew you couldn't keep away. Always, in your letters from Hogwarts, it was ‘Harry Potter this’ and ‘Harry Potter that’. I always knew there was something behind it.”

“N-no. I mean...I don't know what you're talking about—”

She touched his face with the back of a knuckle. “Ah my little dragon. Do you think you can hide it from Mummy? It's all right,” she whispered. “I know. I've known for a long time.”

“Kn-known what?”

“That you...prefer boys.”

“No I don’t! I mean I didn’t—” Draco shook his head. “You’re confusing me!”

“My Draco,” she went on, “if you want Harry Potter I think you should have him. No matter what your father thinks. I love him dearly, but his day is done, I think. You will be master of Malfoy Manor someday. You’ll have the say. You should do what you want. Purebloods...it means so little now. Bella is gone, all the Blacks are gone. What difference does it make in the end? You should be happy. That’s all I ever wanted for you.”

Draco’s mouth hung open and he felt hot tears burn at his eyes. He fell into her embrace and began to sob, incoherently at first, and then between sobs, he tried to tell her. “I didn’t know, but now I do, and I do want him, Mummy, but he doesn’t want me. I’ve made a fool of myself and he hates me, hates me all over again—”

“Sweet Draco, hush, hush. Mummy’s here.” She rocked him and with his nose pressed to her robes, he inhaled her delicately perfumed scent, just like he used to do in her arms. It served to calm him and he allowed her to silently rock him. But after a while, he pushed himself away and wiped his face.

“I’ve made the mess. I have to fix it.”

“Are you sure you don’t want one of Mummy’s potions?”

“Er...no. I want Harry to really want me. Not from some potion.” He sighed. “I’m going to meet him now. I don’t know what it will accomplish but at least he agreed to see me. But I’ve got to go. I can’t be late.”

“Good luck, my son.”

“Thanks, Mother.” He gave her a smile. And with that, he Disapparated.

* * *

Harry paced in the foyer. He told himself a thousand times not to do that but he couldn't not do it. He kept glancing at the clock as well, almost hoping Draco wouldn't come. This was sheer idiocy seeing the man. Why did he allow himself to do it?

Go find some nice bloke, Harry. One who isn't so high maintenance. One who isn't...Malfoy! He shook his head. Now that he knew he was gay, he also knew that somehow, even through all those years of hating him, he had wanted Draco, too. Wanted him fiercely. If fighting would work, then they fought. If hexing brought them closer, then they hexed. He saw it all now.

Could it possibly be, could it even be remotely true, that Draco wanted him as well? He had thought so before. Wasn't it convenient that Draco suddenly realized he was gay as well? Well. Harry had. It was possible, but not probable. Hermione would have a cauldron full to say about it if given the chance. And he had wanted to talk to them about it, but there never seemed to be the right time to bring it up. Pass the peas, please. Oh, and by the way, I'm gay. Roll, anyone?

He'd already made himself into the prize fool for Malfoy. Why was he allowing himself to do it again?

Harry froze at the sound of the doorbell. Oh shit. Malfoy. He hurried to the door. Stopped. Stepped back. Turned an about face and headed back into the house. Swearing aloud, he turned again and headed slowly to the front door.

Madness. Madness. He pulled the door open and scowled his deepest, darkest scowl. "Malfoy." His tone was dripping with disdain. It was so thick you could cut it with a Diffindo.

Draco clutched at a bouquet of red roses. "Hi," his voice squeaked. He thrust the flowers forward, but Harry only glared at them.

"What's this?" he asked, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Um...flowers. For you."

“Don’t want them. Let’s just get this over with.”

Draco frowned. “Not very polite, Potter. Just going to leave me on the front stoop like this?”

“Maybe. I haven’t decided.”

“Hmpf. Not what I expected from a Gryffindor.”

Harry unwound his arms. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

Draco lowered the flowers to his side and studied the buffed nails on his other hand. “I don’t know. There were just all these rumours about people from your house, but... Never mind. It doesn’t matter.”

Harry growled, grabbed Malfoy by the sleeve, and hauled him in. He slammed the door and stomped into the sitting room. When Malfoy failed to follow, Harry hollered at him. “You coming, Malfoy, or do you need an engraved invitation?”

Malfoy sauntered in, looking decidedly like the old Malfoy from school days. He dropped the flowers on the nearest table. “Got anything to drink?”

“This isn’t a social call. You are not a guest. Now what do you want that you had to talk to me about?”

Draco sniffed and threw himself down into the nearest chair, draping his legs over the chair’s arm. “You know, I don’t think I’ll tell you now.”

“Then get the hell out!”

“Easy, Potter. Relax.” Draco eased his legs off the chair arm and sat properly. “I just wanted to talk to you about...about the last time we were...together.”

“Didn’t we already cover that subject?”

Harry noticed now how Draco's attitude was just a thin veneer, hiding the slight tremble in his hands and the uncertainty in his eyes. It gave Harry confidence. "Well...things are different now."

"Oh? How so?" Harry sat in the chair opposite, stretching his legs out in front of him, crossing at the ankles.

Draco couldn't hide his nervousness anymore. "It's just that...when I left you, I did a lot of thinking. About things, you know. About how I felt. And it seems...." He laughed in a forced casual way. "It seems that I'm gay after all."

Harry didn't react. He'd expected it. "So?"

Draco didn't seem to count on that response. He blinked at Harry. "Well...I'm gay," he said more feebly.

"Yeah, I heard you. What's it to me?"

That brought Draco to his feet. His grey eyes glittered as they used to in school, like a summer storm waiting to burst over the landscape. "What do you mean 'what's it to you'? You're gay!"

"So?"

"Stop saying that! I thought you wanted me."

"Maybe I did once."

Malfoy sneered. "Oh, I get it. Now you're the hurt party. Well, I damn well apologized for that!"

"So that makes it all better."

“Look! What do you want from me? I came here to tell you that I’m gay and that I’m attracted to you and that I want to...you know.” His voice softened. “Pick up where we left off.”

“You want a shag?”

“Well...I....”

“Right, then. Get your clothes off.”

“W-what?”

“I’ll fuck you, Malfoy, if that’s what you want.”

“What—? No! I don’t just want a fuck, Potter! I want...I want....”

“What! What do you want?” Harry was on his feet, moving dangerously close to Malfoy. He could smell the man’s cologne mingled with the rising sharp scent of his sweat. Draco took a step back.

“I want...I want...you.” He cringed, seeming to get smaller, even though he was taller than Harry.

“Isn’t that convenient. And I had wanted you. And then you fucking lied to me!”

“I know! But I’m not lying now! Honest! Please. Just give me a chance to prove myself.”

“And just how would you do that?”

Draco cast about for ideas. “Well...couldn’t you use veritaserum on me?”

“Oh yes. I’ll just fetch it from my kitchen cupboard. Where the hell would I get veritaserum?”

“You’re Harry Potter!” As if that answered all questions.

Harry shook his head. “Why did I agree to this?”

“How about...Legilimency, eh? You can do that, can’t you?”

“No, I can’t. Not well, anyway. And you’re just devious enough to be able to skirt around it anyway.”

Draco pulled back, his mouth dropping open. “Devious?” he whispered. “Right. I’ll never be anything other than that in your eyes, will I? Never mind that I have a heart and feelings. Never mind that I’m suddenly so confused about myself I’m ready to jump off to the highest tower at Malfoy Manor. Never mind that I came to you here in good faith, trying to apologize and get you to understand—” To Harry’s horror, great round tears welled up in Malfoy’s eyes and rolled down his pale cheeks. “—that I have feelings for you. But I get it. I hurt your feelings and now you can’t forgive me. No matter what you felt for me before, it doesn’t matter now. Fine. I guess I’ll go. Thanks for seeing me.”

He stepped around Harry and headed for the foyer. Harry didn’t know why, but he followed him.

Draco never lost stride. He yanked open the door. At any moment, Harry thought he might call out to him, make him stop. But he never did. He just watched Draco march out the front door and close it behind him.

Standing alone in the foyer, Harry listened as the soft echoes of the closing door finally died away. Draco Malfoy had said he had feelings for Harry. That he was gay. But it was impossible to believe him. It had hurt too much when Draco scrambled away from him, frightened and admitting that it had all been a sham. Draco was his last hope. He was the one person with whom Harry could just be Harry. How many other wizards could he trust that wanted to be with him and not the Hero?

And Draco was gone. Draco. The man he had fallen for.

* * *

Draco had found his way to that same gay pub as before. He was on his fourth beer when, as before, that same man had found his way to an empty stool beside him.

“Hey, you’re that confused bloke, aren’t you? The Looker?”

Draco raised a bleary eye to the dark-haired man. If he squinted, his face didn’t look so wide—more like Potter’s. If only he had worn glasses... “Yeah, it’s me.”

“So...walking into a gay pub once is an accident. Coming here a second time is a little more intentional.”

Draco turned to him. “I came here on purpose, okay? I guess...you were right. I guess...I am...gay.”

The Muggle wasn’t smug about it as Draco thought he might be. He merely raised his brows and turned all the way toward the bar. “What are you drinking? I’ll join you.”

“It’s this dark beer.”

He motioned to the bartender and got himself a pint. “My name’s Mike. What’s yours?”

“Draco.”

“Draco? Is that Greek?”

“Latin.”

“So...you’re from Latin America?” He grinned as he drank.

Draco got the joke but didn’t laugh. “I went back to that bloke I deceived and he wouldn’t believe that I had changed.”

“Oh.”

Draco shook his head. His voice came out whinier than he would have liked but after four beers and working on a fifth, he couldn't find it in him to care. “I just never expected that I'd be a poufter. I don't think I was ever attracted to blokes before.”

“Sometimes these things are repressed, you know. Family issues. Problems with finances. All sorts of things could have been preying on your mind. Have you had anything like that lately?”

Draco looked at him and visions of Voldemort swam up in his memory. “There's been a lot of anxiety on the home front for the last few years.”

“There you go. You just never had the time to think about it. Now me, I've known since I was five years old. Always liked blokes. Tried to kiss a few in grammar school.”

“I bet that went over well.”

“Got me block knocked off a few times, I can tell you.” He chuckled at it, though, and drank his beer, licking the brown foam from his lips. Draco watched. The man had nicely shaped lips.

“Do you want to dance?” asked Draco. There was enough alcohol in his system to free his inhibitions. To free several.

Mike smiled and put his pint aside. “Draco, I'd love to.”

Mike took Draco's hand and walked with him to the tiny dance floor, where other men were dancing close to one another. It was a little less like dancing and a little more like public sex, the way some had entwined their partners, lips locked and hands traveling.

Draco melted into Mike's arms and laid his head on his shoulder. He inhaled the scent of the man. He smelled like soap and sweat. He found he rather liked it, rather liked the feel of his strong arms around Draco's torso. “You're not a bad looking bloke yourself,” said Draco.

Mike drew back to look at him and seemed pleased. He smiled. "Thanks," he said softly. His brown eyes were searching Draco's face. "I know I might regret this...." He leaned in and gently touched his lips to Draco's. It was nice, Draco decided. So he really was gay. Not just for Potter but for all men. Mike was pressing closer and his kisses were getting more intense, but Draco didn't care. It felt bloody good. Someone wanted him, even if it wasn't exactly the right someone. But to Draco's alcohol-soaked mind, it didn't quite matter at the moment.

He raised his arms and encircled Mike's neck, kissing him back just as deeply. His tongue slid lazily over the other's and his lips were fastened tightly to the man's mouth. With their bodies pressed so firmly together, Draco could feel Mike's erection growing, pushing against his thigh, and to Draco's surprise, he felt his own tightening his trousers.

He ran his fingers through that dark hair, imagining for just a second it was Harry's. Mmmm. What if these were Harry's lips? What if these hands now groping his arse were Harry's hands? What if that hardness mashed into his leg was Harry's cock...

"Draco! What the hell—!"

What if that was...Harry's voice?

Chapter Five—The Wand Chooses the Wizard

After zapping a few odds and ends out of existence in his library, Harry settled down and sat. Staring at the grate in his fireplace, he decided it was time to consider a few things. Number one, since he couldn't trust Malfoy and since his feelings for the man were still quite strong, he knew he would have to forget him, starting now. And number two, since he was lonely and desperately wanted someone to be with, he had better get himself out of his self-imposed exile. And number three, since he didn't want to be stalking other wizards just yet, he'd have to find Muggles. But would it be a good idea starting a relationship with Muggles?

"But what choice do I have?" he moaned.

Harry took himself upstairs and changed his clothes. He wore a nice button down shirt, tight jeans, and a leather jacket. He tried to tame his hair but gave up. He cleaned the lenses of his glasses with a spell, made sure he had Muggle money in his pocket, and rumbled downstairs.

He took a quick jog down the lane. There was a gay pub he knew about that he had passed several times on his way to the grocers, but he had never had the nerve to go in there. And now seemed as good a time as any.

Gingerly, he pushed open the door and made his way hurriedly to the bar. In no time, a tall man with close-cropped brown hair and an earring in one ear sidled up to him, and before Harry could reach for his wallet, the man offered to buy Harry a drink.

Harry gave him a timid smile. The man was very attractive, after all, and after a moment of consideration, Harry agreed. They clinked glasses when the beers came, and Harry drank down half of his in one go. With a bit of alcohol, his nerves calmed a bit. The man was leaning into Harry. "So many regulars come here," said the man, "I was surprised to see a few new faces. And yours is very cute."

"Ah...er...thanks. I think you're...um...very attractive, too."

The man giggled in delight. "Aren't you a polite boy. Someone raised you right. I'm Sidney, by the way. But everyone calls me Sid."

“Hi. I’m Harry.”

“Harry,” said the man, rolling the name over on his tongue. He smiled. “You seem like a nice bloke, Harry. And you’ve got the most amazing eyes.”

Harry felt his face blush and he lowered his eyes, hiding his face in the pint by taking a sip.

Sid edged closer. “Look. Do you want to get out of here?”

It was a little too much too soon for Harry. “W-why don’t we just dance a little, huh?”

Sid shrugged and snatched a swig from his glass. “Whatever.”

Harry did the same and allowed Sid to take his hand. But the moment Harry turned toward the dancing couples he came face to face with Draco Malfoy! And he was snogging someone! Something large and ferocious swelled up in Harry’s chest. He was almost growling with it.

“Draco! What the hell—!”

Draco turned lazy eyes to Harry and Harry could see that the man was pissed. “Harry! What are you doing here?”

The man with his arms around Draco—with hands that definitely should not be on those places on the blond—whispered to Draco, “Is that the bloke?”

Draco smiled back at the man and nodded. “But he’s just a figment of my imagination. Ignore him. Let’s go back to snogging.”

“Draco! You told him about me?”

“Er...mate,” said the man, addressing Draco. “Your imaginary friend is asking you something.”

“Tell him to go away,” he slurred, and then plunged his tongue very obviously and very sloppily into that bloke’s mouth.

The monster in Harry’s chest roared in his ears. Harry couldn’t believe he was doing it, but he tapped the man on the shoulder—rather harder than he intended—and the man turned a lazy brown eye on Harry. He pulled away from Draco and looked at Harry rather sheepishly. “Mate, Draco doesn’t appear to want to talk to you. It seems he got the impression you were through with him. Can I make a suggestion? Make up your bloody mind, because I wouldn’t mind having a go here.”

“A ‘go’? Is that what you’re doing?” seethed Harry.

“I don't see how it's any of your business anymore.”

Harry stepped closer. “I think you'd better step aside.”

The man looked Harry's slight frame up and down. “Or you'll what?”

The room trembled a bit and the man looked warily at the swaying light fixture dangling over his head. “What the—?” His eyes slid back down to Harry and Harry gave him a dangerous smile. Eyes wide, the man seemed to sense something in Harry’s face and he slowly unwound Draco’s arms from his neck, much to Draco’s protest. “Okay. I guess you aren’t through.” He looked over Harry’s shoulder at Sid. “Hey Sid. Want to get out of here?”

“Sounds like a plan, Mike.”

Mike quickly took Sid’s proffered hand and the two escaped out the pub door.

Draco swayed by himself on the dance floor. “Well, you’ve ruined a perfectly good date, there, Potter. I hope you’re proud of yourself.”

“Malfoy, you’re drunk.”

“Damned right I am. And I had procured myself a shag, too, until you came along.”

Harry looked around. Some of the men were staring at them, and some were carrying on as if none of it had happened. That surge of rage that had sustained him only moments ago had shrunk to a kitten and mewled at Draco, who was looking a little cute even as drunk as he was.

“Malfoy, maybe we should get off the dance floor.”

“Don’t want to.” He hugged himself and continued swaying listlessly to the music.

Harry grabbed his arm. “Malfoy, don’t make a scene. Let’s sit down.”

He allowed Harry to steer him away and into a booth. Draco flopped down hard and rested his cheeks on his hands, disfiguring his face. His grey eyes darted about the room, looking from man to man. “It’s like a Smorgasbord. A pinch of that one, a dollop of that. You’d never run out. I’m going to enjoy being gay.” He glared pointedly at Harry. “Just as soon as I can forget you.”

Harry smiled weakly. “Yeah, I know what you mean.”

“So why are you bothering me? I was just getting used to it all. That bloke—Mike. He’s a really good kisser. Not as good as you, but he wasn’t bad.”

Harry gritted his teeth. “Oh?”

“And you had to come along and interrupt.”

Good. But Harry didn’t say anything aloud.

“So why are you here, anyway, Potter?”

"It's a gay pub. I came to hook up."

"Hook up? Hook up? You just came here for a shag?"

Harry slumped down in his seat. "Keep your voice down, Malfoy!"

"Well?" he whispered harshly, sitting up. "Did you? Merlin's bollocks! I just left you not more than half an hour ago and you're already sniffing up other people's trees."

"What? Never mind. You and I are not anything."

"That's your fault."

"I beg your pardon? Wasn't it you who pretended to be gay just so you could get your bloody vault keys out of me?"

"That was then. This is now. I came with hat in hand, Potter, and you just out and out rejected me."

"I didn't believe you were gay!"

"Do you believe me now?"

"I...I guess so. I mean...you were sure examining that bloke's throat deep enough, weren't you."

Draco stared for a moment before a sloppy grin spread over his lips. "Are you jealous?"

"No!" Harry clasped his arms over his chest and turned his face toward the dance floor.

Draco giggled and started banging the table with his hand. "You are! You are jealous. Come barging in here all manly demanding to know what I'm doing with that chap." He burst into a loud guffaw. "You

have a green-eyed monster!" He seemed to think that was particularly funny and couldn't stop gasping and laughing.

Just then the bartender came over to their table. "Excuse me, gents, but I think you're getting a bit loud over here. If it doesn't stop, I may have to ask you to leave."

Harry reddened. "We're going."

"No I'm not. I'm not going anywhere!"

Harry glanced up at the bartender squinting his eyes at Draco. "Malfoy, I think we'd better leave." He rose and dragged Draco to his feet.

"Unhand me, Potter! I can do it myself." But as soon as he got out of the booth he nearly fell over. Harry grabbed his arm again and hustled him out the door.

Draco shook him off. "I am perfectly capanal of doing it myself."

"What was that, Malfoy?"

"Camable. Capamal. Cabanimal— I can do it without your bloody help."

"You'll splinch yourself if you try to Apparate." He sighed. "I...I guess you'd better come home with me."

"I'm not going home with you," he said, swaying dangerously.

"Yes, you are. I have plenty of guest rooms. Come on."

"At least I didn't go there looking for a shag," he muttered, finally allowing Harry to drag him along.

"I thought you said you were getting one from Mickey."

"MIKE! His name is Mike. And he's a damn sight nicer than you are!"

Harry clamped his mouth closed and merely dragged the resisting blond along.

"You're such an oaf, Potter," he muttered, stumbling up Harry's steps.

Harry continued with him up the stairs and Draco kept on with his harangue. Harry opened a guest room door and gestured in. Draco stumbled forward and looked around. "What's this?"

"Your room for the night."

Draco looked around unsteadily and then slowly turned toward Harry. His eyes were wide and he suddenly looked damned appealing. "I have to stay here? Alone?"

Harry sighed. "Yes, Malfoy. You do."

"Why are you calling me 'Malfoy' all of a sudden? When you were snogging me you kept calling me 'Draco'."

Harry took an uneasy step back. "I'm...not snogging you now."

Draco stepped forward, matching Harry's movements. "Why not?"

"Well, for one, you're drunk."

"Am not."

"Yes. You are."

“And two? You said ‘one’, inferring there was another one.”

“And two...we...we just aren’t.”

Draco leaned forward, his smiling face closer to Harry’s than was comfortable. “Don’t you want to?”

“Look, Malfoy—Draco—would you just...get undressed and get into—”

“Oh ho! But you want me to get undressed. Make up your mind, Potter.”

Harry blushed. “I don’t care what you do.”

But Draco was already slipping off his shoes. Fully dressed, he scooted up the bed and pulled back the covers. “How about a good-night kiss?”

“No! Just sleep it off, okay.”

“No. I want a good-night kiss.”

“I’m not your mother.”

“And a good thing, too, considering what I’m thinking.” He waggled his brows at Harry and offered him a seductive smile, eyes drawn to slits. “Kiss, kiss, Harry.” And he puckered.

Harry stood stiffly over the bed. He wondered why he wasn’t just leaving. “I thought I disgusted you.”

“You didn’t. I was just scared. Come on. Pretty please?”

“Oh for God sake!” Harry leaned over, planning on making it a quick peck, but as soon as he neared, Draco leaped up and threw his arms around Harry’s neck. Draco’s mouth covered Harry’s and his warm tongue pierced the gates of his lips. Harry struggled for a second, before the feel of it sank in. And he was kissing Draco deeply, as deeply as the Slytherin was kissing him. They both sank to the bed with Draco beneath Harry, and with his whole body stretched out over the blond, Harry could feel the man’s heart rapidly beating, his chest heaving with breaths, and...oh my!

Harry pulled back and looked down at Draco. The man was drunk. He couldn’t. He simply wouldn’t take advantage of him.

Draco’s arms were still lifted and reaching. “Har-ry! Where are you going?”

Licking his lips, Harry could still taste the man on his tongue. “Y-you’re drunk, Malfoy. Just...sleep it off, okay.”

“I don’t want to be alone. Please stay?”

“No, it’s not a good idea. Please, Draco. Just get some sleep.”

Draco’s face fell and he looked as if he was about to cry. “You still don’t like me. After I apologized and everything. I don’t apologize to just anyone, you know.”

Harry found himself sitting on the edge of the bed, pulling the blanket up to Draco’s chest. Harry suddenly felt very tenderly toward him. “I know. It was very brave of you.”

“I know! I thought you would hex me.”

“I very nearly did.”

“But I came anyway. ‘Cause I fancy you. A lot. And I came to understand that I liked being with you and then I was in this gay pub and this bloke was talking to me, telling me I was gay and then I realized that I was and I didn’t want to lose you. But I have anyway, haven’t I?” And then Draco did start to cry.

Harry's heart cracked open. At least it felt like that, felt like the worst pain his scar used to get. He took Draco in his arms and hugged him, gently rubbing his back in soothing motions. "Shush, Draco. Don't cry." Draco sobbed against his shoulder. He was saying something but Harry couldn't understand him through the sobs. He gently pushed him back to look at him and wiped the tears from Draco's cheeks with his fingers. "Don't cry. I guess...I don't hate you."

"You don't?" he whimpered.

"No. But you hurt me, Draco. You really did."

"I didn't mean to. And I'll never hurt you again." He kissed Harry once. Twice. And suddenly they were kissing madly again. And Harry was cursing himself for losing control, because not only was he kissing Draco, his hands were slipping up into his shirt and he was caressing that unspeakably soft skin again.

"Harry," came the whispered moan beneath him. No, he had to stop. Draco was in no fit state for this. He gently pulled away and laid the man tenderly on the bed. Draco looked up at Harry with large, pleading eyes.

Harry smiled at him to show it wasn't a rejection. "I'm going to control myself. I want you to sleep now. That's an order."

"You're not the boss of me," he whined.

"Yes, I am. At the moment, anyway. Go to sleep, Draco. We'll talk in the morning."

"We'll shag in the morning," he said sleepily, rolling over.

Harry let out a long breath. Maybe, he thought.

* * *

Trolls were clubbing his head, pounding it with each throb. Draco was sure of it. He wrapped his arms around his head to protect it, but it wasn't helping. Finally he sat up, ready to call for his house-elves when he stopped, his mouth open. Where the hell am I? He remembered the pub and Mike and his eyes bulged. He didn't, did he? He didn't sleep with that Muggle, did he? His mother would kill him!

No. Wait. It wasn't that Muggle. It was...it was...

He looked around. The Black House. He was in Harry's house. And he and Harry had kissed last night. And it had been nice. Draco sank down into the pillows hugging himself. Oh yes. It had been very nice.

The door creaked opened and first a tray appeared and then a bespectacled man peered around the door. "Oh. You're up."

Draco gazed at Harry, freshly showered. The scent of his soap and shampoo drifted toward Draco. His face was flushed and dewy and his eyes sparkled behind his glasses. And he was smiling. Square, white teeth. And a bit of a dimple on one side of his face, sort of matching that slight indentation in his chin. Absolutely charming. Draco realized at that moment how smitten he was.

Harry set the tray down on the bed. There was a plate of scrambled eggs, bacon, and toast, a pot of marmalade, a glass of orange juice, a mug of coffee with a bowl of sugar cubes and a small jug of milk. There was also a bottle beside the coffee with a hand-done label that read "Hangover Tincture".

Draco looked at it all with awe. "You did this for me?"

"Well, Kreacher cooked the breakfast. But I brought up the tray." He sat on the bed beside him and reached for the potion bottle. "Thought you could probably use this this morning. You were pretty wasted last night."

"Was I? I seem to remember doing some kissing. And someone kissing back." He looked up shyly.

Harry blushed charmingly. "Yeah," he said rubbing the back of his neck. "Um...yeah. So...so eat your breakfast before it gets cold."

Draco took the potion first and then began to take a delicate bite of toast. "Did you mention a house-elf, Potter? You, the champion of all creatures great and ugly?"

"I inherited him. I don't really have a choice."

"But you are certainly unrestricted when it comes to freeing other people's house-elves."

Harry's face changed and he didn't look as lighthearted as he had done. "Dobby wanted to be free. And he is."

"Father was furious for weeks. And he still brings it up now and again. Where is the blighter now, by the way?" He took a heartier bite of toast and picked up his fork.

In a deadened voice Harry said, "He's dead. Killed by your Auntie Bellatrix while he was saving my life. Again."

Draco froze. He snuck a peek at Harry and lowered the fork again. "Oh. Sorry." He lowered his face and toyed with the edge of the tray. "I seem to spend a lot of time apologizing to you."

"Well, you're a pretty sorry fellow."

There was a pause before Draco looked up. Harry's expression had lightened, and though he wasn't exactly smiling he didn't seem so dark anymore. Draco cautiously picked up his fork again and speared a piece of bacon. He ate while Harry watched. After a while Draco became a bit uncomfortable. "Look, Potter. Are you just going to sit there staring at me?"

"There isn't anything or anyone I'd rather be looking at."

Draco choked on his food. Harry's eyes were gazing at him in a most peculiar manner. It was like it was before, when they were on their first date. Harry had looked at him like that then.

Draco downed his orange juice and with his wand, sent the tray away. He realized he was still in his clothes and he had sweated a lot when he slept. "Um...can I get cleaned up?"

Harry seemed to move off the bed reluctantly. "Sure. Bathroom's down the corridor that way."

"Thanks." He edged by Potter, who was still looking at him, and escaped out the room and down the hall.

Getting undressed in the bathroom, Draco wondered if Harry would come in while he was bathing. The thought was rather exciting. Now that he wasn't afraid of being gay, he really wanted to see Harry naked again. He remembered that cock of his and the considerable size of it...

Well. Maybe he was still a little afraid.

Draco undressed and filled the tub with hot water. Starkers, he eased in and then began to examine what Harry considered cleaning products.

The soap was some plain organic thing and the shampoo and conditioner were store-bought from some wizard shop Draco had never heard of. He used it anyway as it smelled like Harry and he needed it. As he soaped up, he vaguely wondered what his parents were thinking happened to him.

He kept looking at the door through the steamy atmosphere of the room but it never opened. "Bloody Gryffindors," he muttered.

After a relatively short bath, Draco got out and dried off, Scourgifying his clothes before he redressed himself. He opened the door and saw out of the corner of his eye, something scurry around the corner. He smiled to himself. It was way too big to have been a house-elf.

Casually, he followed where the "shadow" had gone and found the staircase. He ambled down and found Harry reading in the library, a bit out of breath for someone casually sitting with a book.

"Hello, again," said Draco.

Harry looked up. Draco noticed that the book was upside down. "Oh. You're done."

Draco took the book out of his hand and tossed it over his shoulder. "Yup."

Harry stood. "So."

"So." Draco felt his insides wriggle. Harry was giving him one of those intense looks, the same he used to wear when he had spotted the Snitch.

"Draco, I...I want us to move forward. But I'm a little gun-shy. I mean, I trusted you before—"

"And I broke that trust," he said, edging forward. "But I swear, Harry, I swear that this is really how I feel now."

"I don't want to be hurt again," Harry said softly.

"I know. I won't hurt you. I promise." And he slid into Harry's embrace and it seemed like the most natural thing in the world. He touched his lips delicately to Harry's, just lingering there and gently rubbed them from side to side, up and down, before the Gryffindor engulfed his mouth in a searing kiss.

Draco felt light-headed. Harry held him tightly, one arm encircling his shoulders while the other slipped around his waist. Draco wrapped a leg around one of Harry's, pulling his hardening cock against Harry's thigh. The Gryffindor moaned and Draco angled his head for a more intense open-mouthed kiss.

The hand on Draco's shoulders climbed, trailing tingling fingers up his neck to the back of his head. Those fingers traced a trail into his hair, massaging his scalp. He kissed harder, fiercer, the sensation on his head sending gooseflesh down his body.

Meanwhile, Harry's other hand was descending until it cupped an arse cheek. He squeezed, pulling Draco's groin into Harry's thigh and grinding it.

Draco pulled his lips away in a gasp. "Harry," he murmured, not knowing what he wanted to say. Maybe that was enough.

"Draco, Draco," Harry whispered to his lips and then captured them again.

The blond felt as if he were floating. His whole body was alive with sensation. He couldn't believe Harry Potter was doing this to him. All those years he wasted hating him when they could have been snogging! Another one to blame on his father!

Both Harry's hands were holding his shoulder blades and skimming upwards to Draco's head. The hands were now cupping his face, thumbs caressing his cheeks. Harry broke away and rested his forehead against Draco's.

"I'm...just holding off a bit," he panted. "I was getting a little too excited there."

Draco blushed. Harry Potter was getting too excited snogging Draco? How cool was that!

"Draco?" he said.

"Mmm?"

"Want to go upstairs?"

"Are we going to shag?"

"Want to?"

"Mmm. Yeah."

"Are you sure? We don't have to...um...penetrate, i-if you don't want to."

“Are you mental, Potter? I won’t rest until I get a proper shag from you. And that means ‘penetration’.”

“It’s going to hurt, probably.”

“I know. You’ll be careful.”

“I’ll try.”

“I trust you.”

Harry closed his eyes at that and kissed Draco’s forehead. That seemed to be the signal, and Harry slipped his arm around Draco’s waist and escorted him up the stairs.

The room was familiar. It was the one that Draco had been in the last time they had their disastrous liaison. This time would be different.

Harry pressed him up against the doorframe and kissed him tenderly, lips lingering. “I want to make love to you, Draco.”

“Yes, Harry.”

Wordlessly, the dark-haired man began unbuttoning Draco’s shirt. His fingers trembled slightly as he reached for each button. He pushed open the silky material and his fingers raked over Draco’s chest, scraping his nipples. Draco arched his chest into those fingers, groaning at the sensations.

Harry kissed and suckled his neck, nipping at the tender skin under his jaw before capturing an earlobe and sucking.

Draco held on to Harry’s shoulders tightly, unconsciously digging in with his nails. He threw back his head, letting Harry nip and nibble whatever he wanted. It was bloody marvelous what he was doing.

“I want to pound you so hard, Malfoy,” he growled against his white skin.

Draco shivered. He was positive he'd never been as aroused as this in his life.

Harry dragged the material off Draco's shoulders and let the shirt drift to the floor. He jerked at his trousers, tugging the button open and yanking down the zip. His hands eased around him and slipped into the loosened waistband in the back, sinking between the flesh of his arse and his underpants, and with one push, both trousers and pants whooshed over his buttocks and down his thighs.

Starkers, except for his shoes and the bunched trousers around his ankles, Draco wondered how many hands Harry had. They seemed to be everywhere at once: pinching a nipple, groping his bum, fondling his genitals. He writhed under each sensation, grasping at Harry's shirt, pulling at it in a vain attempt to pull it off.

“Please!” he moaned. “Please! Off. Now!” His vocabulary had degenerated to a few monosyllables. But Harry understood anyway and took a hand away from Draco's skin long enough to pull off his own t-shirt and shimmy his trousers down. He helped Draco get his shoes and the rest of his clothes off and then the two of them had nothing between them but a sheen of sweat.

Harry went right back to exploring Draco's body with fingers, lips, tongue, and now a cock that kept rubbing sensuously against his own.

“I never thought—” breathed Draco. “I never imagined—”

“Yeah,” grunted Harry. He lifted the taller man in his arms and, while kissing him soundly, manhandled him over to the bed and pushed him down to the mattress. Dazed, Draco looked up at his...lover. Harry was his lover. The thought made his heart ache pleasantly. “You don't hate me, do you,” he whispered. The man's glasses were askew on his face and his hair was ruffled, as usual.

Harry gazed down on him and took his glasses off, setting them on the bedside table. “No, I don't. I think I've wanted you for a very long time indeed.”

Draco swallowed. He couldn't speak. It was a bit overwhelming, this. The Hero of the Wizarding World, wanting him, actually fancying him. Him and him alone. He reached up and touched his lover, ran his hands over that chest and those strong arms. His hands traced a trail up his neck, over the slight beard stubble on his chin, over his cheeks and his thick brows. Draco never imagined anything could be better than power and magic. But this, right under his fingers, was surely it.

Harry bent down to kiss him. His lips nibbled lovingly at Draco's mouth. His tongue lazily painted circles on Draco's parted lips before he plunged it in.

Draco swept his eyes closed, immersing in the pleasures of Harry Potter's mouth. The kiss segued to his sensitive neck and down his chest, teasing a nipple with that supple tongue and moving downward over his belly. It was strange, this feeling of powerlessness. Strange that he welcomed it where he never would have before. Malfoys were not bred to this sort of surrender. And yet it was so intensely pleasurable, Draco wondered why the Malfoys bothered with power plays at all.

Harry was kissing the hollow of his groin and Draco arched into it. Harry was going to suck him. He knew it, he wanted it. He began to writhe in anticipation. His dick had never been this hard. Never! He felt the first swipe of Harry's tongue on his sac and he gasped a wordless sound. Draco spread his legs wide to accommodate the man and Harry filled the space. Hands steadied him at his hips and Harry's face nuzzled his pubic hair. "You smell wonderful," came his muffled voice.

Draco gasped again and tried not to thrust his hips into Harry's face.

"I've never been with anyone, Draco," he said. Draco looked down at Harry. His face seemed naked without his glasses and he looked younger and a little unsure of himself. "I've never done this before."

"Do whatever you want to me, Harry," he said, voice coarse as if he'd been shouting. "I love all of it."

Harry smiled and turned his gaze to Draco's upright cock. He kissed it, first at the root in its nest of blond hair, and then halfway up the shaft, and finally the head which was straining past its foreskin. And then Harry licked it; gave it a long, languid stripe up the underside and closed his mouth over the crown, sucking gently.

Draco couldn't help it. His hips left the bed. He'd never felt anything as exquisite as that! That warm, wet heat enclosing him as if in an embrace! The tongue working on it, slithering into every crevice, over every vein and ridge. "Oh fuck!"

Draco's whole body heaved upward, and before he knew it, his balls contracted and he was pumping his orgasm into Harry's mouth. Harry choked and sputtered, trying to keep his mouth around Draco's cock, but in the end he had to pull away.

He strained to swallow under the choking, and though Draco was floating high from his splendid orgasm, he felt a bit sorry for Harry. "I'm sorry I didn't warn you. I just...couldn't."

Harry licked his lips and wiped a tear from his eyes. "It's okay," he said, smiling and coughing. "I consider it a compliment."

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah." He cleared his throat. "I just wasn't quite ready, that's all." He smacked his lips again. "But you taste good."

Draco chuckled bonelessly. "It was incredibly good."

"Thanks. And now—"

Draco's lazy eyes snapped open. "Do you want me to—"

"I want you to turn over."

"Oh." Draco mustered his dwindling strength and managed to roll onto his stomach. He laid his cheek on his hand and looked back at Harry looking hungrily at Draco's bum. Harry was stroking his cock unconsciously.

"Um...Harry? Could you do that...that licking thing again?"

“Licking?” He looked up at Draco’s face owlshly. “What do you mean?”

“You know. When you did it before. Back there.”

Harry grinned. “I’m sorry. Could you be a little clearer?”

Draco felt himself redden. “You bloody well know what I’m talking about, git.”

“But I want to hear you say it.”

Draco squirmed and hid most of his face in his hands. “Would you please lick my...my asshole! Please.”

“That’s better.” Draco could hear the laughter in Harry’s voice. “It’s dead sexy when you say it.”

Draco shut his eyes tight. Why was he so embarrassed? Well, a bloke was about to lick a distinctly intimate part of him, more so than his cock, which the man had also licked and sucked.

Sex was embarrassing!

Harry’s hands were on his bum, squeezing and manipulating the muscles. “This is lovely. Your arse is perfection.”

Draco felt his body blush. His arse cheeks were opened with Harry’s fingers. Harry was looking at it again. Looking at his hole.

“Could you get up on your knees, Draco?”

Draco complied, whimpering in anticipation.

A finger lightly traced down the middle of his crack, skimming over that most sensitive of spots. “Oh!”

“Like that, don’t you,” purred Harry. “I hope you really want a proper shag this time, Malfoy, because I don’t think there will be any stopping me.”

“I won’t stop you,” he muttered. “I don’t want to.”

“Good.”

Draco waited. It seemed like forever. But then... “Ah!” Harry’s tongue started at the back of his bollocks, and trailed upwards, teasing the hairs there. “Oh god oh god.”

Harry was way too good at this.

That treacherous tongue continued upward, sliding along the crack until it stopped at Draco’s furred entrance. It twirled wetly there, making Draco gasp and mutter incoherently. That sinewy tongue danced and lapped, its warm wetness teasing and tickling that ultra sensitive flesh.

Draco was keening into the mattress. His bottom swayed appallingly, but he couldn’t help it. He wanted to open himself, wanted to feel more of it, more of Harry. And he understood now how someone could come to crave a shag in the arse.

Harry kissed it, kissed right on his hole. And then he spread his open lips over it and gently sucked.

“AH! Harry! God! Please, Harry!”

“Please what?” said his lover in a seductively low voice, breath still puffing over Draco’s arse.

“Please! Inside!”

“You want me to lick inside you?”

“No! I want...I want your cock inside me!”

“Oh!” The bed rocked as Harry sat up abruptly. There was a pause as Harry reached over Draco for something, and then Draco felt that oil again at his entrance. He tried not to tense but it was tough when he knew what that cock looked like.

“I’ll go slow, okay?” Harry’s voice had a quiver in it.

Draco tried to control his erratic breathing and nodded. He felt Harry’s thumbs dig into his arse cheeks once again and spread him. Draco forced his bottom upward, concentrating on opening himself. But all his eagerness was no match for the intrusion of that thick cock. The spongy head kissed his gasping entrance but that was the last of their delicate dance. When Harry pushed forward, his cock forced the tight muscle to expand impossibly wide.

Draco gritted his teeth and began to sweat. Merlin’s fucking bollocks! It hurtithurtithurt! When would it end? He wanted to wriggle away from this pain. He heard Harry breathing hard above him and pushing and pushing. Draco’s arse seemed to tear open. It had to be to take in that girth. Why did he agree to this? He was on the verge of telling Harry to stop when all of a sudden...it didn’t hurt so much. Harry seemed to have pushed past a point where it didn’t hurt and simply felt impossibly full.

Harry did stop then, and panting, asked, “You okay, Draco?”

Draco thought about it. His arse seemed to be stretched wide enough to permit Harry’s whole body, but he knew it must be an illusion. He felt full and there was only the slightest bit of burn around that enormous member. He felt Harry’s balls nestled against his and it was the strangest sensation. “Yeah. I’m okay now.”

Harry eased out a long breath. “This is bloody marvelous. You’re so tight. So hot. Feels so good.”

“Glad I can accommodate. When does it feel great for me?”

Harry faltered. “I...I don’t know. Doesn’t it?”

“It bloody well hurt! That’s quite a weapon, that, Potter.”

“Oh. I’m sorry, Draco. You should have told me to stop.”

“I almost did.” He breathed. “So. Are you going to move?”

“Do you want me to?”

Sarcastically, he said, “I think since you’re already there you should at least give it a go, yeah?”

Harry didn’t reply. He simply eased out a bit and then glided back in. “Oh shit!” he gasped.

It was a strange feeling for Draco, to be sure. That largeness in his arse moving in and out. “Feel good?”

“Like heaven!” Harry did it again, only this time, he slammed in harder.

And when he did, it glided over something inside Draco...something that...

“FUCKFUCKFUCKINGSHIT!”

Harry chuckled above him. “I take it it’s beginning to ‘feel great’ to you?”

“I don’t bloody well know what you did but you’d better be doing that a lot!”

“Your wish is my command.”

Harry slid in again. It didn’t do it that time, but when he tried it again, trying for a different angle, he found it.

“Right there, right there!”

"I'm not deaf, Malfoy," he said. And he commenced fucking Draco in earnest. He thrust in hard and deep, pulling out in shallow bursts. He thrust over that spot inside that made Draco whimper. It felt like many little orgasms and he felt his dick grow hard again. It dripped a copious amount of pre-cum, so much that Draco thought they might actually be little orgasms over and over.

Harry was pounding him harder and harder, grunting with each thrust inward. His balls were spanking against Draco's. "Gonna—" Grunt. "Come!" he announced. And then he was, a staccato gasp releasing with each jutter of his hips. This went on for almost a minute until he released one long gasp and collapsed on top of Draco's back. But by then, Draco was coming, his arse squeezing down so tightly on Harry's cock that Harry gave a squeak as he was milked one more time.

Draco let go and fell to the mattress, his stomach landing in his own spunk. But he didn't care. That had been the single most amazing experience he had ever had. He panted into the mattress, relishing Harry's weight on top of him.

Kisses were peppered all over the back of his neck and shoulders and Harry finally pulled out of him with a sloppy, wet slurp and he rolled to lie beside Draco on his back.

Draco breathed for a moment and used the last of his strength to roll to his back too.

A hand found his and intertwined fingers.

"Draco. That was...fucking...wonderful."

"Yeah. It...was."

"So you're okay?"

"My arse fills like it could fit all of Hogwarts castle in it. And a bit sore. But other than that, yeah."

Harry laughed. He turned his head and Draco did the same, gazing up close at his lover, his Harry. He squeezed his hand.

“Do you believe me now? That I really am gay and that I fancy you?”

Harry laughed harder. “Yeah. You convinced me.”

“Finally!” Draco moved closer to rest his head on Harry’s shoulder. “God, I like this! This is so much better than just being your friend.”

“It’s not bad, is it.”

“Not bad? It’s fucking fantastic! Why didn’t I know about this before? I’m really pissed.”

“Well I didn’t either. I might have gone off and married Ginny Weasley. That would have been a disaster.”

“Too right. Married to a Weasley. Biggest mistake ever.”

“But, thankfully, that won’t be happening.”

“Not if I have anything to say about it.”

“And what would you say?”

“I’d say,” said Draco, running a finger over Harry’s sweat glistened chest. “That you should be thinking of me and only me from now on. My being your...your...boyfriend and all.”

Harry looked down and nuzzled Draco’s hair. “You’re my boyfriend?”

“Of course.” Draco let Harry kiss his head and pet his hair, basking in the afterglow. Harry smelled good. Right now he smelled like sex, but he also smelled like Harry. And Draco realized how much he liked that scent. “Harry. I was wondering. Would...would you mind very much...if...if I...fell in love with you?”

Harry stopped petting and grabbed his glasses to look at Draco properly. “Really?”

Draco, embarrassed now at his admission, shrugged.

Harry’s grin was wide. “It’s just that...I really have fallen for you.”

A lump formed in Draco's throat. “You have?”

“Yeah. I think it’s very serious.”

Draco felt a smile form on his lips. “Well, who could blame you?”

Harry laughed, kissed him, and then settled Draco back on his shoulder again, his arm tight around the Slytherin’s body. Draco felt featherlight, as if the rest of the world didn’t matter at all. He looked about the comfortable room for the first time; at the tall windows and heavy drapery, the pictures on the walls—some that didn’t even move; a familiar bouquet of flowers on a dresser; the bedside table where two wands lay, one gently nudging the other. One was of holly the other of hawthorn. Draco was grateful to get his wand back. He knew that hawthorn branches had always been a symbol of hope amongst the ancients. And the Celts even used it to mend a broken heart. Draco smiled.

“Out of all the wands you took that night,” asked Draco quietly, breaking the comfortable silence between them, “why did you choose mine?”

Harry thought for a moment. “It felt...friendly.”

“Friendly?”

“Yeah. Familiar.” He laughed. “No wonder. I’d been hexed with it enough.”

Draco smiled sheepishly. “‘The wand chooses the wizard.’ I guess it chose you, too.”

“I choose its owner.” He punctuated that with a squeeze and a kiss to Draco’s ear. It tingled his skin. Draco sighed.

“And I choose you, too,” he whispered, barely loud enough for Harry to hear.

But Harry did.

The End

A/N: Fluff, fluff and more fluff. I can’t see you all through the fluff.

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